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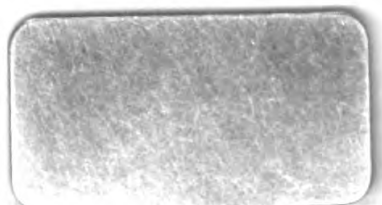


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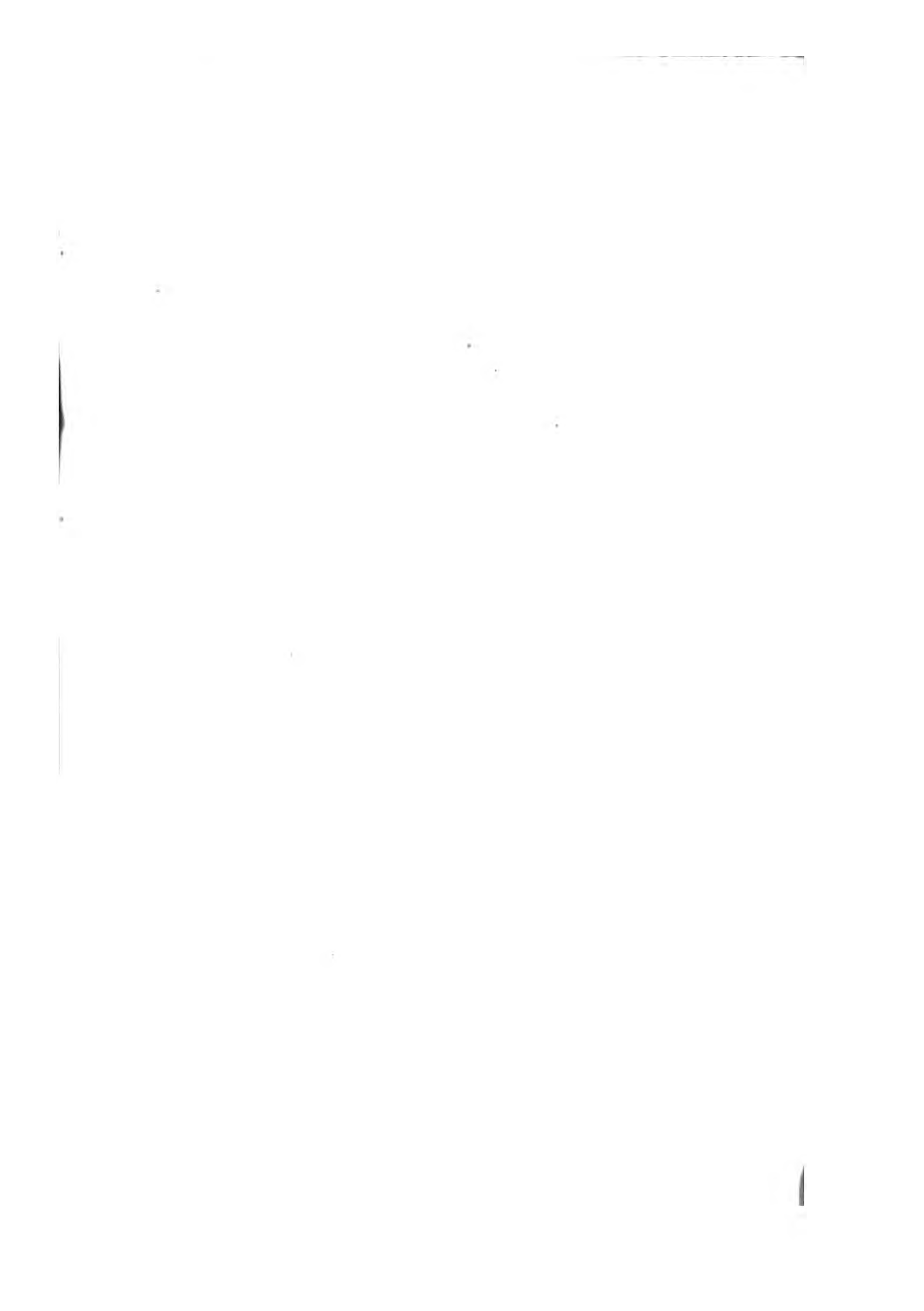


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THE Publisher begs to intimate to his Subscribers, that COWPER'S POETICAL WORKS will be completed in two volumes instead of three, as originally proposed. This alteration in the issue for the Second Year will enable him to give the Poetical Works of SHENSTONE, in addition to those formerly announced for that year.

The two volumes of Cowper will be considerably thicker than the average standard, and some of the others will be correspondingly thinner ; but the six volumes will contain the full number of pages originally contemplated, namely, 2100 in the aggregate. In many cases a little variation in the thickness of the volumes will necessarily take place ; but the Publisher pledges himself to supply each year complete works, and that the six volumes shall contain the quantity of matter stated in his original Prospectus.

The volumes will appear in the following order :—

<b>Cowper's Poetical Works,</b>	<b>Vol. I.</b>	.	<b>1st April 1854.</b>
<b>Do. Do.</b>	<b>Vol. II.</b>	.	<b>1st June „</b>
<b>Butler's Poetical Works,</b>	<b>Vol. I.</b>	.	<b>1st August „</b>
<b>Do. Do.</b>	<b>Vol. II.</b>	.	<b>1st Oct. „</b>
<b>Shenstone's Poetical Works,</b>	.	.	<b>1st Dec. „</b>
<b>The Poetical Works of Blair, Bruce, Logan,</b>			
<b>Beattie, and Falconer,</b>	.	.	<b>1st Feb. 1855.</b>

EDINBURGH, *March* 1854.

**COWPER'S**  
**POETICAL WORKS.**



BALLANTYNE, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.

THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF  
WILLIAM COWPER.

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With Life, Critical Dissertation, and  
Explanatory Notes,

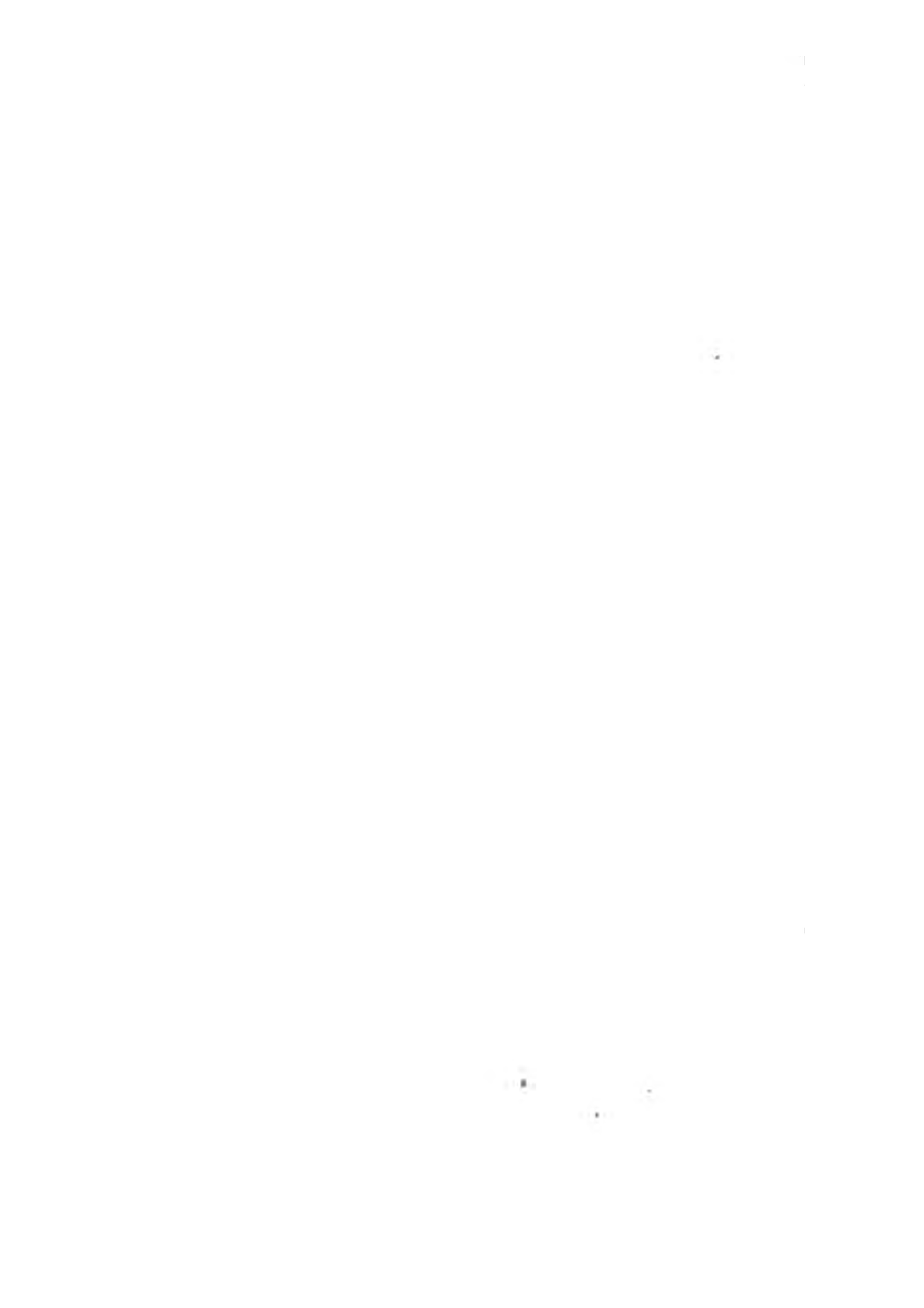
BY THE  
REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN.

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VOL. I.

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## THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER.

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It is with a singular emotion that we have jotted down the words, "THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER." The terms seem almost a contradiction. The word "life" usually suggests ideas of bustling energy, and gladness. But, as applied to an existence which was, on the whole, a long tissue of disappointment, misery, or despair, the word seems a misnomer. Shall we not rather call it "The living death for seventy years of William Cowper"?

The author of "The Task" was born on the 15th of November (an appropriate birth-time for one whose years were all winters, and each of his months a November) 1731, in the rectory, Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire. He was descended from an ancient and highly honourable house. His father was John Cowper, D.D., son of Spencer Cowper, one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, nephew of Lord Chancellor Cowper, and rector of Great Berkhamstead. His mother was Anne, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall, Norfolk—of the same family with the celebrated Dr Donne, the quaint poet and eloquent sermon-writer—the friend of Walton and of George Herbert. This lady, whose memory, as the mother of the poet Cowper and the heroine of the lines "On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture," shall ever be so warmly cherished by the world, seems to have been a person of the most amiable dispositions. Her picture, which now lies before us, expresses much feminine delicacy, and not a

little of that trembling sensibility and timid anxiety which assumed a darker form in her son. She died in 1737, at the age of thirty-four, in childbirth, leaving, of several children, only William and a brother. Young as Cowper was, he felt her loss keenly—wept bitter tears as he saw her hearse slowly leaving the parsonage, and never passed a week, he assures us, and scarce a day, without thinking of her. Soon after his mother's decease he was sent, at the age of six years, to a boarding-house, and here, originally of a morbid disposition, deprived of her watchful and gentle guidance, and flung abruptly among strangers, he imbibed the first prelibation of that deep cup of misery which his whole after-life was employed in drinking. The school was at Market Street, in Hertfordshire, and was kept by a Dr Pitman. The character of the master is not recorded; but the society of the rude boys, and the general atmosphere of the life pursued, disgusted and repelled Cowper. He was continually contrasting the rough treatment he met with in this "Do-the-boys'-hall" with the tenderness of his dear mother and the elegant comforts of his native roof. One brutal lad, especially, conceived a wicked delight in maltreating him. He "fancied" him, as a demon might fancy a special victim of his ire, and treated him with a revolting barbarity, which haunted Cowper's memory till the latest hour of his life, came back upon his dreams, and deepened the dark horrors of his derangement. He says, "I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than his knees, and that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress. May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory!" This cruel usage was carried on for a while in secret, the victim being afraid to reveal, lest he should aggravate it; but it was at last discovered. The wretch was expelled, and Cowper was taken away from the school. Had it continued a little longer, we had not now been employed upon this biography; the poor boy would have sunk into hopeless idiocy, or died of a broken heart. And it had been far better for him, humanly speaking, that he had!

As it was, he remained two years at this seminary—long enough to have his native tendency to mental disease greatly

increased, as well as to derive that profound aversion to public schools afterwards recorded in "Tirocinium." On his removal his eyes became affected with specks, and he was in danger of losing his sight. He was placed for two years with an eminent oculist, "to no good purpose," by his own account, so far as education or religion were concerned. His eyes, however, were much relieved, although they remained rather weak and liable to inflammation till the close of his life. At this period he describes himself as exceedingly depraved for so young a boy, and given especially to the "infernal art of lying"—a statement we are disposed, with Southey, to take *cum grano salis*. His views of himself were all along dismally discoloured. His moral eyesight contended with more numerous and thicker specks than his bodily; and if he had learned to lie, it was probably in self-defence against his cruel foe at Market Street, so that his falsehood may be compared to the feints made by the poor chased hare, in order to secure her escape from the hounds pressing on her haunches. Latterly, no man was ever more truthful, both in word and deed, in life and in poetry; and well might he say, as in "Expostulation"—

" And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,  
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,  
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last."

At ten years of age he was sent to Westminster School. His residence there, on the whole, was a pleasurable passage in his history, and continued to smile back on him, like one select sunny spot upon a traveller, through an atmosphere of clouds and darkness. He had, indeed, then, as in every other portion of his life, some nervous apprehensions to contend with. His special hallucination at this time was a notion that he was consumptive, and was soon to die. Such dreams are, we suspect, not uncommon among boys of nervous and imaginative temperament; at least we know of one of this cast, who, about the age of twelve, was made miserable for many months by precisely the same terror. Cowper felt, however, that this fear was a "messenger of the Lord" to him, and that it had "perfectly convinced him that he was

mortal"—a truth, sooth to say, which many of the young are unable to realise. Otherwise, when at Westminster School, he was happier than at any other period of his life. He was diligent in his studies, and obtained a highly creditable standing as a scholar. He loved the usual schoolboy sports, especially cricket and football. He loved still better the solitary rambles, which holidays permitted him, into the country, where the future author of "The Task" might be seen plucking the scarlet hips, climbing fences in chase of the high-towering haw, satisfying his hunger in the turnip-field, rejoicing at the discovery of some quiet and secret nook, where the softest of sloes or the plumpest of brambles were to be found—sitting silent on the stile, and watching the landscape, with the Thames stealing slowly through it like an incognito king, and the evening light betraying his splendid secret, as it gleamed on the waters—or asleep at noon in some cool retreat, with a broad oak, old almost as that of Yardley, shadowing his plain but pleasing features into an aspect like poetry. Coming back from such rambles—

"No sofa then awaited his return,  
No sofa then he needed"—

but kind and congenial spirits were ready to mingle their minds with his, and to make the evenings of his holidays as delightful as the morns. Seldom has there met in any school a more brilliant assemblage of persons, afterwards renowned, than there did then at Westminster. There was the celebrated wit, Bonnell Thornton. There was Lloyd, the unfortunate but lively versifier, who at one time almost vied in popularity with Churchill. There was Churchill himself, the rugged, robust, and fearless satirist, who wasted on temporary topics powers of great compass and variety—who, in a species of reckless despair, threw away a glorious constitution—whose rapidity of production and manly vigour of verse had been unequalled since Dryden, and who, with all his faults, lived and died an honest man—

"The scourge of impostors, and terror of quacks."

There was Cumberland, the finical and jealous, but highly

accomplished and ingenious dramatist, essayist, and autobiographer. There was Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, who, if, according to Fox, "no one ever *was* so wise as he *looked*," was nevertheless an able lawyer, a sensible judge, and a strong-minded man. There was Colman, a name dear to all the lovers of laughter, and who might be called a half-Cowper, possessed of all his lighter, although of none of his graver powers. There was Impey, afterwards so conspicuous in the history of India, and whose abilities, if not his integrity, were undeniable. And there was a man, perhaps for native power, and certainly for extensive reputation, superior to them all, on whom, when he had mounted the highest pinnacle of wealth, influence, and renown, fell suddenly the invective of Burke, like the thunder-winged eagle of Jove, yet who survived the shock of an attack such as afterwards roused the whole of Europe to arms, and has left a splendid, albeit dubious, fame, like a blood-red sunset, behind him—Warren Hastings. Our readers cannot have forgotten the fine use to which Mrs Johnstone has turned the conjunction of such names as Thurlow, Cowper, and Hastings, in her exquisite story, entitled *The Three Westminster Boys*.

When Cowper had reached his eighteenth year, this delightful chapter of his life—perhaps the only one which was not deeply chequered—came to a close. He left Westminster school, he says, well furnished with grammatical knowledge, but as ignorant of all kinds of religion as the satchel on his back. And yet he had been greatly struck by the ceremony of confirmation, as performed in school by Dr Nicholls, and had after it attempted, for the first time, to pray in secret. But that early goodness had been like the early dew or the morning cloud; and he next betook himself to a scene, where the last drops of it were in danger of being scorched up. He became a lawyer, and was articled for three years to a Mr Chapman, at whose house, too, he lived. How drearily this period must have passed away! Yet we doubt not that these years might have done Cowper much valuable service, and that the study of law, if it did not tend to kindle his devotional fervour, or "remind him of one single Christian duty," might have sharpened his intellect, and increased that strength and acute-



ness which are no less remarkable in his compositions than their fancy and fire. But he took little interest in the study. One precious day he was permitted to call his own—the Sabbath—and that he uniformly spent (as well as parts of most of his week-days) at his aunt's, in Southampton Row, where, with his amiable female cousins (daughters of Ashley Cowper) he on Sundays attended church; and on week-days was found often along with Thurlow, who had become a clerk in the same office, “giggling and making giggle.” The motive of his friends in sending him to a solicitor's office was, because they could most easily provide for him in that profession. He was not willing, it would seem, to return home after leaving school, probably because his father had married a second time. He had no inclination for the Church, and no turn for business, and hence he had passively resigned himself to the will of his relations; and even before he was articled to Mr Chapman he had been entered *pro formâ* at the Middle Temple.

There, on leaving the solicitor's office, in his 21st year, he took up his solitary lodgings. It was in the year 1752. And there the black malady, destined to be the curse of his life, made the first of its many violent attacks. He was struck, it would seem, all of a sudden, with an extreme depression of spirits. He lost all relish for his former studies. He lay down each night in horror, and arose in despair. While in this pitiable plight he met accidentally with Herbert's “Temple.” The reading of this delightful poem did not altogether remove, but it much alleviated, his sufferings. The sea still ran high, but the wind abated. Herbert's voice came to him, in the valley of that shadow, even as there came to Christian, in the “Pilgrim,” when in the depth of the same gloomy glen, “the voice of a man going before him, and saying, ‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me;’” and, like him, he was somewhat comforted, because “he gathered that some who fear God had been in that valley as well as himself.” At the bidding of a relation, however, he threw the book aside, and once more, and for a whole year, felt himself walking alone, in unutterable wretchedness, and

in profound silence, for he could not now either echo the prayers of others or pray himself. At last, indeed, his proud heart was humbled, and he began to pray. He was recommended then to a change of scene, and went down to visit some of his friends at Southampton. Soon after his arrival, at a place called Freemantle, about a mile from the town, in a clear and calm morning, the sun shining on the sea, and on the beautiful glades of the New Forest, the cloud of his melancholy disappeared as rapidly as it had gathered; it was as if "another sun had been kindled that instant in the heavens to dispel sadness;" his heart leaped for joy, and tears of transport came into his eyes. On his return to London, however, Satan, he says, tempted him to believe that this deliverance had been produced simply by change of scene, and was, like the melancholy which preceded it, a mockery and delusion; so he burned a set of prayers he had composed, and plunged into a round of diversion and pleasure to drown the memory of both.

On the 14th of June 1754, he was called to the bar. It is certain, however, that he had paid very little attention to his legal studies, although his heart was already beginning to heave with the ambition of becoming a wit and a poet. Two years later he lost his father, if the removal of one whom he seldom saw, and who had been long dead to him, could be called a loss. Still it cost him a bitter pang to repair in haste to his native place, at the news of his illness, to find him dead; to follow his last parent to the grave, and as he left the scene, to "sigh a long adieu to woods and fields," which never appeared so beautiful as when he was leaving them to return no more. Three years after this event, he removed from the Middle to the Inner Temple, and purchased chambers there. He was about this time made a Commissioner of Bankrupts; but, according to one of his biographers, "was more employed with literature than with law, and more with love than with literature." The object of his attachment was Theodora Jane, second daughter of his uncle, Ashley Cowper. She is described as a person of beauty, accomplishments, and more than ordinary understanding. The attachment was warmly returned, and would have been consummated in mar-

riage, had not, first, his circumstances been so precarious, and had not, in the second place, the father objected to the match, on the ostensible ground that the parties were too nearly related in law. Probably his real reason was, that he knew Cowper's hereditary tendency to insanity. The cousins, however, continued to love, although the father's will forbade any farther intercourse, and the after incidents in Cowper's sad story put their marriage entirely out of the question. He vented his anguish in plaintive verse, addressed to a sister of hers, who, as Lady Hesketh, was destined to play an important part in his history on an after day. Theodora cherished his memory—long and carefully preserved the copies of poems he had given her, and is suspected of having done him effective pecuniary service at a future period of his life. That this disappointment produced Cowper's malady, is not true—for that unquestionably lay in the blood—but that it, along with many other untoward circumstances, increased its virulence, seems certain. Alas!

“The course of true love never did run smooth,”

and even although it had, and the two true and warm hearts had become one, the calm might only have been temporary—

“The torrent's smoothness, ere it dash below”—

and what a miserable aggravation to his malady would the fact of his marriage have been!

Cowper had, as early as fourteen, been a “dabbler in verse.” He began with a translation of an elegy of Tibullus. When seventeen he wrote an imitation of the “Splendid Shilling,” on finding the heel of a shoe. At the Temple he spent much of his time in inditing both verse and prose, most of which he gave away to the help of less gifted and needier scribes, who published them with their own names. He became at this time a member of the Nonsense Club, which was composed of seven Westminster men, who dined together every Thursday. It included several of those we have already named, with one or two remarkable additions. But none of them did Cowper love so well as Joseph Hill—afterwards characterised by him as

“An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,  
Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.”

Hill was at once a lawyer and a lover of letters, an amusing companion, and a steadfast friend. He wrought hard in his chambers all the week, and on Saturdays might be seen “reading upon sunshiny banks, and contemplating the clouds as he lay on his back.” This was the very man after Cowper's own heart; and deep, and clear, and constant, and embalmed at last in energetic verse, was their friendship.

During these years Cowper seems to have been—till his disappointment in love—tolerably happy, often even gay, sometimes, we fear, rather dissipated. From the character of his companions he could hardly have been otherwise. He was the daily and nightly associate of Lloyd and Thornton, sometimes, too, of Churchill; and those excesses, the effects of which Churchill's huge and iron frame as yet threw off from it, “like dew-drops from the lion's mane,” must have told terribly on the delicate nervous system of Cowper. He did not, however, try it very often, and he never allowed his mind to be idle. He kept up his acquaintance with Latin and Greek, and read through all the Iliad and Odyssey, carefully and critically, with a friend, having gone over them before, more rapidly and slightly, at Westminster School. He contributed papers to the *Connoisseur*, and the *St James' Magazine*, and his papers in both are exceedingly characteristic of his fine sense, keen discrimination, and delicate humour. He translated, in conjunction with his brother, a considerable portion of Voltaire's “Henriade.” Altogether, he seemed busy and cheerful, and, perhaps, many thought of him in the spirit of the fine future lines of his best biographer—

“How happily the days  
Of Thalaba went by!”

But all this was false and hollow. It was the flowery verge of a smouldering volcano. In the first place, his small patrimony was wasting away, and as his guineas were disappearing, he felt that he could no more prevent the process, than he could prevent the melting of a patch of snow in the spring sun. Then he *had* neglected his *professional* studies, and was not

qualified for the only offices from which he could expect either emolument or subsistence. With some twinges of remorse, too, were doubtless blending the sighs of a hopeless affection. But the great difficulty was, how to rid himself of the meagre fiend—Want—which was beginning to stare him in the face. At this time, while talking one day on his affairs with a friend, he expressed his hope that the clerk of the House of Lords should die, that, through Major Cowper, his kinsman, who had the place at his disposal, he might obtain it. This, he afterwards in deep contrition said, was “spoken in the spirit of a murderer.” Alas! if this be so, who is blameless? What man that lives has not a thousand times, in levity, or in momentary anger, uttered similar expressions—nay, entertained similar desires? And is not, if the law be carried out to its rigour, “every one that *hateth* his brother a murderer?” Surely, surely Cowper was here applying too sternly a test, which, in condemning him, would condemn all men, and which would, moreover, confound the guilt of the idle WISH with that of the determined *purpose*, the secret *influence*, or the overt *act*.

At all events, his wish was fulfilled. In what De Quincey would call a “spirit of accommodation,” such as he tells us produced so many windfalls of good fortune to Wordsworth, the clerk of the journals dropped off, and two other officials—the reading clerk and the clerk of the committees—resigned, and thus any one out of three situations, all valuable, fell within the reach of Cowper. Major Cowper immediately called on him and offered him two of the most profitable places, reserving the other for Mr Arnold. The kind promptitude of his relative touched the heart of the poet, who was besides dazzled at the splendid prospect opened so providentially up to him. He accepted the offer eagerly, but that moment felt, he says, “a dagger planted in his heart.” He went home in deep dejection; and, fancying himself unfit for the duties of the office, he wrote to his friend, and proposed resigning the more lucrative offices in favour of Mr Arnold, and succeeding him as clerk of the journals, a much easier post. This was at once arranged, and he became, for the moment, contented and calm. But an opposition arising to his friend’s right of

presentation, and a powerful party in the Lords insisting that the new clerk to the journals should be examined at the bar of the house, Cowper was seized with a fit of incontrollable terror. In vain did he try to qualify himself for the examination by attending daily at the office, and studying the journals. He was seized with a nervous fever, and, when partially recovered, fled to Margate. There air and exercise restored him; but as soon as he came back to town, his malady returned in tenfold force. We cannot dwell on the melancholy history that follows, which, even in the graceful language of his own narrative, is absolutely appalling. Suffice it to say that he at one time cursed and blasphemed his Maker; at another, like Manfred, "prayed for madness as a blessing," and repeatedly attempted self-murder. Every one remembers how, in one of these frightful attempts, he was saved through the breaking of a garter, by which he had strung himself to his own bed. At last he obtained transient relief by resigning the situation. But his system and soul were thoroughly unhinged. His days continued to be days of darkness; his nights, nights of despair. Satan, he imagined, had become a constant inmate of his soul, and was tormenting him before the time,—now in his waking hours by horrible suggestions, and now in sleep by the dark machinery of dreams. He felt oppressed under a constant sense of God's wrath; his sins seemed all arranged before him like the open mouths of lions ready to devour him up. There was a "dreadful sound in his ears," a dull dead pressure on his brain, and a perpetual flashing as of fire before his eyes. He heard the flaming sword of Eden turning audibly over his head, a sound mingled with the distant moaning of the waves of hell. In vain he sought relief from books; every page he opened seemed bordered by the blackness of darkness, and in vain he sought aid from his kind brother John, who, when he came at his call, found him crying out, "O brother, I am damned!" He sent for Martin Madan, his friend, the chaplain of the Lock Hospital, who ministered him some consolation by pointing to the peace-speaking blood of Christ. At last his intellect, which had hitherto remained quite entire, reeled and wavered. He lost consciousness of everything, except a vague sense of

sin, such as oft oppresses men in dreams, and a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." He was now veritably insane, and it was thought expedient to remove him to a private asylum, kept by Dr Cotton, at St Albans.

Cowper has declined to discover the "secrets of his prison-house." He tells us only that the differentia of his madness lay in an infinite self-loathing and abhorrence. He thought himself lost, and justly lost, because he was the most execrable monster that ever polluted humanity! The Bible he threw away as a book in which he had no longer any interest or portion. But Dr Cotton was exceedingly kind, as Cowper has so beautifully acknowledged in one of his poems, and gradually he became somewhat calmer. At this juncture, his brother, who was a fellow of Bene't College, Cambridge, visited him. They walked out to the garden. John laboured to convince him that his expectation of sudden judgment was a delusion. He burst into tears, and said, "If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of human beings." He dated his recovery from that moment. He re-opened his Bible. He saw once more the benignant face of his Saviour,—of Him who so often in the days of his flesh had compassion on the "lunatics and the sore vexed;" the doctrine of Christ as the Propitiation broke on him like the morning; he wept like a child for very gladness; the cloud was fairly burst, and he came out of it, not a "sadder," but certainly a "wiser" and a humbler man, and was now to be seen clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Although perfectly restored, he continued for a whole additional year at St Albans, enjoying friendly and Christian communion with the amiable, talented, and pious man who had been one important agent in his cure.

He had now made up his mind to forsake the world, and, especially, never to enter London—a city with which so many dark associations were connected. Wordsworth, in his "Ruth," speaking of the rocks and scenery which, by nursing a romantic and ill-regulated sensibility, had wrought her ruin, adds—

"She never charged *them* with the wrongs  
That they had done to her."

For why? because they were the mere passive instruments

in producing her misery. But Cowper felt that the corrupted and corrupting influence of London society had actively and, in some measure, wittingly destroyed him. He resolved, therefore, not only on instant flight, but on measures of reprisal against that "great Babel," at the very first opportunity. He left with the feeling of Lot leaving Sodom, and he kept his twofold resolution,—he never again saw, though he often shot his vengeful shafts at, its haughty towers, "crowned with darkness." London gave itself no concern at his retreat. He had as yet made no name, and not one of its public journals or public men cried "stole away" to this wounded hare, or cared to track, by the spilt blood-drops, the "stricken deer that left the herd."

He fixed his abode in Huntingtown, where he lived a quiet retired life in lodgings;—walked much, bathed often, resumed his attendance on church, corresponded with Lady Hesketh and with Hill, lived partly on supplies from his relations, partly on the rent of his lodgings in the Temple, which were let, admired the blue willows of the Ouse, and—important event in his history—became acquainted with the family of the Unwins. William Cawthorne Unwin, a Cambridge student, and son of Morley Unwin (who had been a clergyman in Grimstone, but had been persuaded by his wife, Mary Cawthorne, to take a house in Huntingtown, and prepare a few pupils for the university), had often met Cowper in his walks, and been struck with the mild melancholy of his aspect, and with the traces of genius which were engraven on his face. After long desiring and delaying to accost him, he at last, one Sunday afternoon, on the way from morning service, under a row of trees, mustered courage to do so. They became instantly intimate; Cowper was introduced to the family, formed speedily an affection, pure as heaven, long as life, and strong as death, to Mary Cawthorne Unwin, and in November 11, 1765, became domesticated in their house. It was, on the whole, the most fortunate circumstance in his history. They were all amiable, gentle, intelligent, and Christian people; their religious opinions, domestic habits, and intellectual tastes, were identical; and this "pre-established harmony" between them was never disturbed till the close. At this time, some of his



relatives began to tire of, and withdraw, their contributions to his support, and it was then that Theodora Cowper stepped in, through an anonymous communication, and nobly offered to supply any deficiency in his funds; proving thus that many waters had not quenched her love, neither had the floods, and *such* floods! drowned it.

His life in Huntingtown continued of the same even equable tenor, till interrupted by the death of the elder Unwin, who was killed by a fall from a horse. This led to the removal to the neighbouring village of Olney of the whole family, including the poet. Olney had no particular attractions, in point of scenery; it was simply a dull, disagreeable English village, surrounded by tame marshy scenery; without a real hill to diversify the sameness, or even one nook of romantic interest to beautify the surrounding district. The sole magnet, leading this accomplished family to it, lay in that remarkable man, then its vicar, John Newton. He was certainly a singular person, —almost a John Bunyan in his blended romance and commonplace, in his combination of genius and shrewd sagacity of mind, in the intense imagination which influenced his perceptions, and in the picturesque simplicity of his style, not to speak of the kindred struggles and misadventures through which both had attained peace. His "Narrative" is quite a novel in interest, as well as a psychological curiosity. And those conversational remarks of his, preserved by Cecil, are very fresh and sagacious in thinking, and very pointed and poignant in style. He visited the Unwins after the death of Morley, and proposed that they and their friend should remove to Olney. He engaged a house for them so near his own vicarage, that by opening a doorway in the garden wall, they were able to communicate together without going out into the street of the village.

For two or three years nothing worth recording took place in our poet's life, unless it were the removal of John Cowper by a rapid illness, which, of course, deeply affected his brother. He wrote a sketch of his history and character, under the title of "Adelphi," which was published after he too had departed. His own life became still more recluse. He dropped correspondence both with Lady Hesketh, and nearly with Hill, and

surrendered himself more and more thoroughly to the influence of John Newton and Mrs Unwin. Both these excellent persons did a great deal to make him happy, and if they did not succeed, who could have done much better? If there was a certain sameness in their mode of preparing that "Balm of Gilead," which is the great cure to a mind diseased, let us rather pity than blame the physicians, and at all events, in God's name, let us not reflect upon the remedy! The malady was beyond them, and beyond man, and beyond time, and so afterwards it was abundantly proved.

Mr Newton, finding other methods vain, tried to awaken Mr Cowper's long slumbering muse, and the "Olney Hymns" were the result. In 1773 he was again seized with derangement, owing, some say, to the preparation of these hymns; others say, still less probably, to the refusal of a proposal of marriage on his part to Mrs Unwin; and others to his brother's death. At all events, he became very ill, and Dr Cotton had again to be consulted. This, however, was a much gentler attack than the former. It was characterised by great submission on the part of the sufferer, and what was remarkable, his *dreams* were throughout quite tranquil and sane. We have heard of cases in which the original simplicity and virtue of a character, which had degenerated through bad society and habits, were generally retained in sleep, so that a man who was a sinner all the day, was a saint all the night. Cowper's was a case of the same order, although in a different way. In the first access of his frenzy he left Mrs Unwin's house for Newton's, and could not, for two years, be prevailed on to return. The first symptom he gave of returning reason was, writing verses on his own imaginary doom. THAT, in his notion, implied, that he was singled out by a special decree as the victim of eternal destruction. He began next to amuse himself with keeping leverets, the history of which, as written by himself, is one of the most pleasing passages in his story. His love of literature, too, revived, and he resumed his old habits of reading, and was particularly delighted with Cook's *Voyages*, and Vincent Bourne's *Poems*.

Meanwhile, Newton, owing in part to the severity of his doctrine and life, was compelled to leave Olney for London,

but before his departure published the *Olney Hymns*, and introduced Cowper to the Rev. William Bull, the amiable dissenting minister of Newport-Pagnell, to whom he soon became much attached. He felt, however, Mr Newton's departure keenly, and the more as it was followed by the death of Sir Thomas Hesketh, his cousin's husband. But his friend Thurlow had now become chancellor, and Cowper began to flatter himself with hopes of a pension. He strove, too, in every method, by gardening, bathing, walking, bird-caging, and at last by writing rhyme, to divert his mind from gloomy thoughts. Mrs Unwin urged him to write something of moment, and he commenced the "Progress of Error." This poem, after having been subjected to Newton's criticism and approved of, was followed in rapid succession by "Truth," "Table Talk," and "Expostulation." Johnson, in St Paul's Churchyard, became the publisher of his first volume, which contained ultimately several other pieces, large and small, and after various vexatious delays, was fairly launched in 1781. It met with a tolerable reception and nothing more. The *Critical Review* discovered that it had no original genius! The *Monthly Review*, then the supreme ruler of the World of Letters, praised it rather highly, and admitted the author to be a poet. Newton wrote a preface to it, very characteristic both of himself and Cowper, which, in the first instance, was suppressed, although it has been restored in many succeeding editions.

But now a fair and splendid vision, like some "gay creature of the elements," burst across the dim sphere of Cowper and of his *Olney* circle, and made both for a season glad. This was Lady Austen, the wealthy widow of a baronet—a lady who had many accomplishments and talents, and possessed, moreover, that inimitable vivacity of manner, that airy charm and buoyant ease, for which French ladies are so distinguished, and which she had cultivated during her residence in France. The poet had seen her in company with her sister, Mrs Jones, a clergyman's widow from a neighbouring village, visiting a friend in *Olney*, and might have used—had Burke's "Reflections" then been written—the words of the orator—"Never did there light upon this orb, which she scarcely seemed to touch,

a more delightful vision." By a stretch of courtesy, strange in so shy a man, he requested Mrs Unwin to invite her to the house, and speedily there sprung up an intimacy of the most interesting kind between the melancholy bard and this graceful and lively lady. If it was not exactly love, the word friendship still less avails to characterise it fully; let us call it a mutual fascination. The poet felt captivated by the beauty, charmed by the manners, attracted by the mind, cheered by the wit, and overpowered by the sympathies of this lady; and she, on her side, admired to enthusiasm the genius, adored the virtues, felt the force of the gentleness, and pitied the calamities of the poet. She became, for a period, his blameless mistress—his new muse—his inspiring genius; and although it was partly a delusion, who so cruel as to grudge one short and innocent dream of happiness to a man whose usual life was so dark, solitary, and forlorn? Let those who are disposed to blame either party in this little Platonic interlude, remember that, but for the apparition of Lady Austen in Olney, "The Task" would never have instructed, nor "John Gilpin" delighted, the world. She told Cowper the story of the one, and suggested to him the subject of the other. He said—"I want a subject for a poem." She answered—"Write on any—write on this sofa." The good-humoured and fascinated poet obeyed; and the sofa, and himself, and the fair suggester became straightway immortal. It is well known that certain little disputes and jealousies between Mrs Unwin and Lady Austen terminated this delightful episode in Cowper's history. She left Olney for ever, and Cowper, although he submitted without a murmur, and even tried to fancy that her departure was a blessing, often, we doubt not, sighed in secret at the memory of the halcyon days when "her conversation had as happy an effect upon his melancholy spirit as the harp of David upon Saul."

She had told him the old story of John Gilpin. It had amused him exceedingly, and he spent a sleepless night in turning it into a ballad. This immortal humourism, after making his own circle merry, was sent to the *Public Advertiser*, the readers of which it made merrier still; was copied into many newspapers, and all their readers joined in the laugh;

and was, in fine, recited by Henderson the actor to crowds in the capital, and then from London to John o' Groat's House, the whole country dissolved into one grin. Except in the case of Hood's "Song of the Shirt," we do not remember any instance of such rapid and richly-deserved popularity won by one short strain. Best of all, it paved the way for "The Task," which would never have gained such a sudden reputation but for "John Gilpin," which seemed a little cock-boat sent ashore to announce the approach and secure the favourable reception of a large and wealthy galleon of genius.

This fine poem appeared in 1785, and became not only popular, but served to buoy up the first volume of his poems. Upon reading it, Lady Hesketh wrote him; and their correspondence was renewed. His letters to her are the most delightful of all his letters—in other words, the most delightful letters in the world. He told her in one of the first of these, as a great secret, that he was busy translating Homer. Many have regretted that Cowper spent so much of his time in this translation; but we think that the mixture of mechanical, literary, and manual work which a translation implies, made it the very task for him. "The Tale of Troy" took his thoughts far, far away from his personal agony, and in the work of collating, editing, transcribing MSS., and turning lines, there was nothing to fret his heart, or rouse from its lair the demon of his memory.

Lady Hesketh proved an essential ally. Through her, or at least with her knowledge, an anonymous friend—probably the faithful Theodora—sent him an annuity of £50, besides many other presents. At last she came down to visit him—spent some months in Olney—and before returning persuaded him to remove his dwelling to Weston, a much cleaner and prettier village in the neighbourhood. This was in 1786. About the same time the clerk of a church in Northampton applied to him to write annual verses for his bills of mortality, and with great good-nature Cowper complied.

He had scarce established himself in his new abode when his friend, William Unwin, was seized with typhus fever, and died. Shortly after, his malady returned in full force, and for

six months he could bear the sight of no human face except Mrs Unwin.

On his recovery, Samuel Rose, a young Englishman, who had been studying at Edinburgh, came as "a pilgrim of his genius" to his dwelling, bearing with him the thanks of the Scottish professors for his volumes, and a copy of Burns' Poems. "Hero-worshippers" in those days were scarce, and Rose, besides, was an intelligent and warm-hearted youth. Cowper loved him warmly, and appreciated Burns' Poems, although he said his light was hid in a dark-lantern—alluding to the Scottish dialect. It is pleasing to remember, that Burns reciprocated the feeling, and cried, in his frank, fire-blooded style, "What a glorious poem is Cowper's 'Task'!" One is tempted to wish that these two truest men, and most popular poets of their day, had met, and to fancy the particulars of their meeting—the timid and gentlemanly recluse of Olney shrinking somewhat at first from the brawny gauger, with his swarthy visage, his slouching gait, his buckskin breeches, his strong Ayrshire accent, and his wild daring talk—but, ere the interview was over, giving him the right hand of fellowship, and his blessing to boot; while Burns' black flashing eyes are filled with tears, as he compares his own miseries—past, present, and to come—with those still darker woes which were overwhelming his gentle brother bard.

Thus for several years ran the still dim current of Cowper's existence. Regular occupation with Homer, diversified by correspondence with, or visits from, Newton, Lady Hesketh, Rose, and young John Johnson, a distant relative of his own, who sought him out, and became his steadfast friend; anxious watchings over Mrs Unwin's declining health, the writing of songs on the slave-trade, and occasional articles for the *Analytical Review*, along with deep but fitful sinkings of heart and spirits, filled up the complete round of his days—days serener than any that he was to know during the remaining part of his pilgrimage.

In 1791 his translation of Homer, which had occupied him for six years, and had been extensively subscribed for, was published. He was now again at sea for a subject, and several were suggested to him by his friends. Lady Hesketh

mentioned the Mediterranean, as the topic of a great poem—a topic which Paoli had suggested to Boswell long before—which Cowper could never have adequately treated, but which Byron, in his “Childe Harold,” in effect, although not in name, since has. Another spoke of the “Four Ages of Man”—infancy, youth, manhood, and old age—a subject much more congenial to Cowper’s mind, but which he never was permitted to finish, although some lines of an attempt towards it are extant. Perhaps no man can properly, or with good result, suggest the subject of a poem to any other man. It must come from the spirit within the poet himself. At all events, Cowper preferred an Oak in Yardley Chase, which he saw every day, and which was said to be as old as the Norman Conquest, and commenced to write those fine lines about it we now have under the title of “Yardley Oak.”

But, meanwhile, Johnson, his bookseller, wished him to undertake the editorship of a splendid illustrated edition of Milton, with a translation of his Latin poems. This engagement he agreed to accept, and did in part accomplish; but it was never finished. A rival edition had been projected, under the editorship of Hayley. This led to a correspondence between the two—Hayley disclaiming all unhandsome feelings towards Cowper, and Cowper reciprocating civilities. The result was, that Hayley visited Cowper at Weston, and was visited by him in return—became his firm friend, and ultimately his kind and elegant biographer.

Mrs Unwin began now to be seized with successive fits of paralysis, and, as if the two had been the Siamese twins, each attack sent a shock instantly from her system to that of the susceptible poet. He had not recovered so fully from his last, as from his former attacks, and his nerves continued in a state of diseased activity. He now imagined that he heard voices speaking to him in the morning, or through the night, and that these voices were of oracular import. For the explanation of these, as well as for general instructions with regard to his spiritual state, he began to consult a poor weakling, called Teedon, a teacher in Olney, and reputed a man of great piety. In this folly he was encouraged by Newton, and a large portion of the biography of the Poet’s later days

is taken up in an account of this humiliating display of imbecility, on the part of one of the most strong-minded and gifted men that ever lived. He consulted this poor, proud, silly creature, as a kind of spiritual fortune-teller, sent him a regular bulletin of his dreams, and would take no literary step without his concurrence. We know not if the annals of human fatuity contain another case so lamentable as this.

Shame, horror, and deep, deep commiseration induce us to hurry over the remaining part of Cowper's life. He fell into thicker and thicker gloom. A pension was granted him by the king, but came too late to cheer his mind. He was removed by Johnson to Norfolk, took up his residence at North Tuddenham, and was conveyed thence to various other places, and finally to Dereham, but to no purpose. In 1796 Mrs Unwin died. "In the dusk of the evening he attended Johnson to survey her corpse, and after looking a very few moments, he started suddenly away, with a vehement, but unfinished sentence of passionate sorrow. He spake of her no more." His last poem was the "Castaway," a fitting finis to such a career. The last reading he listened to was his own works—but when the reader came to John Gilpin, he desired him to pass it over. On the 25th April 1800, this poor unhappy poet closed his eyes in death. He had said some days before, when asked how he felt, "Feel! I feel unutterable despair!" His last words were, to a lady who offered him a cordial, "What does it signify?" He was buried in Dereham Church, Lady Hesketh erecting a monument, and Hayley supplying an inscription.

Words are wanting to describe the sense of relief with which we close this saddest, most mysterious narrative. The man were granite who could refrain from sympathy, amounting to bitter anguish, with this poor unfortunate. And then, there are questions arising out of his story, which descend into the very depths of those awful relations which connect us with God and Eternity. Why did this man suffer thus? Why was he ever born to endure such wretchedness? What the *rationale* of his long martyrdom and darkness? From these questions we abstain, but must be indulged with one or two closing remarks.



The genius of Cowper and its fruits we reserve for an after-prefatory essay. Nor need we dwell at length upon his private character. He was confessedly an amiable, modest, generous, temperate, honest, upright, and pious man. He had faults indeed, but they seemed all more or less related to his dark life-long companion—disease. He was somewhat testy in temper, and his feelings were easily wounded. He had a morbid craving, latterly, for stimulus, and his excessive use of tea decidedly tended to increase his melancholy. In his youth he had probably dipped his shoe in the prevailing licentiousness of the London of that age. But subtracting all this, he was confessedly one of the best of mortal men, and might be said to have lived and died without an enemy. And yet he was supremely, unutterably, demoniacally wretched! What a paradox this would appear, if it were not a stern fact! Many explanations have been attempted. Many have cried out “Calvinism,” and have sought to attach Cowper’s case as a blot to the countenance of a sublime theological system. This is altogether unfair. Cowper was not at all a rigid Calvinist. He maintained, for example, strongly the salvation of the virtuous heathen—and besides, his special delusion had no connexion with the general doctrines of the system of Calvin. Calvinism admits of no such arbitrary and capricious decree, as Cowper imagined to be hanging over his single head. Others have laid all the blame on John Newton. We do not certainly think that he displayed the profoundest wisdom in his management of the poet. But his intentions were good, and even when Cowper, latterly, escaped from his influence, it was with no better result, and he might have said of *all* who sought to cure and cheer him, “Miserable comforters are ye all.” His case, from the beginning, admitted of but one thorough cure, namely, Death. The dark disarrangement of his being could not be altered, unless by being *taken down*. We grant that the disease in his blood was susceptible of increase, as well as of modification. Some have said that the “Water-cure,” had it then existed, might have made him a happy man. No doubt it might have *modified* the symptoms, but the whole case lay beyond it. *That* was, in a single sentence, the case of an entirely and *ab origine* deranged nervous sys-

tem, much tried by circumstances, often ill-managed by his friends, and by himself, and sustained so long in existence, chiefly by his profound sense of religion, by the force of a most masculine understanding, and by one of the best bodily constitutions that poet ever possessed. At this last, we especially wonder. He lived seventy years in that atmosphere of misery; and not only lived, but wrote thousands of the most humorous, refined, and beautiful letters; translated into stern, clear verse, the two masterpieces of Grecian poetry; and created a mass of original song, as remarkable for its *healthy* tone, as for its richness, vigour, simplicity, and freedom! Truly William Cowper was still more a marvellous, than he was a mild and gentle spirit,—stronger, even, than he was amiable—a very Prometheus chained to his rock, let us call him,—the rock being his rugged, deep-rooted woe; the chain his lengthened life; and himself the Titan, in his earnestness, lofty purpose, and poetic power.



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## TABLE TALK.

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Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ  
Abjicito. Hor. Lib. i. Epist. 18.

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### THE ARGUMENT.

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*A.* You told me, I remember, glory, built  
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt;  
The deeds that men admire as half divine,  
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.  
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears  
The laurel that the very lightning spares,  
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,  
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

*B.* I grant that, men continuing what they are,  
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;      10  
And never meant the rule should be applied  
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews, 13  
 Reward his memory, dear to every Muse,  
 Who, with a courage of unshaken root,  
 In honour's field advancing his firm foot,  
 Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,  
 And will prevail or perish in her cause.  
 'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes  
 His portion in the good that Heaven bestows ; 20  
 And when recording History displays  
 Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,  
 Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died,  
 Where duty placed them, at their country's side ;  
 The man that is not moved with what he reads,  
 That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,  
 Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,  
 Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.  
 But let eternal infamy pursue  
 The wretch to nought but his ambition true, 30  
 Who, for the sake of filling with one blast  
 The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.  
 Think yourself station'd on a towering rock,  
 To see a people scatter'd like a flock,  
 Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,  
 With all the savage thirst a tiger feels ;  
 Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette,  
 Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet !  
 The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,  
 Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced ! 40  
 The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,  
 And Death's own scythe, would better speak his power.  
 Then grace the bony phantom in their stead  
 With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade,  
 Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,  
 The same their occupation and success.

*A.* 'Tis your belief the world was made for man ; 47  
 Kings do but reason on the self-same plan :  
 Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,  
 Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

*B.* Seldom, alas ! the power of logic reigns  
 With much sufficiency in royal brains :  
 Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,  
 Wanting its proper base to stand upon.  
 Man made for kings ! those optics are but dim  
 That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.  
 That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,  
 Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.  
 The diadem, with mighty projects lined,  
 To catch renown by ruining mankind, 60  
 Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,  
 Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.

Oh ! bright occasions of dispensing good,  
 How seldom used, how little understood !  
 To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward,  
 Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard,  
 To quell the faction that affronts the throne  
 By silent magnanimity alone ;  
 To nurse with tender care the thriving arts ;  
 Watch every beam Philosophy imparts ; 70  
 To give Religion her unbridled scope,  
 Nor judge by statute a believer's hope ;  
 With close fidelity and love unfeign'd,  
 To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd ;  
 Covetous only of a virtuous praise,  
 His life a lesson to the land he sways ;  
 To touch the sword with conscientious awe,  
 Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw ;  
 To sheath it in the peace-restoring close,  
 With joy beyond what victory bestows,— 80



Blest country ! where these kingly glories shine, 81  
 Blest England ! if this happiness be thine.

*A.* Guard what you say ; the patriotic tribe  
 Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe.

*B.* A bribe ?

The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,  
 To lure me to the baseness of a lie ;  
 And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast),  
 The lie that flatters I abhor the most.  
 Those arts be theirs who hate his gentle reign ; 90  
 But he that loves him has no need to feign.

*A.* Your smooth eulogium to one crown address'd,  
 Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

*B.* Quevedo,<sup>1</sup> as he tells his sober tale,  
 Ask'd, when in Hell, to see the royal jail ;  
 Approved their method in all other things,  
 " But where, good sir, do you confine your kings ?"  
 " There "—said his guide—" the group is full in view."  
 " Indeed !" replied the Don—" there are but few."  
 His black interpreter the charge disdain'd— 100  
 " Few, fellow ?—there are all that ever reign'd."

Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike  
 The guilty and not guilty both alike.  
 I grant the sarcasm is too severe,  
 And we can readily refute it here,  
 While Alfred's name, the father of his age,  
 And the Sixth Edward's grace the historic page.

*A.* Kings then at last have but the lot of all ;  
 By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

*B.* True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays  
 His quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise ; 111

<sup>1</sup> ' Quevedo : ' there is no such passage in the original Spanish. It has probably been added by a translator.

And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write, 112  
 Adds, as he can, his tributary mite :

A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,  
 A monarch's errors are forbidden game.  
 Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,  
 And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,  
 The fleeting forms of majesty engage  
 Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage ;  
 Then leave their crimes for history to scan, 120  
 And ask, with busy scorn, Was this the man ?

I pity kings, whom worship waits upon  
 Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne ;  
 Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,  
 And binds a wreath about their baby brows ;  
 Whom education stiffens into state,  
 And death awakens from that dream too late.  
 Oh ! if Servility with supple knees,  
 Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please ;  
 If smooth Dissimulation, skill'd to grace 130

A devil's purpose with an angel's face ;  
 If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,  
 Encompassing his throne a few short years ;  
 If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,  
 That wants no driving, and disdains the lead ;  
 If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,  
 Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,  
 Shouldering and standing as if stuck to stone,  
 While condescending majesty looks on ;—  
 If monarchy consist in such base things, 140  
 Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,  
 Even when he labours for his country's good ;  
 To see a band call'd patriot for no cause,  
 But that they catch at popular applause,

Careless of all the anxiety he feels, 146  
 Hook disappointment on the public wheels ;  
 With all their flippant fluency of tongue,  
 Most confident, when palpably most wrong ;—  
 If this be kingly, then farewell for me  
 All kingship ; and may I be poor and free !

To be the Table Talk of clubs up-stairs,  
 To which the unwash'd artificer repairs ;  
 To indulge his genius after long fatigue,  
 By diving into cabinet intrigue ;  
 (For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,  
 To him is relaxation, and mere play ;)  
 To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,  
 But to be rudely censured when they fail ;  
 To doubt the love his favourites may pretend, 160  
 And in reality to find no friend ;  
 If he indulge a cultivated taste,  
 His galleries with the works of art well graced,  
 To hear it call'd extravagance and waste ;—  
 If these attendants, and if such as these,  
 Must follow royalty, then welcome ease !  
 However humble and confined the sphere,  
 Happy the state that has not these to fear !

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt  
 On situations that they never felt, 170  
 Start up sagacious, cover'd with the dust  
 Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,  
 And prate and preach about what others prove,  
 As if the world and they were hand and glove.  
 Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares ;  
 They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs ;  
 Poets, of all men, ever least regret  
 Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.

Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse 179  
 The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,  
 No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,  
 Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.

*B.* Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay  
 To turn the course of Helicon that way ;  
 Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide  
 Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,  
 Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse  
 The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.

*A.* Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme  
 To themes more pertinent, if less sublime. 190

When ministers and ministerial arts ;  
 Patriots, who love good places at their hearts ;  
 When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,  
 Or doing nothing with a deal of skill ;  
 Generals, who will not conquer when they may,  
 Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay ;  
 When Freedom wounded almost to despair,  
 Though Discontent alone can find out where ;—  
 When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,  
 I hear as mute as if a siren sung. 200

Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains  
 A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains ?  
 That were a theme might animate the dead,  
 And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

*B.* The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude  
 Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.  
 They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,  
 Who seek it in his climate and his frame.  
 Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here  
 With stern severity deals out the year. 210  
 Winter invades the spring, and often pours  
 A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;

Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams, 213  
 Ungenial blasts attending, curl the streams ;  
 The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork  
 With double toil, and shiver at their work.  
 Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,  
 She rears her favourite man of all mankind.  
 His form robust, and of elastic tone,  
 Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone, 220  
 Supplies with warm activity and force  
 A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.  
 Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty, inspires  
 And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.  
 Patient of constitutional control,  
 He bears it with meek manliness of soul ;  
 But if authority grow wanton, woe  
 To him that treads upon his free-born toe !  
 One step beyond the boundary of the laws  
 Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause. 230  
 Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,  
 Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard ;  
 And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,  
 Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.  
 Born in a climate softer far than ours,  
 Not form'd like us, with such Herculean powers,  
 The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,  
 Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,  
 Is always happy, reign whoever may,  
 And laughs the sense of misery far away. 240  
 He drinks his simple beverage with a gust ;  
 And, feasting on an onion and a crust,  
 We never feel the alacrity and joy  
 With which he shouts and carols, *Vive le Roi !*  
 Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee,  
 As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows, 247  
 Less on exterior things than most suppose.  
 Vigilant over all that he has made,  
 Kind Providence attends with gracious aid ;  
 Bids equity throughout his works prevail,  
 And weighs the nations in an even scale ;  
 He can encourage slavery to a smile,  
 And fill with discontent a British isle.

*A.* Freeman and slave, then, if the case be such,  
 Stand on a level ; and you prove too much.  
 If all men indiscriminately share  
 His fostering power and tutelary care,  
 As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,  
 As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land. 260

*B.* No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,  
 That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.  
 The mind attains beneath her happy reign,  
 The growth that Nature meant she should attain ;  
 The varied fields of science, ever new,  
 Opening and wider opening on her view,  
 She ventures onward with a prosperous force,  
 While no base fear impedes her in her course.  
 Religion, richest favour of the skies,  
 Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes ; 270  
 No shades of superstition blot the day,  
 Liberty chases all that gloom away ;  
 The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,  
 Free to prove all things and hold fast the best,  
 Learns much ; and to a thousand listening minds,  
 Communicates with joy the good she finds ;  
 Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show  
 His manly forehead to the fiercest foe ;  
 Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,  
 His spirits rising as his toils increase, 280

Guards well what arts and industry have won, 281  
 And Freedom claims him for her first-born son.  
 Slaves fight for what were better cast away—  
 The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway ;  
 But they that fight for freedom, undertake  
 The noblest cause mankind can have at stake ;  
 Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call  
 A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.  
 O Liberty ! the prisoner's pleasing dream,  
 The poet's Muse, his passion, and his theme ; 290  
 Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse,  
 Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse ;  
 Heroic song from thy free touch acquires  
 Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires :  
 Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,  
 And I will sing, if Liberty be there ;  
 And I will sing, at Liberty's dear feet,  
 In Afric's torrid clime or India's fiercest heat.  
*A.* Sing where you please ; in such a cause I grant  
 An English poet's privilege to rant ; 300  
 But is not Freedom—at least, is not ours  
 Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,  
 Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,  
 Spread anarchy and terror all around ?  
*B.* Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse  
 For bounding and curvetting in his course ?  
 Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,  
 He break away, and seek the distant plain ?  
 No. His high mettle, under good control,  
 Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal. 310  
 Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts ;  
 Let magistrates alert perform their parts,  
 Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,  
 As if their duty were a desperate task ;

Let active laws apply the needful curb, 315  
 To guard the peace that riot would disturb ;  
 And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,  
 Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.  
 When Tumult lately burst his prison door,  
 And set plebeian thousands in a roar ; 320  
 When he usurp'd Authority's just place,  
 And dared to look his master in the face ;  
 When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy !  
 And blazing London seem'd a second Troy,—  
 Liberty blush'd, and hung her drooping head,  
 Beheld their progress with the deepest dread,  
 Blush'd, that effects like these she should produce,  
 Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.  
 She loses in such storms her very name,  
 And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame. 330  
     Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;  
 Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;  
 May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend  
 Betray thee, while professing to defend !  
 Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;  
 Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care !  
     *A.* Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found  
 Where most they flourish, upon English ground,  
 The country's need have scantily supplied ;  
 And the last left the scene, when Chatham died. 340  
     *B.* Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,  
 Though the chief actor died upon the stage.  
 In him Demosthenes was heard again ;  
 Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;  
 She clothed him with authority and awe,  
 Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.  
 His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,  
 And all his country beaming in his face,



He stood, as some inimitable hand 349  
 Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.  
 No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose  
 Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose ;  
 And every venal stickler for the yoke  
 Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.  
     Such men are raised to station and command,  
 When Providence means mercy to a land.  
 He speaks, and they appear ; to him they owe  
 Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,  
 To manage with address, to seize with power  
 The crisis of a dark decisive hour. 360  
 So Gideon earn'd a victory not his own,  
 Subserviency his praise, and that alone.  
     Poor England ! thou art a devoted deer,  
 Beset with every ill but that of fear.  
 The nations hunt ; all mark thee for a prey ;  
 They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.  
 Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd ;  
 Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next ?  
 Alas ! the tide of pleasure sweeps along  
 All that should be the boast of British song. 370  
 'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,  
 The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.  
 Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,  
 Patterns of every virtue, every grace,  
 Confess'd a God ; they kneel'd before they fought,  
 And praised him in the victories he wrought.  
 Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth  
 Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth ;  
 Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,  
 Is but the fire without the sacrifice. 380  
 The stream that feeds the wellspring of the heart  
 Not more invigorates life's noblest part,

Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine 383  
 The powers that sin has brought to a decline.

*A.* The inestimable estimate of Brown  
 Rose like a paper-kite, and charm'd the town ;  
 But measures, plann'd and executed well,  
 Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.  
 He trod the very self-same ground you tread,  
 And victory refuted all he said. 390

*B.* And yet his judgment was not framed amiss ;  
 Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—  
 He thought the dying hour already come,  
 And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,  
 Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must ;  
 And that a nation shamefully debased  
 Will be despised and trampled on at last,  
 Unless sweet penitence her powers renew,  
 Is truth, if history itself be true. 400

There is a time, and Justice marks the date,  
 For long-forbearing clemency to wait ;  
 That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt  
 Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt.  
 If Mercy then put by the threatening blow,  
 Must she perform the same kind office now ?  
 May she ! and if offended Heaven be still  
 Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.

'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,  
 The tempest of tumultuary joys, 410  
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay  
 Will win her visits or engage her stay ;  
 Prayer only, and the penitential tear,  
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)  
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame ;

When infamous Venality, grown bold, 417  
 Writes on his bosom, *To be let or sold* ;  
 When Perjury, that Heaven-defying vice,  
 Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,  
 Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,  
 To turn a penny in the way of trade ;  
 When Avarice starves (and never hides his face)  
 Two or three millions of the human race,  
 And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,  
 Though conscience will have twinges now and then ;  
 When profanation of the sacred cause  
 In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,  
 Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost,  
 In all that wars against that title most : 430  
 What follows next let cities of great name,  
 And regions long since desolate, proclaim ;  
 Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome  
 Speak to the present times, and times to come ;  
 They cry aloud in every careless ear,  
 " Stop, while ye may ; suspend your mad career !  
 O learn from our example and our fate,—  
 Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late ! "

Not only Vice disposes and prepares 440  
 The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,  
 To stoop to Tyranny's usurp'd command,  
 And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand  
 (A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws  
 Unchangeably connected with its cause) ;  
 But Providence himself will intervene,  
 To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.  
 All are his instruments ; each form of war,  
 What burns at home, or threatens from afar ;  
 Nature in arms, her elements at strife,  
 The storms that overset the joys of life, 450

Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land, 451  
 And waste it at the bidding of his hand.  
 He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars  
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;  
 The standards of all nations are unfurl'd ;  
 She has one foe, and that one foe the world.  
 And if he doom that people with a frown,  
 And mark them with the seal of wrath press'd down,  
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough,  
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof ; 460  
 Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars above,  
 But nothing scares them from the course they love ;  
 To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,  
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,  
 With mad rapidity and unconcern,  
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.  
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail —  
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail ;  
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;  
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ; 470  
 But all they trust in withers, as it must,  
 When He commands in whom they place no trust.  
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast  
 A long despised, but now victorious, host ;  
 Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge  
 The noble sweep of all their privilege,  
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock,  
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.  
*A.* Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,  
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ? 480  
*B.* I know the mind that feels indeed the fire  
 The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre,  
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,  
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.

If human woes her soft attention claim, 485  
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame,  
 She pours a sensibility divine  
 Along the nerve of every feeling line.  
 But if a deed not tamely to be borne  
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn, 490  
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,  
 The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.  
 So, when remote futurity is brought  
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,  
 A terrible sagacity informs  
 The poet's heart ; he looks to distant storms,  
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,  
 And, arm'd with strength surpassing human powers,  
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,  
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan. 500  
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name  
 Of prophet and of poet was the same ;  
 Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,  
 And every hallow'd Druid was a bard.  
 But no prophetic fires to me belong,  
 I play with syllables, and sport in song.  
*A.* At Westminster, where little poets strive  
 To set a distich upon six and five,  
 Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense,  
 And makes his pupils proud with silver pence, 510  
 I was a poet too : but modern taste  
 Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,  
 That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,  
 Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.  
 Thus, all success depending on an ear,  
 And thinking I might purchase it too dear,  
 If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,  
 And truth cut short to make a period round,

I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse  
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse. 519

*B.* Thus reputation is a spur to wit,  
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.  
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course  
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force ;  
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,  
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.

When labour and when dulness, club in hand,  
Like the two figures at St Dunstan's stand,  
Beating alternately, in measured time,  
The clockwork tintinnabulum of rhyme, 530  
Exact and regular the sounds will be,  
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,  
To him who strains his all into a song,  
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,  
All birks and braes, though he was never there ;  
Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,  
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains ;  
A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke—  
An art contrived to advertise a joke, 540  
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,  
Not in the words—but in the gap between ;  
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,  
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low,  
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.  
Neglected talents rust into decay,  
And every effort ends in pushpin play.  
The man that means success, should soar above  
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ; 550  
Else, summoning the Muse to such a theme,  
The fruit of all her labour is whipp'd cream.

As if an eagle flew aloft, and then— 553  
 Stoop'd from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.  
 As if the poet, purposing to wed,  
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,  
 And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard ;  
 To carry nature lengths unknown before,  
 To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more. 560  
 Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,  
 And shot a dayspring into distant climes,  
 Ennobling every region that he chose ;  
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose,  
 And, tedious years of Gothic darkness past,  
 Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.  
 Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,  
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

*A.* Is genius only found in epic lays ?  
 Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise. 570  
 Make their heroic powers your own at once,  
 Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

*B.* These were the chief ; each interval of night  
 Was graced with many an undulating light.  
 In less illustrious bards his beauty shone  
 A meteor or a star ; in these, the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,  
 While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.  
 Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,  
 Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly ; 580  
 Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,  
 An ell or two of prospect we command ;  
 But never peep beyond the thorny bound,  
 Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart  
 Had faded, poetry was not an art ;

Language, above all teaching, or if taught, 587  
 Only by gratitude and glowing thought,  
 Elegant as simplicity, and warm  
 As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,  
 Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,  
 By low ambition and the thirst of praise,  
 Was natural as is the flowing stream,  
 And yet magnificent—a God the theme!  
 That theme on earth exhausted, though above  
 'Tis found as everlasting as his love,  
 Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things—  
 The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings ;  
 But still, while virtue kindled his delight,  
 The song was moral, and so far was right. 600  
 'Twas thus till Luxury seduced the mind,  
 To joys less innocent, as less refined ;  
 Then Genius danced a bacchanal, he crown'd  
 The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound  
 His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field  
 Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,  
 The victim of his own lascivious fires,  
 And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.  
 Anacreon, Horace, play'd in Greece and Rome  
 This bedlam part ; and others nearer home. 610  
 When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reign'd  
 The proud protector of the power he gain'd,  
 Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,  
 Parent of manners like herself severe,  
 Drew a rough copy of the Christian face  
 Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace ;  
 The dark and sullen humour of the time  
 Judged every effort of the Muse a crime ;  
 Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,  
 Was lumber in an age so void of taste. 620



But when the second Charles assumed the sway, 621  
 And arts revived beneath a softer day,  
 Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,  
 The mind, released from too constrain'd a nerve,  
 Flew to its first position with a spring,  
 That made the vaulted roofs of Pleasure ring.  
 His court, the dissolute and hateful school  
 Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,  
 Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid  
 With brutal lust as ever Circe made. 630  
 From these a long succession, in the rage  
 Of rank obscenity, debauch'd their age ;  
 Nor ceased till, ever anxious to redress  
 The abuses of her sacred charge, the Press,  
 The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train  
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,  
 And claim the palm for purity of song,  
 That lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.  
 Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,  
 That neither gave, nor would endure, offence, 640  
 Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,  
 The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.  
 In front of these came Addison. In him  
 Humour in holiday and sightly trim,  
 Sublimity and Attic taste combined,  
 To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.  
 Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,  
 In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,  
 Gave Virtue and Morality a grace,  
 That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face, 650  
 Levied a tax of wonder and applause,  
 Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.  
 But he (his musical finesse was such,  
 So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)

Made poetry a mere mechanic art ; 655  
 And every warbler has his tune by heart.  
 Nature imparting her satiric gift,  
 Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,  
 With droll sobriety they raised a smile  
 At Folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while. 660  
 That constellation set, the world in vain  
 Must hope to look upon their like again.

*A.* Are we then left ?—

*B.* Not wholly in the dark :

Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,  
 Sufficient to redeem the modern race  
 From total night and absolute disgrace.  
 While servile trick and imitative knack  
 Confine the million in the beaten track,  
 Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road, 670  
 Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one,  
 Short his career indeed, but ably run,—  
 Churchill ; himself unconscious of his powers,  
 In penury consumed his idle hours,  
 And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,  
 Was left to spring by vigour of his own.  
 Lifted at length, by dignity of thought  
 And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,  
 He laid his head in Luxury's soft lap, 680  
 And took too often there his easy nap.  
 If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,  
 'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.  
 Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,  
 Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,  
 Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,  
 Always at speed, and never drawing bit,

He struck the lyre in such a careless mood, 688  
 And so disdain'd the rules he understood,  
 The laurel seem'd to wait on his command ;  
 He snatch'd it rudely from the Muses' hand.

Nature, exerting an unwearied power,  
 Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower,  
 Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads  
 The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads :  
 She fills profuse ten thousand little throats  
 With music, modulating all their notes,  
 And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,  
 With artless airs and concerts of her own :  
 But seldom (as if fearful of expense) 700

Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—  
 Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,  
 Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought ;  
 Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky  
 Brings colours dipp'd in heaven, that never die ;  
 A soul exalted above earth, a mind  
 Skill'd in the characters that form mankind ;—  
 And as the sun, in rising beauty dress'd,  
 Looks to the westward from the dappled east,  
 And marks, whatever clouds may interpose, 710  
 Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close ;  
 An eye like his to catch the distant goal,  
 Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,  
 Like his to shed illuminating rays  
 On every scene and subject it surveys,—  
 Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,  
 And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

Pity Religion has so seldom found  
 A skilful guide into poetic ground !  
 The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,  
 And every Muse attend her in her way. 721

Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend, 722  
 And many a compliment politely penn'd ;  
 But, unattired in that becoming vest  
 Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,  
 Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,  
 A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.  
 The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,  
 Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread ;  
 Satire has long since done his best, and curst 730  
 And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst ;  
 Fancy has sported all her powers away  
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;  
 And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,  
 Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.  
 'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,  
 Touch'd with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,  
 And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,  
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,  
 That He who died below and reigns above, 740  
 Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.  
 For, after all, if merely to beguile,  
 By flowing numbers and a flowery style,  
 The tedium that the lazy rich endure,  
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure ;  
 Or, if to see the name of idol self,  
 Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,  
 To float a bubble on the breath of fame,  
 Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim,  
 Debased to servile purposes of pride, 750  
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !  
 The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,  
 To trace him in his Word, his works, his ways ;  
 Then spread the rich discovery, and invite  
 Mankind to share in the divine delight ;

Distorted from its use and just design, 756  
 To make the pitiful possessor shine ;  
 To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair  
 Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,  
 Is profanation of the basest kind—  
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

*A.* Hail, Sternhold, then ; and Hopkins, hail !—

*B.* Amen.

If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen ;  
 If acrimony, slander, and abuse,  
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;  
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,  
 With all that fancy can invent to please,  
 Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,  
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all. 770

*A.* 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,  
 To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

*B.* No matter ;—we could shift when they were not ;  
 And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

# THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

Si quid loquar audiendum.—HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

## THE ARGUMENT.

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SING, Muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,  
May find a Muse to grace it with a song),  
By what unseen and unsuspected arts  
The serpent Error twines round human hearts ;  
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,  
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,  
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm  
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.  
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine !  
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine ;  
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,  
And observation taught me, I would teach.

10

Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,  
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,

Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend, 15  
 Can trace her mazy windings to their end ;  
 Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,  
 Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.

The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,  
 Falls soporific on the listless ear ; 20  
 Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display,  
 Shines as it runs, but, grasp'd at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,  
 From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,  
 Free in his will to choose or to refuse,  
 Man may improve the crisis, or abuse :  
 Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,  
 Say, to what bar amenable were man ?

With nought in charge, he could betray no trust ;  
 And, if he fell, would fall because he must ; 30  
 If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,  
 His recompence in both unjust alike.

Divine authority within his breast  
 Brings every thought, word, action, to the test ;  
 Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,  
 As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.

Heaven from above, and conscience from within,  
 Cries in his startled ear—Abstain from sin !  
 The world around solicits his desire,

And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire ; 40  
 While, all his purposes and steps to guard,  
 Peace follows virtue as its sure reward ;  
 And Pleasure brings as surely in her train  
 Remorse, and sorrow, and vindictive pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,  
 Must be supplied with objects of his choice.  
 Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,  
 Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight :

These open on the spot their honey'd store ; 49  
 Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.  
 His unexhausted mine the sordid vice  
 Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.  
 Here various motives his ambition raise—  
 Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise ;  
 There Beauty woos him with expanded arms ;  
 Even Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined,  
 Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,  
 Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,  
 Or lead him devious from the path of truth ; 60  
 Hourly allurements on his passions press,  
 Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark ! how it floats upon the dewy air ;—  
 O what a dying, dying close was there !  
 'Tis harmony from yon sequester'd bower,  
 Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour !  
 Long ere the charioteer of day had run  
 His morning course, the enchantment was begun ;  
 And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,  
 Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain. 70

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,  
 That virtue points to ? Can a life thus spent  
 Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,  
 Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies ?  
 Ye devotees to your adored employ,  
 Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,  
 Love makes the music of the blest above,  
 Heaven's harmony is universal love ;  
 And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,  
 And lenient as soft opiates to the mind, 80  
 Leave vice and folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears ; the sportsman and his train  
 Speckle the bosom of the distant plain ;



'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs, 84  
 Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,  
 For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,  
 True beagle as the stanchest hound he keeps.  
 Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,  
 He takes offence, and wonders what you mean ;  
 The joy, the danger and the toil o'er pays ; 90  
 'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.  
 Again impetuous to the field he flies,  
 Leaps every fence but one, there falls, and dies ;  
 Like a slain deer, the tumbril brings him home,  
 Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,  
 Lights of the world, and stars of human race,—  
 But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,  
 Prodigies ominous, and view'd with fear ;  
 The comet's baneful influence is a dream, 100  
 Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.  
 What then ! are appetites and lusts laid down  
 With the same ease that man puts on his gown ?  
 Will avarice and concupiscence give place,  
 Charm'd by the sounds—your Reverence, or your Grace ?  
 No. But his own engagement binds him fast ;  
 Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,  
 What atheists call him—a designing knave,  
 A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.  
 Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest, 110  
 A cassock'd huntsman and a fiddling priest !  
 He from Italian songsters takes his cue :  
 Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.  
 He takes the field, the master of the pack  
 Cries, “ Well done, Saint ! ” and claps him on the back.  
 Is this the path of sanctity ? Is this  
 To stand a waymark in the road to bliss ?

Himself a wanderer from the narrow way, 118  
 His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray ?  
 Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,  
 Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth Street !  
 The sacred function, in your hands is made,  
 Sad sacrilege ! no function, but a trade !

Occiduus is a pastor of renown ;  
 When he has pray'd and preach'd the Sabbath down,  
 With wire and catgut he concludes the day,  
 Quavering and semiquavering care away.  
 The full concerto swells upon your ear ;  
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear  
 The Babylonian tyrant with a nod 130  
 Had summon'd them to serve his golden god.  
 So well that thought the employment seems to suit,  
 Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.

O fie ! 'tis evangelical and pure :  
 Observe each face, how sober and demure !  
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien,  
 Chins fallen, and not an eyeball to be seen.  
 Still I insist, though music heretofore  
 Has charm'd me much, not even Occiduus more,  
 Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet 140  
 For Sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock  
 Resort to this example as a rock ;  
 There stand and justify the foul abuse  
 Of Sabbath hours, with plausible excuse ?  
 If apostolic gravity be free  
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we ?  
 If he the tinkling harpsichord regards  
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?  
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay ! 150  
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

O Italy!—thy Sabbaths will be soon 152  
 Our Sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon.  
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,  
 Ours parcell'd out, as thine have ever been,  
 God's worship and the mountebank between.  
 What says the prophet?—Let that day be blest  
 With holiness and consecrated rest.  
 Pastime and business both it should exclude,  
 And bar the door the moment they intrude ; 160  
 Nobly distinguish'd above all the six,  
 By deeds in which the world must never mix.  
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,  
 A day of luxury, observed aright,  
 When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,  
 Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.  
 But triflers are engaged, and cannot come ;  
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*  
 O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,  
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again ! 170  
 Cards, with what rapture, and the polish'd die,  
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply !  
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon  
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.  
 Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,  
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,  
 Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne,  
 Views constellations brighter than her own.  
 'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,  
 The balm of care, Elysium of the mind. 180  
 Innocent ! Oh, if venerable Time  
 Slain at the foot of Pleasure, be no crime,  
 Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,  
 Let Comus rise Archbishop of the land,

Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe, 185  
Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,  
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.  
Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,  
Not of the moral, but the dancing school, 190

Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone  
As tragical as others at his own.  
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,  
Then kill a constable, and drink five more ;  
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,  
And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.  
Go, fool, and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead  
Your cause before a bar you little dread ;  
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die  
Is far too just to pass the trifler by. 200

Both baby-featured, and of infant size,  
View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,  
Folly and Innocence are so alike,  
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.  
Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,  
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air ;  
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,  
Delights us, by engaging our respect.

Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,  
Receives from her both appetite and treat ; 210  
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,  
His benefactress blushes at the deed.  
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,  
Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.  
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare !  
Heaven bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.  
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,  
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan :

He snuffs far off the anticipated joy ; 219  
 Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ ;  
 Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,  
 Oh, nauseous !—an emetic for a whet !—  
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good ?  
 Temperance were no virtue if he could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,  
 Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all.  
 And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,  
 Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.

Is man then only for his torment placed,  
 The centre of delights he may not taste ? 230  
 Like fabled Tantalus, condemn'd to hear  
 The precious stream still purling in his ear,  
 Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst  
 With prohibition and perpetual thirst ?

No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense !  
 The precept that enjoins him abstinence,  
 Forbids him none but the licentious joy,  
 Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.  
 Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid  
 In every bosom where her nest is made, 240  
 Hatch'd by the beams of Truth, denies him rest,  
 And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.  
 No pleasure ? Are domestic comforts dead ?  
 Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled ?  
 Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame  
 Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame ?  
 All these belong to virtue, and all prove  
 That virtue has a title to your love.

Have you no touch of pity, that the poor  
 Stand starved at your inhospitable door ? 250  
 Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,  
 Need help, let honest industry provide.

Earn, if you want ; if you abound, impart : 253  
 These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.  
 No pleasure ? Has some sickly eastern waste  
 Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast ?  
 Can British Paradise no scenes afford  
 To please her sated and indifferent lord ?  
 Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run  
 Quite to the lees ? And has religion none ? 260  
 Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,  
 And judge you from the kennel and the sty.  
 Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,  
 Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain ;  
 Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off  
 Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough ?  
 Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows  
 Your pleasures, with no curses in the close !  
 Pleasure admitted in undue degree  
 Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free. 270  
 'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice  
 Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use ;  
 Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,  
 And woman, lovely woman, does the same.  
 The heart, surrender'd to the ruling power  
 Of some ungovern'd passion every hour,  
 Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway,  
 And all their deep impressions, wear away ;  
 So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,  
 Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last. 280  
 The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,  
 In rushes folly with a full-moon tide ;  
 Then welcome errors, of whatever size,  
 To justify it by a thousand lies.  
 As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,  
 And hides the ruin that it feeds upon ;

So sophistry cleaves close to and protects  
 Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects. 287  
 Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,  
 First wish to be imposed on, and then are ;  
 And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,  
 Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.  
 Not more industrious are the just and true  
 To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—  
 The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,  
 And call her charms to public notice forth—  
 Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race  
 To hide the shocking features of her face :  
 Her form with dress and lotion they repair,  
 Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair. 300

The sacred implement I now employ  
 Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy ;  
 A trifle, if it move but to amuse ;  
 But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,  
 Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,  
 It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,  
 Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads ;  
 Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,  
 Snivelling and drivelling folly without end ; 310  
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream  
 With sentimental frippery and dream,  
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net  
 By some lewd earl, or rake-hell baronet ;  
 Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,  
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,  
 And teach her, inexperienced yet and green,  
 To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen ;  
 Who, kindling a combustion of desire,  
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire ; 320

Though all your engineering proves in vain, 321  
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again—  
 Oh that a verse had power, and could command  
 Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land,  
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,  
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there !  
 Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,  
 And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil,  
 Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust  
 And relish of their pleasure all to lust. 330

But the Muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view  
 A quarry more important still than you ;  
 Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,  
 Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius !<sup>1</sup> all the Muses weep for thee ;  
 But every tear shall scald thy memory.  
 The Graces too, while Virtue at their shrine  
 Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,  
 Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,  
 Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest. 340  
 Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,  
 Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth,  
 To purge and skim away the filth of vice,  
 That, so refined, it might the more entice,  
 Then pour it on the morals of thy son,  
 To taint his heart, was worthy of thine own !  
 Now, while the poison all high life pervades,  
 Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,  
 One, and one only, charged with deep regret,  
 That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet ; 350  
 One sad epistle thence may cure mankind  
 Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

<sup>1</sup> ' Petronius : ' Lord Chesterfield.



'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears, 353  
 Our most important are our earliest years :  
 The mind, impressible and soft, with ease  
 Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,  
 And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue  
 That Education gives her, false or true.  
 Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong ;  
 Man's coltish disposition asks the thong ; 360  
 And without discipline the favourite child,  
 Like a neglected forester, runs wild.  
 But we, as if good qualities would grow  
 Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow ;  
 We give some Latin and a smatch of Greek,  
 Teach him to fence and figure twice a week ;  
 And having done, we think, the best we can,  
 Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.  
 From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home ;  
 And thence with all convenient speed to Rome, 370  
 With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay,  
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day ;  
 With memorandum-book for every town,  
 And every post, and where the chaise broke down ;  
 His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,  
 With much to learn, but nothing to impart ;  
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,  
 Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.  
 Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,  
 With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare, 380  
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,  
 And steeples towering high, much like our own ;  
 But show peculiar light by many a grin  
 At Popish practices observed within.  
 Ere long, some bowing, smirking, smart abbé,  
 Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way ;

And, being always primed with politesse 387  
 For men of their appearance and address,  
 With much compassion undertakes the task  
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask ;  
 Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,  
 Such as, when legible, were never read,  
 But being canker'd now and half worn out,  
 Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt :  
 Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—  
 Defective only in his Roman nose ;  
 Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,  
 Models of Herculanean pots and pans ;  
 And sells them medals, which, if neither rare  
 Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care. 400

Strange the recital ! from whatever cause  
 His great improvement and new lights he draws,  
 The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,  
 But teems with powers he never felt before :  
 Whether increased momentum, and the force  
 With which from clime to clime he sped his course  
 (As axles sometimes kindle as they go),  
 Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow ;  
 Or whether clearer skies and softer air,  
 That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair, 410  
 Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,  
 Unfolded genially and spread the man ;  
 Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,  
 By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,  
 How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,  
 Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,  
 And wisdom falls before exterior grace :  
 We slight the precious kernel of the stone,  
 And toil to polish its rough coat alone. 420

A just deportment, manners graced with ease, 421  
 Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,  
 Are qualities that seem to comprehend  
 Whatever parents, guardians, schools intend ;  
 Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,  
 Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refined ;  
 Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash  
 With indolence and luxury, is trash ;  
 While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,  
 Seems verging fast towards the female side. 430  
 Learning itself, received into a mind  
 By nature weak, or viciously inclined,  
 Serves but to lead philosophers astray,  
 Where children would with ease discern the way.  
 And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,  
 To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,  
 The worst is—Scripture warp'd from its intent.  
 The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased,  
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased ;  
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far, 440  
 Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,  
 It suffers interruption and delay,  
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.  
 When some hypothesis, absurd and vain,  
 Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,  
 The text that sorts not with his darling whim,  
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.  
 The will made subject to a lawless force,  
 All is irregular, and out of course ;  
 And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way, 450  
 Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.  
 A critic on the sacred book should be  
 Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free ;

Free from the wayward bias bigots feel, 454  
 From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal :  
 But above all (or let the wretch refrain,  
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane),  
 Free from the domineering power of lust :  
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address, 460  
 Thou god of our idolatry, the Press ?  
 By thee, religion, liberty, and laws,  
 Exert their influence, and advance their cause ;  
 By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,  
 Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell ;  
 Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise ;  
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies ;  
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,  
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee !

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest 470  
 Till half mankind were like himself possess'd.  
 Philosophers, who darken and put out  
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt ;  
 Church quacks, with passions under no command,  
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband ;  
 Discoverers of they know not what, confined  
 Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;  
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,  
 Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.

The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around, 480  
 Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound ;  
 Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,  
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food :  
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,  
 Even Leuwenhoeck himself would stand aghast,  
 Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,  
 And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.

Is this hyperbole? The world well known, 488  
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes  
From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes,  
And therefore prints :—himself but half deceived,  
Till others have the soothing tale believed.

Hence comment after comment, spun as fine  
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line ;  
Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey,  
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.

If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,  
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend ;  
If languages and copies all cry, No !— 500  
Somebody proved it centuries ago.

Like trout pursued, the critic in despair  
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.  
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly  
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),  
With all the simple and unletter'd poor,  
Admire his learning, and almost adore.

Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,  
With such fine words familiar to his tongue. 510

Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause, 510  
I should deserve to forfeit all applause),  
Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence  
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense  
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),  
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,  
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.  
Committed once into the public arms,  
The baby seems to smile with added charms.  
Like something precious ventured far from shore, 520  
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.

He views it with complacency supreme, 522  
 Solicits kind attention to his dream ;  
 And daily more enamour'd of the cheat,  
 Kneels, and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit.  
 So one,<sup>1</sup> whose story serves at least to show  
 Men loved their own productions long ago,  
 Woo'd an unfeeling statue for his wife,  
 Nor rested till the gods had given it life.  
 If some mere driveller suck the sugar'd fib, 530  
 One that still needs his leading-string and bib,  
 And praise his genius, he is soon repaid  
 In praise applied to the same part—his head.  
 For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,  
 Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,  
 Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,  
 Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke :  
 Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.  
 The creature is so sure to kick and bite, 540  
 A muleteer 's the man to set him right.  
 First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,  
 Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.  
 Tell him he wanders ; that his error leads  
 To fatal ills ; that, though the path he treads  
 Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,  
 Death and the pains of Hell attend him there :  
 In vain ; the slave of arrogance and pride,  
 He has no hearing on the prudent side.  
 His still refuted quirks he still repeats, 550  
 New raised objections with new quibbles meets ;  
 Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,  
 He dies disputing, and the contest ends—  
 But not the mischiefs ; they, still left behind,  
 Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.

<sup>1</sup> 'One : ' Pygmalion.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill, 556  
 Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will,  
 And, with a clear and shining lamp supplied,  
 First put it out, then take it for a guide.  
 Halting on crutches of unequal size,  
 One leg by truth supported, one by lies,  
 They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,  
 Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,  
 And these, reciprocally, those again.  
 The mind and conduct mutually imprint  
 And stamp their image in each other's mint :  
 Each, sire and dam, of an infernal race,  
 Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view, 570  
 Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.  
 For though ere yet the shaft is on the wing,  
 Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,  
 It err but little from the intended line,  
 It falls at last far wide of his design :  
 So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,  
 Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye ;  
 That prize belongs to none but the sincere,  
 The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup, 580  
 He that sips often, at last drinks it up.  
 Habits are soon assumed, but when we strive  
 To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.  
 Call'd to the temple of impure delight,  
 He that abstains, and he alone, does right.  
 If a wish wander that way, call it home ;  
 He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.  
 But if you pass the threshold, you are caught ;  
 Die then, if power Almighty save you not !

There hardening by degrees, till double steel'd, 590  
 Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd ;  
 Then laugh at all you trembled at before  
 And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,  
 Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—  
 That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense :  
 If clemency revolted by abuse  
 Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence, when they will,  
 The storm of passion, and say, *Peace, be still* ;  
 But *Thus far and no farther*, when address'd 600  
 To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,  
 Implies authority that never can,  
 That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, Muse, forbear ; long flights forebode a fall ;  
 Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies !  
 He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies ;  
 And he that will be cheated to the last,  
 Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast.  
 But if the wanderer his mistake discern, 610  
 Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,  
 Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss  
 For ever and for ever ? No—the Cross !  
 There, and there only (though the deist rave,  
 And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave) ;  
 There, and there only, is the power to save.  
 There no delusive hope invites despair,  
 No mockery meets you, no deception there.  
 The spells and charms that blinded you before,  
 All vanish there, and fascinate no more. 620

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice,—  
 The Cross, once seen, is death to every vice :  
 Else He that hung there, suffer'd all his pain,  
 Bled, groan'd, and agonized, and died in vain.



# TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ.—HOR. Lib. ii. Ep. 1.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Error leads to destruction, 1—Grace conducts to righteousness and peace, 17—Its offers despised, 32—The self-complacency of the Pharisee, 44—Humility of the true Christian, 66—Works of righteousness of the hermit and Brahmin alike condemned, 79—A sanctimonious prude, 131—Cheerfulness and freedom of true piety, 171—Willing obedience the test of love, 197—The gospel the sure refuge of the sinner, 238—False grounds of peace, 283—Infidelity; Voltaire, 301—Simplicity of faith, 317—Not many rich called, 337—Offers of the gospel free to all, 345—Poverty the best soil for the gospel seed, 361—Sinfulness and weakness of man, 383—His pride and self-esteem, 403—Unbelief terminating in suicide, 429—Scripture the cure of woe, 451—Pride the greatest opponent of the truth, 463—The atonement not for the self-righteous, 503—Plea for the conscientious heathen, 515—Terrors of the law, 547—The last judgment, 563—Humility crowned, faith triumphant, 571.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error tost,  
His ship half founder'd and his compass lost,  
Sees, far as human optics may command,  
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land ;  
Spreads all his canvas, every sinew plies ;  
Pants for't, aims at it, enters it, and dies !  
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,  
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams ;  
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell !  
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

10

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward  
Of virtue, and yet lose it ! Wherefore hard ?—  
He that would win the race, must guide his horse  
Obedient to the customs of the course ;

Else, though unequal'd to the goal he flies, 15  
 A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.  
 Grace leads the right way ; if you choose the wrong,  
 Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue ;  
 Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,  
 Your wilful suicide on God's decree. 20

Oh how unlike the complex works of man,  
 Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan !  
 No meretricious graces to beguile,  
 No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;  
 From ostentation as from weakness free,  
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,  
 Majestic in its own simplicity.  
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar  
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,  
 Legible only by the light they give, 30  
 Stand the soul-quickenng words—BELIEVE, AND LIVE.  
 Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,  
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost.  
 Heaven on such terms ! (they cry with proud disdain)—  
 Incredible, impossible, and vain !—  
 Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,  
 And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.  
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains  
 Some thought of immortality remains ;  
 The rest too busy, or too gay, to wait 40  
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,  
 Sport for a day, and perish in a night,  
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee ? What odious cause  
 Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws ?  
 Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,  
 Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end ?  
 Was blasphemy his sin ? or did he stray  
 From the strict duties of the sacred day ?

Sit long and late at the carousing board ? 50

(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)

No—the man's morals were exact,—what then ?

'Twas his ambition to be seen of men ;

His virtues were his pride ; and that one vice

Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price ;

He wore them as fine trappings for a show,

A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—

Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he !

Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold 60

His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold ;

He treads as if, some solemn music near,

His measured step were govern'd by his ear,

And seems to say, Ye meaner fowl, give place,

I am all splendour, dignity, and grace !

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,

Though he too has a glory in his plumes.

He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien,

To the close copse or far sequester'd green,

And shines without desiring to be seen. 70

The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,

Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain :

Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,

Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.

What is all righteousness that men devise,

What, but a sordid bargain for the skies ?

But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,

As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock ;

Book, beads, and maple-dish his meagre stock ; 80

In shirt of hair and weeds of canvas dress'd,

Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd ;

Adust with stripes told out for every crime,

And sore tormented long before his time ;

His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid, 85  
 His praise postponed, and never to be paid ;  
 See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,  
 With all that bigotry adopts, inspired,  
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,  
 'Till his religious whimsy wears out him. 90

His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,  
 You think him humble—God accounts him proud :  
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,  
 Of all his conduct, this the genuine sense—  
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,  
 Have purchased heaven, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply  
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.  
 The Brahmin kindles on his own bare head  
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade ; 100  
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,  
 Would give a barbarous air to British song ;  
 No grand inquisitor could worse invent,  
 Than he contrives to suffer, well content.

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?  
 Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.  
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name ?  
 I say the Brahmin has the fairer claim.  
 If sufferings Scripture nowhere recommends,  
 Devised by self, to answer selfish ends, 110  
 Give saintship, then all Europe must agree,  
 Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,  
 And prejudice have left a passage clear),  
 Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,  
 And poison'd every virtue in them both.  
 Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean ;  
 Humility may clothe an English dean ;

That grace was Cowper's—his confess'd by all— 119  
 Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.  
 Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,  
 His palace, and his lacqueys, and "My Lord,"  
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,  
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice.  
 It thrives in misery, and abundant grows ;  
 In misery fools upon themselves impose.

But why before us Protestants produce  
 An Indian mystic or a French recluse ?  
 Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,  
 Reform'd and well instructed ? You shall hear. 130

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show  
 She might be young some forty years ago,  
 Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,  
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,  
 Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray  
 To watch yon amorous couple in their play,  
 With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies  
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,  
 And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs  
 Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers. 140  
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,  
 She yet allows herself that boy behind ;  
 The shivering urchin,<sup>1</sup> bending as he goes,  
 With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose ;  
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,  
 Which future pages are yet doom'd to share ;  
 Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,  
 And hides his hands, to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,  
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount, 150

<sup>1</sup> 'The shivering urchin:' a rendering into verse of Hogarth's print of 'Morning.'

Though not a grace appears on strictest search, 151  
 But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.  
 Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,  
 And tells, not always with an eye to truth,  
 Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,  
 Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name ;  
 Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,  
 And drank the little bumper every day.  
 Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,  
 Censorious, and her every word a wasp ; 160  
 In faithful memory she records the crimes,  
 Or real, or fictitious, of the times ;  
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,  
 And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,  
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified :  
 Take, madam, the reward of all your prayers,  
 Where hermits and where Brahmins meet with theirs !  
 Your portion is with them : nay, never frown,  
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down. 170

Artist, attend—your brushes and your paint—  
 Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint.  
 Oh, sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears  
 Channel her cheeks,—a Niobe appears !  
 Is this a Saint ? Throw tints and all away—  
 True Piety is cheerful as the day,  
 Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan  
 For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of Saints in view ?  
 Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew ? 180  
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,  
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?  
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved  
 From servile fear, or be the more enslaved ?

To loose the links that gall'd mankind before, 185  
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?  
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,  
 Or if a chain, the golden one of love ;  
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,  
 What fear he feels his gratitude inspires. 190  
 Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,  
 Recompense ill ? He trembles at the thought :  
 His Master's interest and his own combined,  
 Prompt every movement of his heart and mind :  
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,  
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course  
 His life should prove that he perceives their force ;  
 His utmost he can render is but small,  
 The principle and motive all in all. 200  
 You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,  
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue ;  
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,  
 Moves without noise, and swift as an express ;  
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,  
 Expert in all the duties of his place :  
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?  
 Has he a world of gratitude and love ?  
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;  
 He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay ; 210  
 Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,  
 Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, sir.

The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,  
 Watches your eye, anticipates command,  
 Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail,  
 And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;  
 Consults all day your interest and your ease,  
 Richly rewarded if he can but please,

And, proud to make his firm attachment known, 219  
To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now, which stands highest in your serious thought ?  
Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought ;  
One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,  
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus Heaven approves, as honest and sincere,  
The work of generous love and filial fear ;  
But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge  
Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.

Where dwell these matchless saints ? old Curio cries.  
Even at your side, sir, and before your eyes, 230  
The favour'd few, the enthusiasts you despise.  
And, pleased at heart because on holy ground  
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,  
Reproach a people with his single fall,  
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.  
Attend !—an apt similitude shall show  
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,  
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain ;  
Peal upon peal redoubling all around, 240  
Shakes it again and faster to the ground ;  
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,  
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away :  
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,  
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed ;  
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,  
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.  
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,  
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,  
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd, 250  
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,  
Offer him warmth, security, and rest ;



Think with what pleasure, safe, and at his ease, 253  
 He hears the tempest howling in the trees ;  
 What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,  
 While danger past is turn'd to present joy.  
 So fares it with the sinner, when he feels  
 A growing dread of vengeance at his heels ;  
 His conscience, like a glassy lake before,  
 Lash'd into foaming waves, begins to roar ; 260  
 The law, grown clamorous, though silent long,  
 Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,  
 Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,  
 And death, or restitution, is the word :  
 The last impossible, he fears the first,  
 And, having well deserved, expects the worst.  
 Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home ;  
 Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come !  
 Crush me, ye rocks ! ye falling mountains, hide,  
 Or bury me in ocean's angry tide !— 270  
 The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes  
 I dare not——And you need not, God replies ;  
 The remedy you want I freely give ;  
 The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live !  
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,  
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore ;  
 And Justice, guardian of the dread command,  
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.  
 A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise ;  
 Hence the complexion of his future days, 280  
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,  
 And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.  
 Some lead a life unblameable and just,  
 Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust.  
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)  
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,

The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,  
A slight gratuity atones for all. 287

For though the Pope has lost his interest here,  
And pardons are not sold as once they were,  
No Papist more desirous to compound,  
Than some grave sinners upon English ground :  
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek,—  
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak ;  
The future shall obliterate the past,  
And heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.

Come, then—a still, small whisper in your ear—  
He has no hope who never had a fear ;  
And he that never doubted of his state,  
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late. 300

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;  
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.  
The Frenchman, first in literary fame,  
(Mention him, if you please. Voltaire ?—The same),  
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied.

Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died :  
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew  
*Bon-mots* to gall the Christian and the Jew :  
An infidel in health, but what when sick ?  
Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick ! 310

View him at Paris in his last career,  
Surrounding throngs the demigod revere,  
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,  
And fumed with frankincense on every side,  
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,  
And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death !

Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,  
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,  
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,  
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day, 320

Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night 321  
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;  
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
 Has little understanding, and no wit,  
 Receives no praise, but (though her lot be such,  
 Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;  
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—  
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;  
 And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
 Her title to a treasure in the skies. 330

O happy peasant ! O unhappy bard !  
 His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;  
 He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,  
 She never heard of half a mile from home ;  
 He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,  
 She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound  
 In science, win one inch of heavenly ground :  
 And is it not a mortifying thought  
 The poor should gain it, and the rich should not ? 340  
 No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget  
 One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret ;  
 Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,  
 Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.

Not that the Former of us all in this,  
 Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice ;  
 The supposition is replete with sin,  
 And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.  
 Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call  
 Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all ; 350  
 Kings are invited, and would kings obey,  
 No slaves on earth more welcome were than they :  
 But royalty, nobility, and state,  
 Are such a dead preponderating weight,

That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem), 355  
 In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.  
 'Tis open, and ye cannot enter ; why ?  
 Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—  
 And he says much that many may dispute  
 And cavil at with ease, but none refute. 360  
 Oh, bless'd effect of penury and want,  
 The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant !  
 No soil like poverty for growth divine,  
 As leanest land supplies the richest wine.  
 Earth gives too little, giving only bread,  
 To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head :  
 To them the sounding jargon of the schools  
 Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools :  
 The light they walk by, kindled from above,  
 Shows them the shortest way to life and love : 370  
 They, strangers to the controversial field,  
 Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,  
 And never check'd by what impedes the wise,  
 Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.  
 Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small !  
 Ye have much cause for envy—but not all :  
 We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,  
 And one who wears a coronet and prays ;  
 Like gleanings of an olive-tree, they show,  
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough. 380  
 How readily, upon the Gospel plan,  
 That question has its answer—What is man ?  
 Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch,  
 An instrument whose chords, upon the stretch,  
 And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,  
 Yield only discord in his Maker's ear :  
 Once the blest residence of truth divine,  
 Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,

Where, in his own oracular abode, 389  
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God ;  
 But made long since, like Babylon of old,  
 A den of mischiefs never to be told :  
 And she, once mistress of the realms around,  
 Now scatter'd wide, and nowhere to be found,  
 As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,  
 By native power and energy her own,  
 As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,  
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.  
 Go, bid the winter cease to chill the year,  
 Replace the wandering comet in his sphere, 400  
 Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)  
 The self-restoring arm of human power !  
 But what is man in his own proud esteem ?  
 Hear him, himself the poet and the theme :  
 A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,  
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law ;  
 Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,  
 Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies ;  
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,  
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God ! 410  
 So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,  
 The song magnificent, the theme a worm !  
 Himself so much the source of his delight,  
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight :  
 See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,  
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,  
 His passions tamed and all at his control,  
 How perfect the composure of his soul !  
 Complacency has breathed a gentle gale  
 O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail : 420  
 His books, well trimm'd, and in the gayest style,  
 Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,

Adorn his intellects as well as shelves, 423  
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves :  
 The Bible only stands neglected there,  
 Though that of all most worthy of his care ;  
 And, like an infant, troublesome awake,  
 Is left to sleep for peace and quiet' sake.

What shall the man deserve of human kind,  
 Whose happy skill and industry combined 430  
 Shall prove (what argument could never yet)  
 The Bible an imposture and a cheat ?  
 The praises of the libertine profess'd,  
 The worst of men, and curses of the best.  
 Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes ;  
 The dying, trembling at their awful close ;  
 Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,  
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest ;—  
 Where should they find (those comforts at an end  
 The Scripture yields), or hope to find, a friend ? 440  
 Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,  
 And, seeking exile from the sight of men,  
 Bury herself in solitude profound,  
 Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.  
 Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,  
 Flies to the tempting pool or felon knife :  
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,  
 And lunacy the verdict of the court.  
 Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,  
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone : 450  
 They knew not, what some bishops may not know,  
 That Scripture is the only cure of woe :  
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad  
 Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !  
 The soul, reposing on assured relief,  
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,

Forgets her labour as she toils along, 457  
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word that, like the polish'd share,  
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,  
 Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,  
 That bind the sinner's bacchanalian brow.  
 Oh, that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,  
 Sad messenger of mercy from above !  
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,  
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !  
 His will and judgment at continual strife,  
 That civil war embitters all his life ;  
 In vain he points his powers against the skies,  
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes, 470  
 Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware ;  
 And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.  
 Though various foes against the Truth combine,  
 Pride above all opposes her design ;  
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,  
 The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,  
 Swells at the thought, and kindling into rage,  
 Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage,  
 And is the soul indeed so lost ? she cries ;  
 Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise ? 480  
 Torpid and dull, beneath a frozen zone,  
 Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own ?  
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call  
 Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all !  
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,  
 Some love of virtue, and some power to praise ;  
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,  
 And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,  
 Possess herself of all that's good or true,  
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due. 490

Past indiscretion is a venial crime ; 491  
 And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,  
 Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,  
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,  
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce,  
 And meliorate the well-concocted juice.  
 Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,  
 To Justice she may make her bold appeal,  
 And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,  
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind. 500  
 Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied,  
 Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,  
 And the fool with it, who insults his Lord !  
 The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought  
 Is not for you—the righteous need it not.  
 Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,  
 The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,  
 Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,  
 Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn ? 510  
 The gracious shower, unlimited and free,  
 Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.  
 Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift—  
 That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,  
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?  
 Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,  
 For ignorance of what they could not know ?—  
 That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue ;  
 Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong ! 520  
 Truly, not I—the partial light men have,  
 My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save ;  
 While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,  
 Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.



Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind 525  
 Left sensuality and dross behind,  
 Possess for me their undisputed lot,  
 And take unenvied the reward they sought ;  
 But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,  
 Not blind by choice, but destined not to see. 530  
 Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame  
 Celestial, though they knew not whence it came ;  
 Derived from the same source of light and grace  
 That guides the Christian in his swifter race ;  
 Their judge was Conscience, and her rule their law ;  
 That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,  
 Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,  
 From what they knew to what they wish'd to know :  
 But let not him that shares a brighter day  
 Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray, 540  
 Prefer the twilight of a darker time,  
 And deem his base stupidity no crime ;  
 The wretch who slights the bounty of the skies,  
 And sinks, while favour'd with the means to rise,  
 Shall find them rated at their full amount,  
 The good he scorn'd all carried to account.  
     Marshalling all his terrors as he came,  
 Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,  
 From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law—  
 Life for obedience, death for every flaw. 550  
 When the great Sovereign would his will express,  
 He gives a perfect rule ; what can He less ?  
 And guards it with a sanction as severe  
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :  
 Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,  
 And man might safely trifle with his name.  
 He bids him glow with unremitting love  
 To all on earth, and to himself above ;

Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue, 559  
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong :  
 Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,  
 His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal Nature shook and groan'd,  
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned !  
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,  
 Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.  
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?  
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,  
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,  
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now. 570

All joy to the believer ! He can speak—  
 Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.—

“ Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,  
 And cut up all my follies by the root,  
 I never trusted in an arm but thine,  
 Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine :  
 My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,  
 Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;  
 Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,  
 That they proceeded from a grateful heart : 580  
 Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,  
 Forgive their evil, and accept their good ;  
 I cast them at thy feet—my only plea  
 Is what it was, dependence upon Thee ;  
 While struggling in the vale of tears below,  
 That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.”

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,  
 Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,  
 Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

# EXPOSTULATION.

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*Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli  
Dona fines? VIRG.*

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## THE ARGUMENT.

Why should the Muse weep for England? her outward prosperity great, 1—Sinful condition of Israel, when the prophet wept for her, 33—His warnings despised, 69—The captivity, 73—When nations are to perish, the decay commences in the church, 95—State of the Jewish church and people, when Messiah came, 123—The unequalled privileges of the Jews, 161—Their day of grace abused, 213—Their fall and dispersion, 225—Warning and lesson from their history, especially to Britain, 241—Her sins and dangers, 272—Untoward public events traced to an adverse Providence, 310—Call to the nation to self-judgment, 340—Her unsanctified pride and ambition, 346—Her conduct to India, 364—Abuse of the sacrament, and false swearing, 376—Long deferred and hypocritical fasts, 390—Character of the priesthood, 438—Of the people, 450—Ancient history and origin of the nation, 466—Benefits of the Roman conquest, 474—Introduction of the gospel, 500—Darkened by Popish tyranny, 508—Degraded and enslaved condition of the people, 526—Subsequent blessings of Providence, cause of gratitude and love to Him, 562—Duty to serve him and secure his favour, 644—Under his guardianship, all dangers may be defied, 694—The poet believes that his expostulation is in vain, 718.

WHY weeps the Muse for England? What appears  
In England's case to move the Muse to tears?  
From side to side of her delightful isle,  
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?  
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer  
A new-found luxury not seen in her?  
Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,  
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?  
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn  
Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn;  
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies  
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;

Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits 13  
 To pour his golden tide through all her gates ;  
 Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice  
 Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,  
 Forbid in vain to push his daring way  
 To darker climes, or climes of brighter day ;  
 Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,  
 From the World's girdle to the frozen pole ; 20  
 The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,  
 Her vaults below, where every vintage meets ;  
 Her theatres, her revels, and her sports,  
 The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,  
 But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,  
 Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again ;—  
 All speak her happy : let the Muse look round  
 From East to West, no sorrow can be found,  
 Or only what, in cottages confined,  
 Sighs unregarded to the passing wind. 30  
 Then wherefore weep for England ? What appears  
 In England's case to move the Muse to tears ?  
 The prophet wept for Israel ; wish'd his eyes  
 Were fountains fed with infinite supplies ;  
 For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;  
 There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue ;  
 Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,  
 As interest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools ;  
 Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door ;  
 Oppression labouring hard to grind the poor ; 40  
 The partial balance and deceitful weight ;  
 The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate ;  
 Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,  
 And the dull service of the lip were there.  
 Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,  
 By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,

Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart 47  
 To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art ;  
 Were just such trifles, without worth or use,  
 As silly pride and idleness produce :  
 Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around,  
 With feet too delicate to touch the ground,  
 They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,  
 And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust,  
 Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;  
 He heard the wheels of an avenging God  
 Groan heavily along the distant road ;  
 Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass,  
 To let the military deluge pass ; 60  
 Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,  
 Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd ;  
 Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,  
 Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh ;  
 But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain ;  
 Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,  
 And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit  
 Ears long accustom'd to the pleasing lute :  
 They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,  
 Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream ; 70  
 With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,  
 Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,  
 Till penitence had purged the public stain,  
 And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,  
 Return'd them happy to the land they loved ;  
 There, proof against Prosperity, awhile  
 They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,  
 And had the grace in scenes of peace to show  
 The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe. 80

But man is frail, and can but ill sustain 81  
 A long immunity from grief and pain ;  
 And after all the joys that Plenty leads,  
 With tiptoe step, Vice silently succeeds.

When He that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,  
 In form a man, in dignity a God,  
 Came, not expected in that humble guise,  
 To sift and search them with unerring eyes,  
 He found conceal'd beneath a fair outside,  
 The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride ; 90  
 Their piety a system of deceit,  
 Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat ;  
 The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,  
 Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.

When nations are to perish in their sins,  
 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins :  
 The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,  
 To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,  
 Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,  
 While others poison what the flock must drink ; 100  
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,  
 Infuses lies and errors of his own :  
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,  
 And, tainted by the very means of cure,  
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,  
 The foul forerunner of a general rot.  
 Then Truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach,  
 And all is trash that Reason cannot reach ;  
 Then God's own image on the soul impress'd  
 Becomes a mockery and a standing jest ; 110  
 And Faith, the root whence only can arise  
 The graces of a life that wins the skies,  
 Loses at once all value and esteem,  
 Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream ;

Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth, 115  
 Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth ;  
 While truths, on which eternal things depend,  
 Find not, or hardly find, a single friend :  
 As soldiers watch the signal of command,  
 They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand ; 120  
 Happy to fill religion's vacant place  
 With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.  
 Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,  
 People and priest, the sons of Israel were ;  
 Stiff in the letter, lax in the design  
 And import, of their oracles divine ;  
 Their learning legendary, false, absurd,  
 And yet exalted above God's own Word ;  
 They drew a curse from an intended good,  
 Puff'd up with gifts they never understood. 130  
 He judg'd them with as terrible a frown,  
 As if, not love, but wrath, had brought him down :  
 Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,  
 Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs.  
 Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran ;  
 Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man,  
 And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,  
 Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.  
 The astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore  
 The mask from faces never seen before ; 140  
 He stripp'd the impostors in the noonday sun,  
 Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun ;  
 Their prayers made public, their excesses kept  
 As private as the chambers where they slept ;  
 The temple and its holy rites profaned  
 By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdain'd ;  
 Uplifted hands, that at convenient times  
 Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,

Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice, 149  
 And free from every taint but that of vice.  
 Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace  
 When Obstinacy once has conquer'd Grace.  
 They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored,  
 In answer to the fiat of his word ;  
 Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue  
 Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.  
 They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,  
 The future tone and temper of the sky ;  
 But, grave dissemblers ! could not understand  
 That Sin let loose speaks Punishment at hand. 160

Ask now of History's authentic page,  
 And call up evidence from every age ;  
 Display with busy and laborious hand  
 The blessings of the most indebted land ;  
 What nation will you find, whose annals prove  
 So rich an interest in Almighty love ?  
 Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day  
 A people planted, water'd, blest, as they ?  
 Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim  
 The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name ; 170  
 Their freedom purchased for them, at the cost  
 Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;  
 Their title to a country not their own  
 Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;  
 For them, the state they left made waste and void ;  
 For them, the states to which they went destroy'd ;  
 A cloud to measure out their march by day,  
 By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;  
 That moving signal summoning, when best,  
 Their host to move, and, when it stay'd, to rest. 180  
 For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,  
 The dews condensed into angelic food ;



Their very garments sacred, old yet new, 183  
 And Time forbid to touch them as he flew ;  
 Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand  
 While they pass'd through to their appointed land ;  
 Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,  
 And graced with clear credentials from above ;  
 Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing,  
 Their God their captain, lawgiver, and king ; 190  
 Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last  
 Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,  
 In peace possessing what they won by war,  
 Their name far publish'd, and revered as far ;  
 Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd  
 With all that man e'er wish'd, or heaven bestow'd ?  
 They, and they only, amongst all mankind,  
 Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind ;  
 Were trusted with his own engraven laws,  
 And constituted guardians of his cause ; 200  
 Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,  
 And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.  
 In vain the nations that had seen them rise,  
 With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,  
 Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were  
 By power divine, and skill that could not err.  
 Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,  
 And kept the faith immaculate and pure,  
 Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome  
 Had found one city not to be o'ercome ; 210  
 And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd  
 Had bid defiance to the warring world.  
 But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,  
 As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds ;  
 Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,  
 They set up self, that idol god within ;

View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate, 217  
 Who left them still a tributary state ;  
 Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free  
 From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree.  
 There was the consummation and the crown,  
 The flower of Israel's infamy full blown ;  
 Thence date their sad declension and their fall,  
 Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,  
 And the most favour'd land, look where we may.  
 Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes  
 Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies :  
 In other climes perhaps creative Art,  
 With power surpassing theirs, perform'd her part ; 230  
 Might give more life to marble, or might fill  
 The glowing tablets with a juster skill ;  
 Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes  
 With all the embroidery of poetic dreams :  
 'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan  
 That Truth and Mercy had reveal'd to man ;  
 And while the World beside, that plan unknown,  
 Deified useless wood or senseless stone,  
 They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,  
 And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs. 240

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,  
 The last of nations now, though once the first ;  
 They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn—  
 Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn !  
 If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,  
 Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus ;  
 If Vice received her retribution due  
 When we were visited, what hope for you ?  
 When God arises with an awful frown,  
 To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ; 250

When gifts perverted, or not duly prized, 251  
 Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,  
 Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand  
 To pour down wrath upon a thankless land,  
 He will be found impartially severe,  
 Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

O Israel, of all nations most undone !  
 Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone ;  
 Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and razed,  
 And thou a worshipper even where thou may'st ; 260  
 Thy services, once holy without spot,  
 Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot ;  
 Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,  
 No longer Levites, and their lineage lost ;  
 And thou thyself o'er every country sown,  
 With none on earth that thou canst call thine own ;  
 Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,  
 Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust ;  
 Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears,  
 Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears, 270  
 But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,  
 And fling their foam against thy chalky shore ?  
 Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,  
 And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—  
 Why, having kept good faith, and often shown  
 Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none ?  
 Thou that hast set the persecuted free,  
 None interposes now to succour thee ;  
 Countries indebted to thy power, that shine 280  
 With light derived from thee, would smother thine ;  
 Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,  
 A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face :

Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year, 284  
 With sums Peruvian mines could never clear ;  
 As if, like arches built with skilful hand,  
 The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.

The cry in all thy ships is still the same,  
 Speed us away to battle and to fame !  
 Thy mariners explore the wild expanse, 290  
 Impatient to descry the flags of France :  
 But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,  
 Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.

Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,  
 Chaos of contrarities at war,  
 Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,  
 Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;  
 Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,  
 To disconcert what Policy has plann'd,  
 Where Policy is busied all night long 300  
 In setting right what Faction has set wrong ;  
 Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,  
 That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.  
 Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,  
 Tax'd till the brow of Labour sweats in vain ;  
 War lays a burden on the reeling state,  
 And Peace does nothing to relieve the weight ;  
 Successive loads succeeding broils impose,  
 And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well, 310  
 So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,  
 Thou canst not read with readiness and ease,  
 Providence adverse in events like these ?  
 Know then, that heavenly wisdom on this ball  
 Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all ;  
 That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man  
 Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,

He first conceives, then perfects his design, 318  
 As a mere instrument in hands divine :  
 Blind to the working of that secret power  
 That balances the wings of every hour,  
 The busy trifler dreams himself alone,  
 Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.  
 States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,  
 Even as his will and his decrees ordain ;  
 While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,  
 They flourish ; and as these decline, decay.  
 In just resentment of his injured laws,  
 He pours contempt on them and on their cause ;  
 Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart 330  
 The web of every scheme they have at heart ;  
 Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust  
 The pillars of support in which they trust,  
 And do his errand of disgrace and shame  
 On the chief strength and glory of the frame.  
 None ever yet impeded what He wrought,  
 None bars Him out from his most secret thought :  
 Darkness itself before His eye is light,  
 And Hell's close mischief naked in His sight.  
 Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incur'd 340  
 His anger who can waste thee with a word,  
 Who poises and proportions sea and land,  
 Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,  
 And in whose awful sight all nations seem  
 As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?  
 Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)  
 Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars ?  
 Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem  
 Of his just praise, to lavish it on them ?  
 Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told, 350  
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,

That no success attends on spears and swords 352  
 Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's ?  
 That Courage is his creature, and Dismay  
 The post that at his bidding speeds away,  
 Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue  
 With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,  
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,  
 And teach the combatant a woman's part ?

That he bids thousands fly when none pursue, 360  
 Saves as he will, by many or by few,  
 And claims for ever, as his royal right,  
 The event and sure decision of the fight ?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,  
 Exported slavery to the conquer'd East ?

Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,  
 And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead ?  
 Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,  
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,  
 A despot big with power obtain'd by wealth, 370  
 And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth ?

With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,  
 But left their virtues and thine own behind,  
 And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee,  
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee ?

Hast thou by statute shoved from its design  
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,  
 And made the symbols of atoning grace  
 An office-key, a picklock to a place,

That infidels may prove their title good 380  
 By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood ?  
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite  
 Of all that grave apologists may write ;  
 And though a Bishop toil to cleanse the stain,  
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.

And hast thou sworn, on every slight pretence, 386  
 Till perjuries are common as bad pence,  
 While thousands, careless of the damning sin,  
 Kiss the book's outside who ne'er look within ?

Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,  
 And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face, 391  
 (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured  
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,  
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow,  
 And never of a sabler hue than now)—

Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience sear'd,  
 Despising all rebuke, still persevered,  
 And, having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice  
 That cried, Repent!—and gloried in thy choice ?  
 Thy fastings, when calamity at last 400

Suggests the expedient of an yearly fast,  
 What mean they ? Canst thou dream there is a power  
 In lighter diet at a later hour,  
 To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,  
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes ?  
 The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends  
 The stroke that a vindictive God intends,  
 Is to renounce hypocrisy ; to draw  
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law ;  
 To war with Pleasure, idolised before ; 410  
 To vanquish Lust, and wear its yoke no more.  
 All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,  
 Is wooing Mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time  
 Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime.  
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,  
 Baboons are free from, upon human race ?  
 Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot  
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,

Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth, 420  
 Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth ;  
 Or in his words who damn'd the base desire,  
 Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire :  
 Then Nature, injured, scandalised, defiled,  
 Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on and smiled ;  
 Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,  
 And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,  
 And farther still the form'd and fix'd design,  
 To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest 430  
 Against an innocent unconscious breast :  
 The man that dares traduce, because he can  
 With safety to himself, is not a man :  
 An individual is a sacred mark,  
 Not to be pierced in play or in the dark ;  
 But public censure speaks a public foe,  
 Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,  
 From mean self-interest and ambition clear,  
 Their hope in Heaven, servility their scorn, 440  
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,  
 Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,  
 Their usefulness insured by zeal and love,  
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal  
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,  
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,  
 Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?  
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,  
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these, 450  
 For ears and hearts that he can hope to please ?  
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain  
 Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain ;



Humility is gentle, apt to learn, 454  
 Speak but the word, will listen and return.  
 Alas! not so; the poorest of the flock  
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock;  
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,  
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse,  
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem, 460  
 Are more intelligent, at least—try them.  
 Oh, vain inquiry! they without remorse  
 Are altogether gone a devious course;  
 Where beckoning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray;  
 Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.  
 Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,  
 Review thy dim original and prime!  
 This island, spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,  
 The cradle that received thee at thy birth,  
 Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast, 470  
 And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd;  
 For thou wast born amid the din of arms,  
 And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.  
 While yet thou wast a grovelling, puling chit,  
 Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,  
 The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,  
 Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now:  
 His victory was that of orient light,  
 When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night  
 Thy language at this distant moment shows 480  
 How much the country to the conqueror owes;  
 Expressive, energetic, and refined,  
 It sparkles with the gems he left behind.  
 He brought thy land a blessing when he came,  
 He found thee savage, and he left thee tame:  
 Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,  
 And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride;

He sow'd the seeds of order where he went, 488  
 Improved thee far beyond his own intent,  
 And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone,  
 Made thee at last a warrior like his own.  
 Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,  
 Needs only to be seen to be admired ;  
 But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,  
 Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight :  
 Thy Druids struck the well-strung harps they bore,  
 With fingers deeply dyed in human gore ;  
 And while the victim slowly bled to death,  
 Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.

Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams 500  
 Dispell'd thy gloom and broke away thy dreams,  
 Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,  
 Babblers of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :  
 But still light reach'd thee ; and those gods of thine,  
 Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,  
 Fell broken and defaced at his own door,  
 As Dagon in Philistia long before.  
 But Rome, with sorceries and magic wand,  
 Soon raised a cloud that darken'd every land ;  
 And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog 510  
 Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.  
 Then priests, with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,  
 And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,  
 Legates and delegates with powers from hell,  
 Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well ;  
 And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,  
 Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thy soldiery, the Pope's well managed pack,  
 Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,

<sup>1</sup> Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

And when he laid them on the scent of blood, 520  
 Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.  
 Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,  
 That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,  
 They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,  
 His worthless absolution all the prize.  
 Thou wast the veriest slave, in days of yore,  
 That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar ;  
 Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,  
 Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,  
 Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress 530  
 Found thee a goodly sponge for Power to press.  
 Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,  
 Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee ;  
 Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,  
 Domestic happiness, and rural joy,  
 To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down  
 In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own ;  
 Thy parliaments adored, on bended knees,  
 The sovereignty they were convened to please ;  
 Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist, 540  
 Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd ;  
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,  
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,  
 Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,  
 He was a traitor by the general voice.  
 Oh, slave ! with powers thou didst not dare exert,  
 Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert !  
 It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain.  
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,  
 To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea 550  
 That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee ;  
 When other nations flew from coast to coast,  
 And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.

Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust ! 554  
 Blush if thou canst ; not petrified, thou must ;  
 Act but an honest and a faithful part,  
 Compare what then thou wast, with what thou art ;  
 And God's disposing providence confess'd,  
 Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—

Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove, 560  
 Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Has he not hid thee and thy favour'd land,  
 For ages, safe beneath his sheltering hand—  
 Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,  
 Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,  
 And charged Hostility and Hate to roar  
 Where else they would, but not upon thy shore ?  
 His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain  
 Baptized her fleet Invincible in vain ;  
 Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd 570  
 To every pang that racks an anxious mind,  
 Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,  
 What tidings ? and the surge replied—All lost !  
 And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,  
 Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,  
 Pierced to the very centre of the realm,  
 And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,  
 'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,  
 He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.  
 Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd, 580  
 Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest ;  
 Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,  
 And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.  
 'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,  
 Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm ;  
 While his own Heaven surveys the troubled scene,  
 And feels no change, unshaken and serene.

Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine, 588  
 Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine ;  
 Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays  
 As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.  
 True freedom is where no restraint is known  
 That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown ;  
 Where only vice and injury are tied,  
 And all from shore to shore is free beside.  
 Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers  
 Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,  
 That won a nymph on that immortal plain,  
 Like her the fabled Phœbus woo'd in vain :  
 He found the laurel only—happier you, 600  
 The unfading laurel and the virgin too !<sup>1</sup>

Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare ;  
 If God himself be not beneath her care ;  
 If Business, constant as the wheels of time,  
 Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme ;  
 If the new mail thy merchants now receive,  
 Or expectation of the next, give leave ;  
 Oh, think, if chargeable with deep arrears  
 For such indulgence, gilding all thy years,  
 How much, though long neglected, shining yet, 610  
 The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt !  
 When persecuting zeal made royal sport  
 With tortured innocence in Mary's court ;  
 And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,  
 Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake ;  
 The sacred Book, its value understood,  
 Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.  
 Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,  
 Seem to reflection of a different race ;

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede, near Windsor.

Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere, 620  
 In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;  
 They could not purchase earth with such a prize,  
 Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.  
 From them to thee convey'd along the tide,  
 Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died ;  
 Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,  
 Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.  
 What dotage will not Vanity maintain ?  
 What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?  
 The moles and bats in full assembly find, 630  
 On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.  
 And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?  
 Prove it : if better, I submit and bow.  
 Wisdom and Goodness are twin-born, one heart  
 Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.  
 So then—as darkness overspread the deep,  
 Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,  
 And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,  
 Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High ;  
 By such a change thy darkness is made light, 640  
 Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;  
 And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,  
 Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise.  
 To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,  
 Doing and suffering, his unquestion'd will ;  
 'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,  
 Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold ;  
 Candid and just, with no false aim in view,  
 To take for truth what cannot but be true ;  
 To learn in God's own school the Christian part, 650  
 And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart :  
 Happy the man there seeking and there found !  
 Happy the nation where such men abound !

How shall a verse impress thee ? by what name 654  
 Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame ?  
 By theirs whose bright example, unimpeach'd,  
 Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,  
 Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires ?  
 Or His, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires ?  
 Their names, alas ! in vain reproach an age, 660  
 Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage ;  
 And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung  
 Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,  
 Or serves the champion in forensic war  
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.  
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,  
 If interest move thee, to persuade even thee ;  
 By every charm that smiles upon her face,  
 By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,  
 If dear society be worth a thought, 670  
 And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,  
 Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,  
 Held by the tenure of his will alone,  
 Like angels in the service of their Lord,  
 Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word ;  
 That gratitude, and temperance in our use  
 Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,  
 Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,  
 That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.  
 But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er 680  
 Those rights that millions envy thee, appear,  
 And though resolved to risk them, and swim down  
 The tide of pleasure, heedless of His frown,—  
 That blessings truly sacred, and when given  
 Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven,  
 The Word of prophecy, those truths divine,  
 Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine

(Awful alternative ! believed, beloved,  
 Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved),  
 Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside  
 \* With cold disgust or philosophic pride ;  
 And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,  
 Error, and darkness, occupy their place.

688

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot  
 Not quickly found if negligently sought,  
 Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,  
 Endurest the brunt, and darest defy them all :  
 And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise  
 A bolder still, a contest with the skies ?  
 Remember, if He guard thee and secure,  
 Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure ;  
 But if He leave thee, though the skill and power  
 Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,  
 Were all collected in thy single arm,  
 And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,  
 That strength would fail, opposed against the push  
 And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

700

Say not (and if the thought of such defence  
 Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)  
 What nation amongst all my foes is free  
 From crimes as base as any charged on me ?  
 Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,  
 Which God, though long forborne, will not forget :  
 But know, that Wrath divine, when most severe,  
 Makes justice still the guide of his career,  
 And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,  
 Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

710

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,  
 Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach ;  
 And while, at intervals, a cold blast sings  
 Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,

720



My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament 722  
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.  
I know the warning song is sung in vain ;  
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain ;  
But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd  
A blessing to my country and mankind,  
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home  
A flock so scatter'd, and so wont to roam,  
Then place it once again between my knees ; 730  
The sound of truth will then be sure to please ;  
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,  
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,  
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

# HOPE.

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— doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.

VIRG. ÆN. vi. 109.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

Human life, different views of, 1—Nature always the same, although she appears in different hues to youth and age, 27—Vanity and weariness of fashionable life, 75—Life a gift of infinite value, 115—The attributes of the Creator inscribed on all his works, 133—Nature the handmaid of grace, 145—Birth and character of Hope, 152—Corruption of human nature shown in early youth, 179—Farther evidenced in more advanced life, 197—Conscience awakened to a sense of sin, 215—False peace and formal devotion, 229—Empty honours attending a hopeless death, 260—Each man's belief right in his own eyes, 276—Only one right way to eternal life, 302—Offers of salvation by free grace repugnant to human pride, 322—Loose ideas of the way of salvation, 357—Notwithstanding the light of science, and the spread of the gospel, 439—Reception of the simple truth in distant Greenland, 465—Its inhabitants in their unconverted and converted state, 495—Vindication of Whitefield, 554—The lover of pleasure the greatest of bigots, 594—Any hope preferred to the hope of the gospel, 614—Folly ends where genuine hope begins, 635—Apostrophe to Truth, 663—The sinner convicted, 674—Pardoned, 710—Works of Truth imperishable, 742—Conclusion, 754.

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,  
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,—  
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,  
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,  
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,  
Closing at last in darkness and despair.—  
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,  
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,  
And nowhere but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,  
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.

Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand, 11  
 As fortune, vice, or folly may command ;  
 As in a dance the pair that take the lead  
 Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,  
 So shifting and so various is the plan  
 By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man ;  
 Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,  
 The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud :  
 Business is labour, and man's weakness such,  
 Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much ; 20  
 The very sense of it foregoes its use,  
 By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.  
 Youth lost in dissipation we deplore  
 Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;  
 Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,  
 Too many, yet too few to make us wise.  
     Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,  
 Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff !  
 O querulous and weak ! whose useless brain  
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain ; 30  
 Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,  
 Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste ;  
 Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,  
 And youth invigorate that frame again,  
 Renew'd desire would grace with other speech  
 Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.  
     For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom  
 That overhangs the borders of thy tomb ;  
 See Nature gay, as when she first began  
 With smiles alluring her admirer, Man ; 40  
 She spreads the morning over eastern hills,  
 Earth glitters with the drops the night distils ;  
 The sun, obedient, at her call appears,  
 To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears ;

Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds,  
 The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds, 46  
 Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field  
 Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd ;  
 From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,  
 Down to the very turf beneath thy feet, 50  
 Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,  
 Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,  
 All speak one language, all with one sweet voice  
 Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice !  
 Man feels the spur of passions and desires,  
 And she gives largely more than he requires ;  
 Not that, his hours devoted all to Care,  
 Hollow-eyed Abstinence, and lean Despair,  
 The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,  
 She holds a Paradise of rich delight ; 60  
 But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,  
 To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere,  
 To banish hesitation, and proclaim  
 His happiness her dear, her only aim.  
 'Tis grave Philosophy's absurdest dream,  
 That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,  
 That only shadows are dispensed below,  
 And earth has no reality but woe.

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,  
 As youth or age persuades—and neither true ; 70  
 So Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,  
 The rose or lily appears blue or green,  
 But still the imputed tints are those alone  
 The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,  
 To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,  
 Till half the world comes rattling at his door,  
 To fill the dull vacuity till four ;

And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray, 79  
 To spend two hours in dressing for the day ;  
 To make the Sun a bauble without use,  
 Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce ;  
 Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,  
 Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;  
 Through mere necessity to close his eyes  
 Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise ;—  
 Is such a life, so tediously the same,  
 So void of all utility or aim,  
 That poor JONQUIL, with almost every breath,  
 Sighs for his exit, vulgarly call'd death : 90  
 For he, with all his follies, has a mind  
 Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,  
 But now and then perhaps a feeble ray  
 Of distant wisdom shoots across his way ;  
 By which he reads, that life without a plan,  
 As useless as the moment it began,  
 Serves merely as a soil for discontent  
 To thrive in ; an encumbrance, ere half spent.  
 Oh ! weariness beyond what asses feel,  
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ; 100  
 A dull rotation, never at a stay,  
 Yesterday's face twin image of to-day ;  
 While conversation, an exhausted stock,  
 Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.  
 No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out  
 With academic dignity devout,  
 To read wise lectures, vanity the text :  
 Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;  
 For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,  
 Is vanity surpassing all the rest. 110  
 That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,  
 Yet seldom sought where only to be found,

While passion turns aside from its due scope 113  
 The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.  
 Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs,  
 With every good and perfect gift, proceeds ;  
 Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,  
 Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake ;  
 Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,  
 And yet the seed of an immortal flower ; 120  
 Design'd, in honour of his endless love,  
 To fill with fragrance his abode above ;  
 No trifle, howsoever short it seem,  
 And, howsoever shadowy, no dream :  
 Its value, what no thought can ascertain,  
 Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.  
 Men deal with life as children with their play,  
 Who first misuse, then cast their toys away !  
 Live to no sober purpose, and contend  
 That their Creator had no serious end. 130  
 When God and man stand opposite in view,  
 Man's disappointment must of course ensue.  
 The just Creator condescends to write,  
 In beams of inextinguishable light,  
 His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,  
 On all that blooms below or shines above ;  
 To catch the wandering notice of mankind,  
 And teach the world, if not perversely blind,  
 His gracious attributes, and prove the share  
 His offspring hold in his paternal care. 140  
 If, led from earthly things to things divine,  
 His creature thwart not his august design,  
 Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,  
 And captious cavil and complaint subside.  
 Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,  
 Is handmaid to the purposes of Grace ;

By good vouchsafed, makes known superior good, 147  
 And bliss not seen, by blessings understood :  
 That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture, with a glow  
 Bright as the covenant-insuring bow,  
 Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn  
 Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all  
 That men have deem'd substantial since the fall ;  
 Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe  
 From emptiness itself a real use ;  
 And while she takes, as at a father's hand,  
 What health and sober appetite demand,  
 From fading good derives, with chemic art,  
 That lasting happiness, a thankful heart. 160

Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,  
 Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,  
 On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,  
 Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,  
 And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,  
 With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.  
 Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast  
 The Christian vessel, and defies the blast :  
 Hope ! nothing else can nourish and secure  
 His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure : 170  
 Hope ! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,  
 Whom now despairing agonies destroy,  
 Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,  
 What treasures centre, what delights, in thee.

Had he the gems, the spices, and the land  
 That boasts the treasure, all at his command,  
 The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,  
 Were light when weigh'd against one smile of thine.  
 Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms,  
 He shine with all a cherub's artless charms, 180

Man is the genuine offspring of revolt, 181  
 Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt ;  
 His passions, like the watery stores that sleep  
 Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,  
 Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,  
 To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.  
 From infancy, through childhood's giddy maze,  
 Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,  
 The puny tyrant burns to subjugate  
 The free republic of the whip-gig state. 190  
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,  
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,  
 Dares step across his arbitrary views,  
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues :  
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,  
 Till the best tongue or heaviest hand prevails.  
 Now see him launch'd into the world at large ;  
 If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,  
 Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,  
 Though short, too long, the price he pays for all. 200  
 If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,  
 But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.  
 Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,  
 Punctually paid for lengthening out disease ;  
 No COTTON, whose humanity sheds rays  
 That make superior skill his second praise.  
 If arms engage him, he devotes to sport  
 His date of life, so likely to be short ;  
 A soldier may be anything, if brave ;  
 So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave. 210  
 Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind,  
 To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd,  
 Insist on, as if each were his own Pope,  
 Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope.



But Conscience, in some awful silent hour, 215  
 When captivating lusts have lost their power,  
 Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,  
 Reminds him of religion, hated theme !  
 Starts from the down on which she lately slept,  
 And tells of laws despised, at least not kept ; 220  
 Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,  
 A pale procession of past sinful joys,  
 All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,  
 And life abused—and not to be suborn'd.  
 Mark these, she says ; these, summon'd from afar,  
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;  
 There find a Judge inexorably just,  
 And perish there, as all presumption must.  
 Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)  
 Who live in pleasure, dead even while they live ; 230  
 Born capable indeed of heavenly truth,  
 But down to latest age, from earliest youth,  
 Their mind a wilderness through want of care,  
 The plough of wisdom never entering there.  
 Peace (if insensibility may claim  
 A right to the meek honours of her name)  
 To men of pedigree, their noble race,  
 Emulous always of the nearest place  
 To any throne, except the throne of grace.  
 Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains 240  
 Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains,  
 Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,  
 And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there ;  
 Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat  
 To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,  
 To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,  
 For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,  
 May now and then their velvet cushions take,  
 And seem to pray for good example's sake ;

Judging, in charity no doubt, the town 250  
 Pious enough, and having need of none.  
 Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize  
 What they themselves, without remorse, despise ;  
 Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,  
 As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;  
 They could have held the conduct they pursue,  
 Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew ;  
 And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,  
 Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.

They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport,  
 All the grim honours of his ghastly court. 261  
 Far other paintings grace the chamber now,  
 Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :  
 The busy heralds hang the sable scene,  
 With mournful scutcheons, and dim lamps between ;  
 Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,  
 But they that wore them move not at the sound ;  
 The coronet, placed idly at their head,  
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead,  
 And even the star that glitters on the bier, 270  
 Can only say—Nobility lies here.  
 Peace to all such!—'twere pity to offend  
 By useless censure, whom we cannot mend ;  
 Life without hope can close but in despair,  
 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.

As, when two pilgrims in a forest stray,  
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way ;  
 So fares it with the multitudes beguiled  
 In vain Opinion's waste and dangerous wild ;  
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among, 280  
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.  
 But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,  
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes ;

And he that blames what they have blindly chose, 284  
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, botanist! within whose province fall  
 The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,  
 Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,  
 What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?  
 Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined, 290  
 Distinguish every cultivated kind;  
 The want of both denotes a meaner breed,  
 And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.  
 Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect  
 Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,  
 If wild in nature, and not duly found,  
 Gethsemane! in thy dear, hallow'd ground,  
 That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,  
 Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,  
 Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds— 300  
 Oh, cast them from thee!—are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,  
 Diverging each from each, like equal rays;  
 Himself as bountiful as April rains,  
 Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,  
 Would give relief of bed and board to none,  
 But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE;  
 And they might enter at his open door,  
 Even till his spacious hall would hold no more.  
 He sent a servant forth by every road, 310  
 To sound his horn and publish it abroad,  
 That all might mark—knight, menial, high and low—  
 An ordinance it concern'd them much to know,  
 If, after all, some headstrong, hardy lout,  
 Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,  
 Could he with reason murmur at his case,  
 Himself sole author of his own disgrace?

No ! the decree was just and without flaw, 318  
 And he that made had right to make the law ;  
 His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd,  
 The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.  
 Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife  
 With Him, the donor of eternal life,  
 Because the deed, by which his love confirms  
 The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms,  
 Compliance with his will your lot insures,  
 Accept it only, and the boon is yours.  
 And sure it is as kind to smile and give,  
 As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.  
 Love is not pedlar's trumpery, bought and sold ; 330  
 He will give freely, or he will withhold ;  
 His soul abhors a mercenary thought,  
 And him as deeply who abhors it not.  
 He stipulates indeed, but merely this,  
 That man will freely take an unbought bliss,  
 Will trust him for a faithful generous part,  
 Nor set a price upon a willing heart.  
 Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,  
 To place you where his saints his presence share,  
 This only can ; for this plain cause, express'd 340  
 In terms as plain—Himself has shut the rest.  
 But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,  
 The tidings of unpurchased Heaven create !  
 The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,  
 All speakers, yet all language at a loss.  
 From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound :  
 And beaux, adepts in every thing profound,  
 Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.  
 Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,  
 The explosion of the levell'd tube excites, 350  
 Where mouldering abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,  
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade ;

The screaming nations, hovering in mid air, 353  
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,  
 And seem to warn him never to repeat  
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinosà cries, ere yet he sips  
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,—  
 Adieu to all morality! if Grace  
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case. 360

The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—  
 If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!—  
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,  
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.—  
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,  
 That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes,  
 With nice attention, in a righteous scale,  
 And save or damn as these or those prevail.  
 I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,  
 And silence every fear with—God is just. 370  
 But if perchance, on some dull drizzling day,  
 A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,  
 If thus the important cause is to be tried,  
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side?  
 I soon recover from these needless frights,  
 And—God is merciful—sets all to rights.  
 Thus, between justice, as my prime support,  
 And mercy fled to as the last resort,  
 I glide and steal along with heaven in view,  
 And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you. 380

I never will believe, the colonel cries,  
 The sanguinary schemes that some devise,  
 Who make the good Creator, on their plan,  
 A being of less equity than man.  
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,  
 Which men comply with, even because they must,

Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure ? 387  
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure :  
 If sentence of eternal pain belong  
 To every sudden slip and transient wrong,  
 Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail  
 A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.  
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean  
 By Athanasian nonsense or Nicene),  
 My creed is, he is safe that does his best,  
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right, says an ensign ; and for aught I see,  
 Your faith and mine substantially agree ;  
 The best of every man's performance here,  
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere. 400

A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,  
 Honesty shines with great advantage there.  
 Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,  
 A decent caution and reserve at least.  
 A soldier's best is courage in the field,  
 With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd :  
 Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay ;  
 A hand as liberal as the light of day.  
 The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks,  
 Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks, 410  
 Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,  
 Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.

Sir Smug ! he cries (for lowest at the board,  
 Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,  
 His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug  
 How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug),  
 Your office is to winnow false from true ;  
 Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, What think you ?

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,  
 Which they that woo preferment rarely pass— 420

Fallible man, the Church-bred youth replies, 421  
 Is still found fallible, however wise ;  
 And differing judgments serve but to declare,  
 That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.  
 Of all it ever was my lot to read,  
 Of critics now alive or long since dead,  
 The book of all the world that charm'd me most  
 Was,—well-a-day, the title-page was lost ;—  
 The writer well remarks, a heart that knows  
 To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows, 430  
 With prudence always ready at our call,  
 To guide our use of it, is all in all.  
 Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,  
 I superadd a few essentials more ;  
 But these—excuse the liberty I take—  
 I waive just now, for conversation's sake.—  
 Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,  
 And add Right Reverend to Smug's honour'd name.

And yet our lot is given us in a land  
 Where busy arts are never at a stand ; 440  
 Where Science points her telescopic eye,  
 Familiar with the wonders of the sky ;  
 Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight,  
 Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light ;  
 Where nought eludes the persevering quest,  
 That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.

But above all, in her own light array'd,  
 See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd !  
 The sacred Book no longer suffers wrong,  
 Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ; 450  
 But speaks with plainness art could never mend,  
 What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.  
 God gives the word, the preachers throng around,  
 Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound :

That sound bespeaks salvation on her way, 455  
 The trumpet of a life-restoring day !  
 'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,  
 And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.  
 And still it spreads. See Germany send forth  
 Her sons <sup>1</sup> to pour it on the farthest north : 460  
 Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy  
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,  
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's Rose  
 On icy plains and in eternal snows.

O blest within the enclosure of your rocks,  
 Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks ;  
 No fertilizing streams your fields divide,  
 That show, reversed, the villas on their side ;  
 No groves have ye ; no cheerful sound of bird,  
 Or voice of turtle in your land is heard ; 470  
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell  
 Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell—  
 But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,  
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne ;  
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,  
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast ;  
 Beckons the legions of his storms away  
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey ;  
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,  
 And scorns to share it with the distant Sun. 480  
 —Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle !  
 And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile ;  
 The pride of letter'd Ignorance that binds  
 In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,  
 That decks with all the splendour of the true,  
 A false religion, is unknown to you.

<sup>1</sup> ' Her sons : ' the Moravian missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.





Feeds sparingly, communicates his store, 521  
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,  
 And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.  
 Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing ;  
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,  
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,  
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand,  
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,  
 If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift, 530  
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift :  
 The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes  
 Glistening at once with pity and surprise,  
 Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight  
 Of one whose birth was in a land of light,  
 Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,  
 And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied  
 The common care that waits on all beside,  
 Wild as if Nature there, void of all good, 540  
 Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood,  
 (Yet charge not heavenly skill with having plann'd  
 A plaything world unworthy of his hand),  
 Can see his love, though secret evil lurks  
 In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works ;  
 Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,  
 Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.  
 Hard task indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam !  
 Is Hope exotic ? grows it not at home ?  
 Yes ; but an object, bright as orient morn, 550  
 May press the eye too closely to be borne ;  
 A distant virtue we can all confess ;  
 It hurts our pride and moves our envy less.

Leuconomus<sup>1</sup> (beneath well-sounding Greek 554  
 I slur a name a poet must not speak)  
 Stood pilloried on Infamy's high stage,  
 And bore the pelting scorn of half an age,  
 The very butt of Slander, and the blot  
 For every dart that Malice ever shot.  
 The man that mention'd him, at once dismiss'd 560  
 All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd ;  
 His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,  
 And Perjury stood up to swear all true ;  
 His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,  
 His speech rebellion against common sense ;  
 A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule ;  
 And when by that of reason, a mere fool ;  
 The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd ;  
 Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.  
 Now Truth, perform thine office ; waft aside 570  
 The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride,  
 Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes  
 This more than monster in his proper guise.  
 He loved the world that hated him ; the tear  
 That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere ;  
 Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,  
 His only answer was, a blameless life ;  
 And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,  
 Had each a brother's interest in his heart.  
 Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed, 580  
 Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.  
 He follow'd Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,  
 His apostolic charity the same.  
 Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,  
 Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;

<sup>1</sup> ' Leuconomus : ' Whitefield.

Like him, he labour'd, and, like him, content      586  
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.

Blush, Calumny! and write upon his tomb,  
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,  
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,  
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended skies ;  
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,  
Against thine image in thy saint, O Lord!

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,  
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :  
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,  
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.  
Scripture indeed is plain, but God and he,  
On Scripture ground, are sure to disagree ;  
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,      600  
Than this his Maker has seen fit to give ;  
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,  
To take the bend his appetites ordain ;  
Contrived to suit frail Nature's crazy case,  
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.  
By this, with nice precision of design,  
He draws upon life's map a zig-zag line,  
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,  
And where his danger and God's wrath begin :  
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,      610  
His well-poised estimate of right and wrong,  
And finds the modish manners of the day,  
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,  
With what materials, on what ground you please,  
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,  
If not that hope the Scripture has required :  
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,  
With which hypocrisy for ever teems

(Though other follies strike the public eye, 620  
 And raise a laugh), pass unmolested by ;  
 But if, unblameable in word and thought,  
 A MAN arise, a man whom God has taught,  
 With all Elijah's dignity of tone,  
 And all the love of the beloved John,  
 To storm the citadels they build in air,  
 And smite the untemper'd wall ; 'tis death to spare—  
 To sweep away all refuges of lies,  
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,  
 LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes ; 630  
 To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,  
 All hope despair, that stands not on his cross :—  
 Except the few his God may have impress'd,  
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,  
 There dwells a consciousness in every breast,  
 That folly ends where genuine hope begins,  
 And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.  
 Nature opposes, with her utmost force,  
 This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ; 640  
 And while Religion seems to be her view,  
 Hates with a deep sincerity *the true* :  
 For this, of all that ever influenced man,  
 Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,  
 This only spares no lust, admits no plea,  
 But makes him, if at all, completely free ;  
 Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,  
 Of an eternal, universal war ;  
 Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,  
 Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles ;  
 Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels, 651  
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !

Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art, 653  
 Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,  
 Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,  
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!  
 While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,  
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,  
 Mighty to parry and push by God's Word  
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword, 660  
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,  
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known  
 Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own!  
 The silent progress of thy power is such,  
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,  
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,  
 And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.  
 Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command  
 A painter's skill into a poet's hand, 670  
 That, while I trembling trace a work divine,  
 Fancy may stand aloof from the design,  
 And light and shade and every stroke be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,  
 If ever when he sigh'd hast sigh'd again,  
 If ever on thine eyelid stood the tear  
 That pity had engender'd, drop one here.  
 This man was happy—had the world's good word,  
 And with it every joy it can afford;  
 Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife, 680  
 Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;  
 Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,  
 Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,  
 And whether at the toilet of the fair  
 He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there;

Or if in masculine debate he shared, 686  
 Insured him mute attention and regard.  
 Alas ! how changed ! Expressive of his mind,  
 His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined ;  
 Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin,  
 Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within ;  
 That Conscience there performs her proper part,  
 And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart !  
 Forsaking and forsaken of all friends,  
 He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends ;  
 Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,  
 And harder still as learnt beneath despair !  
 His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,  
 A dark importance saddens every day ;  
 He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd, 700  
 And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next !  
 Sweet music is no longer music here,  
 And laughter sounds like madness in his ear ;  
 His grief the world of all her power disarms ;  
 Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms ;  
 God's holy Word, once trivial in his view,  
 Now by the voice of his experience true,  
 Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone  
 Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.  
 Now let the bright reverse be known abroad ; 710  
 Say, man's a worm, and power belongs to God.  
 As when a felon, whom his country's laws  
 Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,  
 Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears  
 The shameful close of all his misspent years ;  
 If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,  
 A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,  
 Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,  
 The thunder seems to summon him away,

The warder at the door his key applies, 720  
 Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies :  
 If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,  
 When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,  
 The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,  
 He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;  
 A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,  
 And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks :  
 Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs  
 The comfort of a few poor added days,  
 Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul 730  
 Of him whom Hope has with a touch made whole.  
 'Tis heaven, all heaven descending on the wings  
 Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;  
 'Tis more,—'tis God diffused through every part,  
 'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.  
 Oh, welcome now the sun's once hated light ;  
 His noonday beams were never half so bright :  
 Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ  
 Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;  
 Unconscious nature, all that he surveys, 740  
 Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.  
 These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,  
 The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth ;  
 These move the censure and illiberal grin  
 Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin :  
 But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,  
 And heaven is all departed as a scroll :  
 And when, as Justice has long since decreed,  
 This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,  
 Then these thy glorious works, and they who share 750  
 That Hope which can alone exclude despair,  
 Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,  
 The brightest wonders of an endless day.



Happy the bard (if that fair name belong 754  
To him that blends no fable with his song)  
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,  
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,  
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,  
And, while they captivate, inform the mind :  
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil, 760  
And fruit reward his honourable toil :  
But happier far, who comfort those that wait  
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate ;  
Their language simple, as their manners meek,  
No shining ornaments have they to seek ;  
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents, waste,  
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste ;  
But, while they speak the wisdom of the skies,  
Which art can only darken and disguise,  
The abundant harvest, recompence divine, 770  
Repays their work—the gleanings only mine.

## CHARITY.

Quo nihil majus meliusve terris  
Fata donavere, bonique divi ;  
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum  
Tempora priscum.

HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

### THE ARGUMENT.

Invocation to Charity or Christian Love, 1—Ties of society, 15—Captain Cook's respect for social ties, even among savages, 23—Cook and Cortez contrasted, 35—Degraded state of Spain, the effect of divine retribution, 65—Commerce designed to promote national intercourse and improvement, 83—Encourages art, 97—A blessing invoked on lawful commerce, 123—Denunciation of the slave trade, 137—Slavery the most degrading of ills, 155—Unchristian, 180—Unlawful in the sight of the Almighty, 196—Blessed privilege of mitigating the sorrows of slavery, 218—Luxury of doing good, 244—Apostrophe to Liberty, 254—Tribute to Howard, 290—Pursuits of philosophy, 313—Aid of Revelation necessary to reason, 337—Divine truth the parent of Charity, 377—Supposed case of an optician lecturing to a blind nation, 379—Applied to a world spiritually blind, 395—Apostle's definition of charity, 422—Its heavenly fragrance, 435—Almsgiving as a means of lulling the conscience, 447—Satire deprecated, 485—Works of charity alone acceptable in the judgment day, 557—Charity exemplified in the works of Christ, 579—Blessed effects that would flow from the universal diffusion of charity, 604.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait  
On man's most dignified and happiest state,  
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,  
Chief grace below, and all in all above,  
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)  
A task I venture on, impell'd by thee :  
Oh, never seen but in thy blest effects,  
Nor felt but in the soul that Heaven selects ;  
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known  
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.

Come, prompt me with benevolent desires, 11  
 Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,  
 And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem  
 A poet's name, by making thee the theme.  
 Good working ever on a social plan,  
 By various ties attaches man to man :  
 We made at first, though free and unconfined,  
 One man the common father of the kind ;  
 That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,  
 Where seas or deserts part them from the rest, 20  
 Differing in language, manners, or in face,  
 Might feel themselves allied to all the race.  
 When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just  
 As ever mingled with heroic dust—  
 Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,  
 And in his country's glory sought his own ;  
 Wherever he found man to nature true,  
 The rights of man were sacred in his view ;  
 He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,  
 The simple native of the new-found isle ; 30  
 He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood  
 The tender argument of kindred blood ;  
 Nor would endure that any should control  
 His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.  
 But, though some nobler minds a law respect,  
 That none shall with impunity neglect,  
 In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,  
 To thwart its influence and its end defeat.  
 While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,  
 See Cortez odious for a world enslaved ! 40  
 Where wast thou then, sweet Charity, where then,  
 Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?  
 Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,  
 Or building hospitals on English ground ?

No!—Mammon makes the world his legatee 45  
 Through fear, not love ; and Heaven abhors the fee :  
 Wherever found (and all men need thy care),  
 Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.

The hand that slew till it could slay no more  
 Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore. 50

Their prince, as justly seated on his throne  
 As vain imperial Philip<sup>1</sup> on his own,  
 Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,

That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,  
 Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,

For scorning what they taught him to detest.

How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze

Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways !

God stood not, though he seem'd to stand, aloof ;

And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof : 60

The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,

The fretting plague is in the public purse,

The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,

Starved by that indolence their mines create.

Oh, could their ancient Incas rise again,

How would they take up Israel's taunting strain !

Art thou too fallen, Iberia ? Do we see

The robber and the murderer weak as we ?

Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise

Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies. 70

Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid

Low in the pits thine avarice has made.

We come with joy from our eternal rest,

To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.

Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand

Roll'd over all our desolated land ;

<sup>1</sup> 'Imperial Philip : ' a mistake ; Philip was never an Emperor ; and, besides, when Pizzaro (not Cortez) put the Inca Atahualpa to death, Philip was not on the throne.

Shook principalities and kingdoms down, 77  
 And made the mountains tremble at his frown ?  
 The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,  
 And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.  
 'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,  
 And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.

Again—the band of commerce was design'd  
 To associate all the branches of mankind ;  
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,  
 Trade is the golden girdle, of the globe.  
 Wise to promote whatever end he means,  
 God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes ;  
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,  
 And offers something to the general use ; 90  
 No land but listens to the common call,  
 And in return receives supply from all.  
 This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,  
 Cheers what were else an universal shade ;  
 Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,  
 And softens human rock-work into men.  
 Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,  
 Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,—  
 Not only fills Necessity's demand,  
 But overcharges her capacious hand : 100  
 Capricious Taste itself can crave no more  
 Than she supplies from her abounding store :  
 She strikes out all that Luxury can ask,  
 And gains new vigour at her endless task.  
 Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,  
 The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre ;  
 From her the canvas borrows light and shade,  
 And verse more lasting, hues that never fade.  
 She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,  
 Gives difficulty all the grace of ease, 110

And pours a torrent of sweet notes around, 111  
 Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of Art ; and Art thrives most,  
 Where Commerce has enrich'd the busy coast :  
 He catches all improvements in his flight,  
 Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,  
 Imports what others have invented well,  
 And stirs his own to match them, or excel.

'Tis thus, reciprocating, each with each,  
 Alternately the nations learn and teach ; 120  
 While Providence enjoins to every soul  
 A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvas, gallantly unfurl'd,  
 To furnish and accommodate a world,  
 To give the pole the produce of the sun,  
 And knit the unsocial climates into one !—  
 Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave  
 Impel the fleet whose errand is to save,  
 To succour wasted regions, and replace  
 The smile of Opulence in Sorrow's face ! 130

Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,  
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,  
 Charged with a freight transcending in its worth  
 The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,  
 That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,  
 A herald of God's love, to pagan lands !  
 But ah ! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,  
 For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,  
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,  
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man ? 140

The tender ties of father, husband, friend,  
 All bonds of nature in that moment end ;  
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,  
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.

The sable warrior, frantic with regret 145  
 Of her he loves, and never can forget,  
 Loses in tears the far receding shore,  
 But not the thought that they must meet no more ;  
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow  
 What has he left that he can yet forego ? 150  
 Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,  
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind ;  
 Puts off his generous nature ; and to suit  
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.  
 O most degrading of all ills that wait  
 On man, a mourner in his best estate !  
 All other sorrows Virtue may endure,  
 And find submission more than half a cure ;  
 Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd  
 To improve the fortitude that bears the load ; 160  
 To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,  
 The path of Wisdom, all whose paths are peace ;  
 But slavery !—Virtue dreads it as her grave :  
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave :  
 Or if the will and sovereignty of God  
 Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,  
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,  
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.  
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,  
 That has a heart and life in it, Be free ! 170  
 The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force  
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse :  
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack,  
 And, conscious of an unencumber'd back,  
 Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein,  
 Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;  
 Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs,  
 Nor stops, till, overleaping all delays,  
 He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name, 180  
 Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ?  
 Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead  
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?  
 So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold  
 To quit the forest and invade the fold ;  
 So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,  
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside ;  
 Not he, but his emergence forced the door,  
 He found it inconvenient to be poor.  
 Has God then given its sweetness to the cane, 190  
 Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?  
 Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,  
 Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd ?  
 Impudent blasphemy ! So Folly pleads,  
 And Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.  
 But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,  
 That man make man his prey, because he *must* ;  
 Still there is room for pity to abate  
 And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.  
 A Briton knows, or if he knows it not, 200  
 The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,  
 That souls have no discriminating hue,  
 Alike important in their Maker's view ;  
 That none are free from blemish since the fall,  
 And Love divine has paid one price for all.  
 The wretch that works and weeps without relief  
 Has One that notices his silent grief.  
 He from whose hands alone all power proceeds,  
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds ;  
 Considers all injustice with a frown ; 210  
 But marks the man that treads his fellow down.  
 Begone !—the whip and bell in that hard hand  
 Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command :



Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim 214  
 To scourge him, weariness his only blame.  
 Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod ;  
 To smite the poor is treason against God.

    Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,  
 While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd :  
 We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil, 220  
 Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,  
 Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,  
 Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade ;  
 Else who would lose, that had the power to improve  
 The occasion of transmuting fear to love ?  
 Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save !

    And he that scorns it is himself a slave.—  
 Inform his mind ; one flash of heavenly day  
 Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.  
 “ Beauty for ashes ” is a gift indeed, 230  
 And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.  
 Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,  
 While gratitude and love made service sweet,—  
 My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,  
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,  
 I was a bondman on my native plain,  
 Sin forged, and Ignorance made fast, the chain ;  
 Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,  
 Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue ;  
 Farewell my former joys ! I sigh no more 240  
 For Africa's once loved, benighted shore,—  
 Serving a benefactor, I am free ;  
 At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

    Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds  
 A stream of liberal and heroic deeds ;  
 The swell of pity, not to be confined  
 Within the scanty limits of the mind,

Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands, 248  
 A rich deposit, on the bordering lands :  
 These have an ear for His paternal call,  
 Who makes some rich for the supply of all ;  
 God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ ;  
 And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.

Oh, could I worship aught beneath the skies  
 That earth hath seen, or fancy can devise,  
 Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,  
 Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,  
 With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair  
 As ever dress'd a bank or scented summer air!

Duly, as ever on the mountain's height 260  
 The peep of Morning shed a dawning light ;  
 Again, when Evening, in her sober vest,  
 Drew the gray curtain of the fading west ;  
 My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,  
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days :  
 But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,  
 But His who gave thee, and preserves thee mine :

Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly  
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,—  
 This triple realm adores thee—thou art come 270  
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.

We feel thy force still active—at this hour  
 Enjoy immunity from priestly power,  
 While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,  
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.

Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong  
 Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long,  
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share  
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care.  
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built 280  
 To bind the lawless and to punish guilt ;

But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood, 282  
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood ;  
 And honest Merit stands on slippery ground,  
 Where covert guile and artifice abound :  
 Let just Restraint, for public peace design'd,  
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;  
 The foe of Virtue has no claim to thee,  
 But let insolvent Innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men, 290  
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;  
 Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,  
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed ;  
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame  
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)  
 I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.  
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign  
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine ;  
 To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,  
 To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe ; 300  
 To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,  
 Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,  
 But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,  
 And only sympathy like thine could reach ;  
 That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,  
 Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage ;  
 Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,  
 The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.  
 Oh that the voice of clamour and debate,  
 That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state, 310  
 Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea,  
 The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee !

Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,  
 Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way ;

Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends 315  
 Whatever steep Inquiry recommends,  
 Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll  
 Round other systems under her control,  
 Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light  
 That cheers the silent journey of the night, 320  
 And brings, at his return, a bosom charged  
 With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.  
 The treasured sweets of the capacious plan  
 That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,  
 All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue  
 Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new ;  
 He too has a connecting power, and draws  
 Man to the centre of the common cause,  
 Aiding a dubious and deficient sight  
 With a new medium and a purer light. 330  
 All truth is precious, if not all divine,  
 And what dilates the powers must needs refine.  
 He reads the skies, and, watching every change,  
 Provides the faculties an ampler range,  
 And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,  
 A prouder station on the general scale.  
 But Reason still, unless divinely taught,  
 Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought ;  
 The lamp of revelation only shows  
 What human wisdom cannot but oppose— 340  
 That man, in Nature's richest mantle clad,  
 And graced with all Philosophy can add,  
 Though fair without, and luminous within,  
 Is still the progeny and heir of sin.  
 Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride ;  
 He feels his need of an unerring guide,  
 And knows that falling he shall rise no more,  
 Unless the power that bade him stand, restore.

This is indeed philosophy ; this known, 349  
 Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own ;  
 And without this, whatever he discuss ;  
 Whether the space between the stars and us ;  
 Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,  
 Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea ;  
 The solemn trifler with his boasted skill  
 Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still :  
 Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes  
 Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.  
 Self-knowledge truly learn'd, of course implies  
 The rich possession of a nobler prize ; 360  
 For self to self, and God to man, reveal'd  
 (Two themes to Nature's eye for ever seal'd),  
 Are taught by rays that fly with equal pace  
 From the same centre of enlightening grace.  
 Here stay thy foot ; how copious, and how clear,  
 The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here !  
 Hark ! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,  
 Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,  
 Winding a secret or an open course,  
 And all supplied from an eternal source. 370  
 The ties of Nature do but feebly bind,  
 And Commerce partially reclaims mankind ;  
 Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,  
 May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride ;  
 But while his province is the reasoning part,  
 Has still a veil of midnight on his heart :  
 'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,  
 Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows,  
 What will not argument sometimes suppose ?) 380  
 An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,  
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.

Let Supposition lend her aid once more, 383  
 And land some grave optician on the shore :  
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,  
 Close to the part where vision ought to be ;  
 But finds that, though his tubes assist the sight,  
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.  
 He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud  
 A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd ; 390  
 He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,  
 As men of depth in erudition use ;  
 But all he gains for his harangue is—Well—  
 What monstrous lies some travellers will tell !  
 The soul whose sight all-quickenning grace renews,  
 Takes the resemblance of the good she views,  
 As diamonds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,  
 Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.  
 She speaks of Him, her author, guardian, friend,  
 Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end, 400  
 In language warm as all that love inspires ;  
 And, in the glow of her intense desires,  
 Pants to communicate her noble fires.  
 She sees a world stark blind to what employs  
 Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys ;  
 Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,  
 Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all :  
 Herself as weak as her support is strong,  
 She feels that frailty she denied so long ;  
 And, from a knowledge of her own disease, 410  
 Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.  
 Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,  
 The reign of genuine Charity commence :  
 Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,  
 She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;

The truth she loves, a sightless world blaspheme, 416  
 'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream !  
 The danger they discern not, they deny ;  
 Laugh at their only remedy, and die.  
 But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,  
 Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.  
 Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,  
 Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child ;  
 She makes excuses where she might condemn—  
 Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them :  
 Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,  
 The worst suggested, she believes the best ;  
 Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,  
 And if perhaps made angry, soon appeased ;  
 She rather waives than will dispute her right ; 430  
 And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an apostle drew,  
 The bright original was one he knew ;  
 Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one that holds communion with the skies,  
 Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,  
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
 'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings ;  
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
 That tells us whence his treasures are supplied. 440  
 So when a ship well freighted with the stores  
 The sun matures on India's spicy shores,  
 Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvas furl'd,  
 In some safe haven of our western world ;  
 'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,  
 The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,  
 To lull the painful malady with alms ;

But charity not feign'd, intends alone 449  
 Another's good—theirs centres in their own ;  
 And, too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,  
 Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.  
 Flavia, most tender of her own good name,  
 Is rather careless of a sister's fame :  
 Her superfluity the poor supplies,  
 But if she touch a character, it dies.  
 The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,  
 She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :  
 No charity but alms aught values she,  
 Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree. 460  
 How many deeds with which the world has rung,  
 From Pride, in league with Ignorance, have sprung !  
 But God o'errules all human follies still,  
 And bends the tough materials to his will.  
 A conflagration, or a wintry flood,  
 Has left some hundreds without home or food :  
 Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,  
 While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.  
 The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew,  
 But first the squire's, a compliment but due : 470  
 With slow deliberation he unties  
 His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes ;  
 And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,  
 Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;  
 Till finding, what he might have found before,  
 A smaller piece amidst the precious store,  
 Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,  
 He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.  
 Gold, to be sure !—throughout the town 'tis told  
 How the good squire gives never less than gold. 480  
 From motives such as his, though not the best,  
 Springs in due time supply for the distress'd,



Not less effectual than what love bestows, 483  
 Except that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,  
 And wound the grace I mean to recommend  
 (Though vice derided with a just design  
 Implies no trespass against love divine),  
 Once more I would adopt the graver style ;  
 A teacher should be sparing of his smile. 490

Unless a love of virtue light the flame,  
 Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame ;  
 He hides behind a magisterial air  
 His own offences, and strips others' bare ;  
 Affects, indeed, a most humane concern,  
 That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn ;  
 That mulish Folly, not to be reclaim'd  
 By softer methods, must be made ashamed,—  
 But (I might instance in St Patrick's dean)  
 Too often rails to gratify his spleen. 500

Most satirists are indeed a public scourge ;  
 Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;  
 Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,  
 The milk of their good purpose all to curd.  
 Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,  
 By lean despair upon an empty purse,  
 The wild assassins start into the street,  
 Prepared to poniard whomso'er they meet.  
 No skill in swordsmanship, however just,  
 Can be secure against a madman's thrust ; 510  
 And even Virtue, so unfairly match'd,  
 Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.  
 When Scandal has new minted an old lie,  
 Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,  
 'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears  
 Gathering around it with erected ears ;

A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd ; 517  
 Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud ;  
 Just as the sapience of an author's brain  
 Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.  
 Strange ! how the frequent interjected dash  
 Quickens a market, and helps off the trash ;  
 The important letters that include the rest,  
 Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd ;  
 Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,  
 The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.  
 So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,  
 Worms may be caught by either head or tail ;  
 Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,  
 They meet with little pity, no redress ; 530  
 Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,  
 Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence  
 To peace and charity, is mere pretence :  
 A bold remark,—but which, if well applied,  
 Would humble many a towering poet's pride.  
 Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,  
 And had no other play-place for his wit ;  
 Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,  
 He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ; 540  
 Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,  
 The cause of virtue could not be his view.  
 At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes,  
 The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,  
 But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,  
 That, while they please, possess us with alarms :  
 So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight  
 On all the wings of holiday delight),  
 Where stands that monument of ancient power,  
 Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower, 550

Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small, 551  
 In starry forms disposed upon the wall :  
 We wonder, as we gazing stand below,  
 That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;  
 But, though we praise the exact designer's skill,  
 Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day  
 When all disguises shall be rent away,  
 That square not truly with the Scripture plan,  
 Nor spring from love to God, or love to man. 560  
 As he ordains things sordid in their birth  
 To be resolved into their parent earth ;  
 And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,  
 Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs ;  
 So self starts nothing but what tends apace  
 Home to the goal where it began the race.  
 Such as our motive is, our aim must be ;  
 If this be servile, that can ne'er be free ;  
 If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,  
 We glorify that self, not Him we ought : 570  
 Such virtues had need prove their own reward,  
 The Judge of all men owes them no regard.  
 True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,  
 Fed by the love from which it rose at first,  
 Thrives against hope, and in the rudest scene,  
 Storms but enliven its unfading green ;  
 Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,  
 Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.  
 To look at Him who form'd us and redeem'd,  
 So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd ; 580  
 To see a God stretch forth his human hand,  
 To uphold the boundless scenes of his command ;  
 To recollect that, in a form like ours,  
 He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers,

Captivity led captive, rose to claim 585  
 The wreath he won so dearly in our name ;  
 That, throned above all height, he condescends  
 To call the few that trust in him his friends ;  
 That in the Heaven of heavens, that space he deems  
 Too scanty for the exertion of his beams, 590  
 And shines, as if impatient to bestow  
 Life and a kingdom upon worms below ;  
 That sight imparts a never-dying flame,  
 Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.  
 Like Him, the soul, thus kindled from above,  
 Spreads wide her arms of universal love,  
 And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,  
 Includes creation in her close embrace.  
 Behold a Christian !—and without the fires  
 The Founder of that name alone inspires, 600  
 Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,  
 To make the shining prodigy complete,  
 Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !  
 Were love, in these the world's last dotting years,  
 As frequent as the want of it appears,  
 The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold  
 Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;  
 Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease ;  
 And even the dipp'd and sprinkled, live in peace ;  
 Each heart would quit its prison in the breast, 610  
 And flow in free communion with the rest.  
 The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep,  
 Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;  
 His budget, often fill'd, yet always poor,  
 Might swing at ease behind his study door,  
 No longer prey upon our annual rents,  
 Nor scare the nation with its big contents :

Disbanded legions freely might depart,  
 And slaying man would cease to be an art.  
 No learned disputants would take the field,  
 Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;  
 Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,  
 Pelting each other for the public good.  
 Did Charity prevail, the press would prove  
 A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;  
 And I might spare myself the pains to show  
 What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

618

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay  
 With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,  
 In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,  
 The attention pleasure has so much engross'd.  
 But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,  
 And prove too weak for so divine a theme,  
 Let Charity forgive me a mistake  
 That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,  
 And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

630

# CONVERSATION.

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Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,  
Nec percussa juvant fluctû tam litora, nec quæ  
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

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VIRG. Ecl. 5.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Conversation a gift, but dependent on culture, 1—To talk not always to converse, 8—Results often worthless, 15—Impure conversation reprobated, 31—Profane swearing condemned, 55—Unprofitable debates, 81—Dogmatism and sophistry, 91—The scrupulously cautious in conversation, 119—Opposite error of positive assertion, 145—Point of honour erroneously deemed useful, 163—Duelling savage and dastardly, 171—Encounters with fists recommended in preference, 195—Tiresomeness of long tales, 203—Truthfulness enforced, 217—Judicious story-telling, 235—Smoking condemned, 245—Emphatic speakers, 269—Coxcombry of different sorts, 283—State of health made a subject of conversation, 311—Fretful tempers, 325—Bashfulness, 347—Often the effect of vanity, 363—Its influence, 379—The sportsman, 405—True idea of conversation, 427—Corrupted by fashion, 457—Converse on the way to Emmaus, 505—Such as God approves, 537—Divine truth the only lasting subject of conversation, 547—Objections made to it, 575—The result of ignorance, 587—Christian converse, 595—Age mellows the speech, 639—Fanaticism, 651—Communion of the good, 679—Conversation should be spontaneous, not forced, 703—True religion suspected and branded as hypocrisy, 719—Vindicated from the charge, 749—Apology for digressing, 789—The poet's ignorance of the world may have led him into error, 798—Conversation refined and purified by religion, 887.

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense  
To every man his modicum of sense,  
And Conversation, in its better part,  
May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,  
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,  
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.  
Words learn'd by rote, a parrot may rehearse,  
But talking is not always to converse ;  
Not more distinct from harmony divine,  
The constant creaking of a country sign.

10

As alphabets in ivory employ, 11  
 Hour after hour, the yet unletter'd boy,  
 Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee  
 Those seeds of science call'd his A B C ;  
 So language in the mouths of the adult—  
 Witness its insignificant result—  
 Too often proves an implement of play,  
 A toy to sport with, and pass time away.  
 Collect at evening what the day brought forth,  
 Compress the sum into its solid worth, 20  
 And if it weigh the importance of a fly,  
 The scales are false, or algebra a lie.  
 Sacred interpreter of human thought,  
 How few respect or use thee as they ought !  
 But all shall give account of every wrong,  
 Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue ;  
 Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,  
 Or sell their glory at a market price ;  
 Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,  
 The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon. 30  
 There is a prurience in the speech of some,  
 Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb ;  
 His wise forbearance has their end in view,  
 They fill their measure, and receive their due.  
 The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,  
 Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,  
 Would drive them forth from the resort of men,  
 And shut up every satyr in his den.  
 Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,  
 Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth ! 40  
 Infectious as impure, your blighting power  
 Taints in its rudiments the promised flower ;  
 Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,  
 Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.





A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks, 79  
 Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,  
 And make colloquial happiness your care,  
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,  
 A duel in the form of a debate.

The clash of arguments and jar of words,  
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,  
 Decide no question with their tedious length,  
 For opposition gives opinion strength,  
 Divert the champions, prodigal of breath,  
 And put the peaceably-disposed to death. 90

Oh, thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,  
 Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;  
 Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue.

I am not surely always in the wrong !  
 'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,  
 A fool must now and then be right by chance.

Not that all freedom of dissent I blame ;  
 No—there I grant the privilege I claim.  
 A disputable point is no man's ground ;  
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around. 100

Discourse may want an animated—No,  
 To brush the surface, and to make it flow ;  
 But still remember, if you mean to please,  
 To press your point with modesty and ease.  
 The mark at which my juster aim I take,  
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake.

Set your opinion at whatever pitch,  
 Knots and impediments make something hitch ;  
 Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,  
 Your thread of argument is snapp'd again ; 110  
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,  
 Will judge himself deceived,—and prove it too.

Vociferated logic kills me quite,— 113  
 A noisy man is always in the right ;  
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,  
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,  
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,  
 Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt !  
 DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man—  
 Yes—you may catch him tripping, if you can. 120  
 He would not, with a peremptory tone,  
 Assert the nose upon his face his own ;  
 With hesitation admirably slow,  
 He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.  
 His evidence, if he were call'd by law  
 To swear to some enormity he saw,  
 For want of prominence and just relief,  
 Would hang an honest man and save a thief.  
 Through constant dread of giving truth offence,  
 He ties up all his hearers in suspense ; 130  
 Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;  
 What he remembers, seems to have forgot ;  
 His sole opinion, whatso'er befall,  
 Centering at last in having none at all.  
 Yet, though he tease and balk your listening ear,  
 He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;  
 Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme  
 A sceptic in philosophy may seem,  
 Reduced to practice, his beloved rule  
 Would only prove him a consummate fool. 140  
 Useless in him alike both brain and speech,  
 Fate having placed all truth above his reach ;  
 His ambiguities his total sum,  
 He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.  
 Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,  
 The positive pronounce without dismay ;

Their want of light and intellect supplied 147  
 By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride :  
 Without the means of knowing right from wrong,  
 They always are decisive, clear, and strong ;  
 Where others toil with philosophic force,  
 Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,  
 Flings at your head conviction in the lump,  
 And gains remote conclusions at a jump :  
 Their own defect, invisible to them,  
 Seen in another, they at once condemn ;  
 And, though self-idolised in every case,  
 Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.  
 The cause is plain, and not to be denied,  
 The proud are always most provoked by pride : 160  
 Few competitions but engender spite,  
 And those the most, where neither has a right.  
     The point of honour has been deem'd of use,  
 To teach good manners, and to curb abuse :  
 Admit it true, the consequence is clear,  
 Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,  
 And at the bottom barbarous still and rude,  
 We are restrain'd indeed, but not subdued.  
 The very remedy, however sure,  
 Springs from the mischief it intends to cure, 170  
 And savage in its principle appears,  
 Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.  
 'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend  
 Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;  
 That now and then a hero must decease,  
 That the surviving world may live in peace.  
 Perhaps at last, close scrutiny may show  
 The practice dastardly, and mean, and low ;  
 That men engage in it compell'd by force,  
 And fear, not courage, is its proper source ; 180

The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear 181  
 Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.  
 At least to trample on our Maker's laws,  
 And hazard life for any or no cause,  
 To rush into a fix'd eternal state,  
 Out of the very flames of rage and hate,  
 Or send another shivering to the bar  
 With all the guilt of such unnatural war,  
 Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,  
 On reason's verdict is a madman's deed. 190  
 Am I to set my life upon a throw,  
 Because a bear is rude and surly? No—  
 A moral, sensible, and well-bred man  
 Will not affront me, and no other can.  
 Were I empower'd to regulate the lists,  
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists ;  
 A Trojan combat would be something new,  
 Let DARES beat ENTELLUS black and blue ;  
 Then each might show, to his admiring friends,  
 In honourable bumps his rich amends, 200  
 And carry, in contusions of his skull,  
 A satisfactory receipt in full.  
 A story, in which native humour reigns,  
 Is often useful, always entertains ;  
 A graver fact, enlisted on your side,  
 May furnish illustration, well applied ;  
 But sedentary weavers of long tales  
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.  
 'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,  
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth, 210  
 And echo conversations, dull and dry,  
 Embellish'd with, He said, and, So said I.  
 At every interview their route the same,  
 The repetition makes attention lame :

We bustle up with unsuccessful speed, 215  
 And in the saddest part cry—Droll indeed !  
 The path of narrative with care pursue,  
 Still making probability your clue ;  
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,  
 And let them guide you to a decent end. 220  
 Of all ambitions man may entertain,  
 The worst that can invade a sickly brain,  
 Is that which angles hourly for surprise,  
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.  
 Credulous infancy, or age as weak,  
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,  
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,  
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.  
 A great retailer of this curious ware,  
 Having unloaded and made many stare, 230  
 Can this be true ? an arch observer cries—  
 Yes (rather moved), I saw it with these eyes !  
 Sir ! I believe it on that ground alone ;  
 I could not, had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct ;  
 The language plain, and incidents well link'd ;  
 Tell not as new what everybody knows,  
 And, new or old, still hasten to a close ;  
 There centering in a focus round and neat,  
 Let all your rays of information meet : 240  
 What neither yields us profit nor delight  
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night ;  
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,  
 Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,  
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough ;  
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,  
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.

Such often, like the tube they so admire, 249  
 Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.  
 Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,  
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,  
 Thy worst effect is banishing for hours  
 The sex whose presence civilizes ours.

Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,  
 To poison vermin that infest his plants :  
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,  
 As to despise the glory of our kind,  
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms  
 As little mercy as he grubs and worms ? 260

They dare not wait the riotous abuse  
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,  
 When wine has given indecent language birth,  
 And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth ;  
 For seaborne Venus her attachment shows  
 Still to that element from which she rose,  
 And, with a quiet which no fumes disturb,  
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,  
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose, 270  
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,  
 Touch'd with a magnet, had attracted his.  
 His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,  
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,—  
 An extract of his diary—no more,  
 A tasteless journal of the day before.

He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,  
 Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again ;  
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk  
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk. 280  
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,  
 Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room, 283  
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume ;  
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—  
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show ?  
 His odoriferous attempts to please  
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees ;  
 But we that make no honey, though we sting,  
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing. 290  
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,  
 What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*,  
 An argument of cogence, we may say,  
 Why such a one should keep himself away.  
 A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,  
 Quite as absurd, though not so light, as he :  
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,  
 An oracle within an empty cask,  
 The solemn fop ; significant and budge ;  
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge : 300  
 He says but little, and that little said  
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.  
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,  
 But when you knock, it never is at home :  
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,  
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage ;  
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove  
 An absent friend's fidelity and love ;  
 But when unpack'd, your disappointment groans  
 To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones. 310  
 Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,  
 In making known how oft they have been sick,  
 And give us, in recitals of disease,  
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees ;  
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,  
 How an emetic or cathartic sped ;

Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,                   317  
 Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.  
 Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,  
 Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill ;  
 And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps !  
 They put on a damp nightcap and relapse ;  
 They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;  
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,  
 You always do too little or too much :  
 You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,  
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;  
 You fall at once into a lower key,  
 That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.                   330  
 The southern sash admits too strong a light,  
 You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.  
 He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive  
 To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.  
 Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish ;  
 With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.  
 He takes what he at first profess'd to loathe,  
 And in due time feeds heartily on both ;  
 Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,  
 He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.                   340  
 Your hope to please him vain on every plan,  
 Himself should work that wonder if he can.  
 Alas ! his efforts double his distress,  
 He likes yours little, and his own still less.  
 Thus always teasing others, always teased,  
 His only pleasure is—to be displeas'd.

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain  
 Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,  
 And bear the marks, upon a blushing face,  
 Of needless shame and self-imposed disgrace.                   350



Our sensibilities are so acute, 351  
 The fear of being silent makes us mute.  
 We sometimes think we could a speech produce  
 Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;  
 But being tied, it dies upon the lip,  
 Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :  
 Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,  
 Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.  
 Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd ;  
 It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd, 360  
 By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,  
 To fear each other, fearing none beside.  
 The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,  
 Self-searching with an introverted eye,  
 Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,  
 The vainest corner of our own vain heart :  
 For ever aiming at the world's esteem,  
 Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;  
 In other eyes our talents rarely shown,  
 Become at length so splendid in our own, 370  
 We dare not risk them into public view,  
 Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.  
 True modesty is a discerning grace,  
 And only blushes in the proper place ;  
 But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,  
 Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear :  
 Humility the parent of the first,  
 The last by Vanity produced and nursed.  
 The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,  
 Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate ; 380  
 Yes, ma'am, and No, ma'am, utter'd softly, show  
 Every five minutes how the minutes go ;  
 Each individual suffering a constraint  
 Poetry may, but colours cannot, paint ;

As if in close committee on the sky, 385  
 Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;  
 And finds a changing clime a happy source  
 Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.  
 We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,  
 Like conservators of the public health, 390  
 Of epidemic throats, if such there are,  
 And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.  
 That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,  
 Fill'd up at last with interesting news,  
 Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,  
 And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed ;  
 But fear to call a more important cause,  
 As if 'twere treason against English laws.  
 The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,  
 As from a seven years' transportation, home, 400  
 And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,  
 Recovering what we lost we know not how,  
 The faculties that seem'd reduced to nought,  
 Expression and the privilege of thought.  
 The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,  
 I give him over as a desperate case.  
 Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,  
 Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;  
 And though the fox he follows may be tamed,  
 A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd. 410  
 Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,  
 Whose only fit companion is his horse,  
 Or if, deserving of a better doom,  
 The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.  
 Yet even the rogue that serves him, though he stand  
 To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,  
 Prefers his fellow-grooms with much good sense,  
 Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.

If neither horse nor groom affect the squire, 419  
 Where can at last his jockeyship retire ?  
 Oh, to the club, the scene of savage joys,  
 The school of coarse good-fellowship and noise ;  
 There, in the sweet society of those  
 Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,  
 Let him improve his talent if he can,  
 Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,  
 Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,  
 Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand  
 Given him a soul, and bade him understand. 430  
 The reasoning power vouchsafed, of course inferr'd  
 The power to clothe that reason with his word ;  
 For all is perfect that God works on earth,  
 And He that gives conception, aids the birth.  
 If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,  
 What uses of his boon the Giver would.  
 The mind, despatch'd upon her busy toil,  
 Should range where Providence has bless'd the soil ;  
 Visiting every flower with labour meet,  
 And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet, 440  
 She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,  
 And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,  
 That good diffused may more abundant grow,  
 And speech may praise the Power that bids it flow.  
 Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,  
 That fills the listening lover with delight,  
 Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,  
 To learn the twittering of a meaner bird ?  
 Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,  
 That odious libel on a human voice ? 450  
 No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,  
 Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;

The melody that was at first design'd 453  
 To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,  
 Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,  
 In the last scene of her six thousand years :  
 Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,  
 Whom man, for his own hurt, permits to reign,  
 Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,  
 And would degrade her votary to an ape, 460  
 The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,  
 Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue ;  
 There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,  
 Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,  
 And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,  
 Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.  
 'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree,  
 That none could frame or ratify but she,  
 That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,  
 Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within, 470  
 God and his attributes (a field of day  
 Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),  
 Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,  
 Be never named in ears esteem'd polite ;  
 That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,  
 Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,  
 A close designer not to be believed,  
 Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.  
 Oh, folly worthy of the nurse's lap,  
 Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap ! 480  
 Is it incredible, or can it seem  
 A dream to any except those that dream,  
 That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,  
 Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire ?  
 Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,  
 And veil your daring crest that braves the skies ;

That air of insolence affronts your God, 487  
 You need his pardon, and provoke his rod :  
 Now, in a posture that becomes you more  
 Than that heroic strut assumed before,  
 Know, your arrears with every hour accrue  
 For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.  
 The time is short, and there are souls on earth,  
 Though future pain may serve for present mirth,  
 Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,  
 By Fashion taught, forbade them once to name,  
 And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,  
 Have proved them truths too big to be express'd.  
 Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,  
 Sure to succeed, the remedy they found : 500  
 Touch'd by that Power that you have dared to mock,  
 That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,  
 Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,  
 That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.  
 It happen'd on a solemn eventide,  
 Soon after He that was our Surety died,  
 Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,  
 The scene of all those sorrows left behind,  
 Sought their own village, busied as they went,  
 In musings worthy of the great event : 510  
 They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,  
 Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,  
 Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,  
 A deep memorial graven on their hearts.  
 The recollection, like a vein of ore,  
 The farther traced, enrich'd them still the more ;  
 They thought him, and they justly thought him, one  
 Sent to do more than he appear'd to have done ;  
 To exalt a people, and to place them high  
 Above all else, and wonder'd he should die. 520

Ere yet they brought their journey to an end, 521  
 A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,  
 And ask'd them, with a kind engaging air,  
 What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.  
 Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,  
 And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,  
 Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well,  
 The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,  
 That, reaching home,—The night, they said, is near,  
 We must not now be parted ; sojourn here. 530

The new acquaintance soon became a guest,  
 And, made so welcome at their simple feast,  
 He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,  
 And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !  
 Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say,  
 Did they not burn within us by the way ?

Now theirs was converse such as it behoves  
 Man to maintain, and such as God approves ;  
 Their views indeed were indistinct and dim,  
 But yet successful, being aim'd at him. 540  
 Christ and his character their only scope,  
 Their object, and their subject, and their hope ;  
 They felt what it became them much to feel,  
 And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,  
 Found him as prompt as their desire was true,  
 To spread the new-born glories in their view.

Well—what are ages and the lapse of time  
 Match'd against truths, as lasting as sublime ?  
 Can length of years on God himself exact,  
 Or make that fiction which was once a fact ? 550  
 No—marble and recording brass decay,  
 And, like the graver's memory, pass away :  
 The works of man inherit, as is just,  
 Their author's frailty, and return to dust :

But Truth divine for ever stands secure, 555  
 Its head as guarded as its base is sure ;  
 Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,  
 The pillar of the eternal plan appears,  
 The raving storm and dashing wave defies,  
 Built by that Architect who built the skies. 560  
 Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour  
 That love of Christ in all its quickening power ;  
 And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,  
 Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,  
 Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows  
 A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.  
 O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,  
 Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,  
 When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet  
 Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat, 570  
 Discourse, as if released and safe at home,  
 Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,  
 And spread the sacred treasures of the breast  
 Upon the lap of covenanted Rest !

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,  
 Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings ?  
 Canting and whining out all day the word,  
 And half the night ?—fanatic and absurd !  
 Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,  
 Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs, 580  
 Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,  
 And chase the splenetic dull hours away ;  
 Content on earth in earthly things to shine,  
 Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,  
 Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,  
 And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,  
 Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.

Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right, 589  
 The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light ?  
 Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour,  
 That come to waft us out of Sorrow's power,  
 Obscure or quench a faculty that finds  
 Its happiest soil in the serenest minds ?  
 Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,  
 And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,  
 But gives it usefulness unknown before,  
 And, purifying, makes it shine the more.  
 A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,  
 A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight ; 600  
 Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,  
 'Tis always active on the side of truth ;  
 Temperance and peace insure its healthful state,  
 And make it brightest at its latest date.  
 Oh, I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,  
 Ere life go down, to see such sights again)  
 A veteran warrior in the Christian field,  
 Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;  
 Grave without dulness, learned without pride,  
 Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed ; 610  
 A man that would have foil'd at their own play,  
 A dozen would-be's of the modern day ;  
 Who, when occasion justified its use,  
 Had wit as bright as ready to produce,  
 Could fetch from records of an earlier age,  
 Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,  
 His rich materials, and regale your ear  
 With strains it was a privilege to hear ;  
 Yet above all, his luxury supreme,  
 And his chief glory, was the Gospel theme ; 620  
 There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,  
 His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,



Ambitious, not to shine or to excel, 623  
 But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,  
 When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,  
 Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,  
 And wiser men's ability pretence.  
 Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,  
 Such men are not forgot as soon as cold, 630  
 Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,  
 Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume :  
 And to say truth, though in its early prime,  
 And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,  
 Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,  
 That in the valley of decline are lost,  
 And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,  
 Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years ;  
 Yet Age, by long experience well inform'd,  
 Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd, 640  
 That fire abated which impels rash youth,  
 Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,  
 As time improves the grape's authentic juice,  
 Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,  
 And claims a reverence in its shortening day,  
 That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.  
 The fruits of Age, less fair, are yet more sound,  
 Than those a brighter season pours around ;  
 And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,  
 Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure. 650

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,  
 And dreaded more than a contagious touch ?  
 I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,  
 That fire is catching, if you draw too near ;  
 But sage observers oft mistake the flame,  
 And give true piety that odious name.

To tremble (as the creature of an hour  
 Ought at the view of an Almighty power) 657  
 Before His presence, at whose awful throne  
 All tremble in all worlds, except our own ;  
 To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,  
 And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,  
 Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice,  
 And free from bias, must approve the choice,  
 Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,  
 And wild as madness in the world's esteem.  
 But that disease, when soberly defined,  
 Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind ;  
 It views the truth with a distorted eye,  
 And either warps or lays it useless by ; 670  
 'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws  
 Its sordid nourishment from man's applause ;  
 And while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,  
 Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.  
 'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds  
 In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,  
 Shines in the dark, but, usher'd into day,  
 The stench remains, the lustre dies away  
 True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed  
 Of hearts in union mutually disclosed : 680  
 And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,  
 Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.  
 Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,  
 Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,  
 A dark confederacy against the laws  
 Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause :  
 They build each other up with dreadful skill,  
 As bastions set point-blank against God's will ;  
 Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,  
 Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out ; 690

Call legions up from hell to back the deed, 691  
 And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed :  
 But souls that carry on a blest exchange  
 Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,  
 And with a fearless confidence make known  
 The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,  
 Daily derive increasing light and force  
 From such communion in their pleasant course ;  
 Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,  
 Meet their opposers with united strength, 700  
 And, one in heart, in interest, and design,  
 Gird up each other to the race divine.

But Conversation, choose what theme we may,  
 And chiefly when religion leads the way,  
 Should flow, like waters after summer showers,  
 Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.  
 The Christian, in whose soul, though now distress'd,  
 Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,  
 When all his glowing language issued forth  
 With God's deep stamp upon its current worth, 710  
 Will speak without disguise, and must impart,  
 Sad as it is, his undissembling heart  
 Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,  
 Or seem to boast a fire, he does not feel.  
 The song of Zion is a tasteless thing,  
 Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,  
 The soul can mix with the celestial bands,  
 And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world who treat  
 All but their own experience as deceit ! 720  
 Will they believe, though credulous enough  
 To swallow much upon much weaker proof,  
 That there are blest inhabitants of earth,  
 Partakers of a new ethereal birth,

Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged 725  
 From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,  
 Their very language of a kind that speaks  
 The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,  
 Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,  
 As Tully with philosophy once dealt, 730  
 And, in the silent watches of the night,  
 And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,  
 The social walk, or solitary ride,  
 Keep still the dear companion at their side ?  
 No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,  
 God's work may serve an ape upon a stage  
 With such a jest as fill'd with hellish glee  
 Certain invisibles as shrewd as he ;  
 But veneration or respect finds none,  
 Save from the subjects of that work alone. 740  
 The World grown old, her deep discernment shows,  
 Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,  
 Peruses closely the true Christian's face,  
 And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace,  
 Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,  
 And finds hypocrisy close lurking there ;  
 And, serving God herself through mere constraint,  
 Concludes his unfeign'd love of him a feint.  
 And yet, God knows, look human nature through  
 (And in due time the World shall know it too), 750  
 That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,  
 That after man's defection laid all waste,  
 Sincerity towards the heart-searching God  
 Has made the new-born creature her abode,  
 Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls  
 Till the last fire burn all between the poles.  
 Sincerity ! why, 'tis his only pride,  
 Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,

He knows that God demands his heart entire, 759  
 And gives him all his just demands require.  
 Without it, his pretensions were as vain  
 As, having it, he deems the World's disdain ;  
 That great defect would cost him not alone  
 Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;  
 His birthright shaken, and no longer clear  
 Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere :  
 Retort the charge, and let the World be told  
 She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;  
 That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead  
 A cold misgiving and a killing dread ; 770  
 That while in health, the ground of her support  
 Is madly to forget that life is short ;  
 That sick, she trembles, knowing she must die,  
 Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;  
 That while she dotes and dreams that she believes,  
 She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives ;  
 Her utmost reach, historical assent,  
 The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant ;  
 That truth itself is in her head as dull  
 And useless as a candle in a skull ; 780  
 And all her love of God a groundless claim,  
 A trick upon the canvas, painted flame.  
 Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,  
 And all her censures of the work of grace,  
 Are insincere, meant only to conceal  
 A dread she would not, yet is forced, to feel ;  
 That in her heart the Christian she reveres,  
 And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.  
 A poet does not work by square or line,  
 As smiths and joiners perfect a design ; 790  
 At least we moderns, our attention less,  
 Beyond the example of our sires digress,

And claim a right to scamper and run wide, 793  
 Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.  
 The World and I fortuitously met,  
 I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt ;  
 She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,  
 And, having struck the balance, now proceed.  
 Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd  
 Since she and I conversed together last, 800  
 And I have lived recluse in rural shades,  
 Which seldom a distinct report pervades,  
 Great changes and new manners have occur'd,  
 And blest reforms that I have never heard,  
 And she may now be as discreet and wise,  
 As once absurd in all discerning eyes.  
 Sobriety perhaps may now be found  
 Where once Intoxication press'd the ground ;  
 The subtle and injurious may be just,  
 And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust ; 810  
 Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd ;  
 Charity may relax the miser's fist ;  
 The gamester may have cast his cards away,  
 Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.  
 It has indeed been told me (with what weight,  
 How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)  
 That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,  
 Revived, are hastening into fresh repute,  
 And gods and goddesses, discarded long,  
 Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song, 820  
 Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,  
 And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;  
 That certain feasts are instituted now,  
 Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;  
 That all Olympus through the country roves,  
 To consecrate our few remaining groves,

And Echo learns politely to repeat 827  
 The praise of names for ages obsolete ;  
 That having proved the weakness, it should seem,  
 Of revelation's ineffectual beam,  
 To bring the passions under sober sway,  
 And give the moral springs their proper play,  
 They mean to try what may at last be done,  
 By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,  
 And whether Roman rites may not produce  
 The virtues of old Rome for English use.  
 May such success attend the pious plan,  
 May Mercury once more embellish man,  
 Grace him again with long-forgotten arts,  
 Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts, 840  
 Make him athletic as in days of old,  
 Learn'd at the bar, in the palæstra bold,  
 Divest the rougher sex of female airs,  
 And teach the softer not to copy theirs :  
 The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught  
 Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.  
 'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,  
 For us plain folks, and all who side with us,  
 To build our altar, confident and bold,  
 And say, as stern Elijah said of old, 850  
 The strife now stands upon a fair award,  
 If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord ;  
 If he be silent, faith is all a whim,  
 Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,  
 Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,  
 Some never seem so wide of their intent,  
 As when returning to the theme they meant ;  
 As mendicants, whose business is to roam,  
 Make every parish but their own their home. 860

Though such continual zig-zags in a book, 861  
 Such drunken reelings, have an awkward look,  
 And I had rather creep to what is true,  
 Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;  
 Yet to consult a little, seem'd no crime,  
 The freakish humour of the present time.  
 But now to gather up what seems dispersed,  
 And touch the subject I design'd at first,  
 May prove, though much beside the rules of art,  
 Best for the public, and my wisest part. 870  
 And first, let no man charge me, that I mean  
 To clothe in sable every social scene,  
 And give good company a face severe,  
 As if they met around a father's bier ;  
 For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,  
 And laughter all their work, is life misspent,  
 Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,  
 Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.  
 To find the medium asks some share of wit,  
 And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit. 880  
 But though life's valley be a vale of tears,  
 A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,  
 Whose glory, with a light that never fades,  
 Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening shades ;  
 And, while it shows the land the soul desires,  
 The language of the land she seeks inspires.  
 Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure  
 Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;  
 Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech  
 Pursues the course that Truth and Nature teach ; 890  
 No longer labours merely to produce  
 The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use :  
 Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,  
 Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme ;



While all the happy man possess'd before, 895  
The gift of nature, or the classic store,  
Is made subservient to the grand design,  
For which Heaven form'd the faculty divine.  
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,  
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays, 900  
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,  
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;  
But let the wise and well-instructed hand  
Once take the shell beneath his just command,  
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd  
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,  
'Till, tuned at length to some immortal song,  
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

# RETIREMENT.

— studiis florens ignobilis ott.—VIRG. GEOR. Lib. iv.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Retirement from busy life generally desired, 1—Rarely improved, 40—Happy, if consecrated to the service of God and to meditation on his works, 45—Retirement favourable to spiritual improvement, 117—Panorama of human life, 147—Various motives for courting retirement, 169—The poet's motives, 187—The lover's, 219—Hypochondria, 279—Meets with little sympathy, 301—Cure to be sought in the favour of God, 343—The retired statesman, 365—His anticipations of enjoyment, 381—Set free from the cares of life, 391—Requires society, and selects a friend, 437—His employments begin to pall, 457—Returns to the world, 479—Suburban villas, 481—The citizen's idea of country life, 487—Seaside enjoyments, 515—The ocean, 525—The spendthrift's involuntary retirement, 559—The sportsman turned ostler, 575—Difficulty of managing leisure, 611—Its responsibilities, 649—Good books necessary to retirement, 683—Friends, 719—And divine communion, 743—Religion does not forbid harmless enjoyments, 783—The poet's own employment of retirement, 801.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar  
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,  
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,  
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego ;  
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,  
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,  
Where, all his long anxieties forgot  
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,  
Or recollected only to gild o'er,  
And add a smile to what was sweet before,                   10  
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,  
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,

Improve the remnant of his wasted span, 13  
 And, having lived a trifler, die a man.  
 Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,  
 Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,  
 And calls a creature form'd for God alone,  
 For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,  
 Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,  
 From what debilitates and what inflames, 20  
 From cities humming with a restless crowd,  
 Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,  
 Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,  
 The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain ;  
 Where works of man are cluster'd close around,  
 And works of God are hardly to be found,  
 To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,  
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,  
 Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,  
 Remind him of his Maker's power and love. 30  
 'Tis well if, look'd for at so late a day,  
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,  
 True wisdom will attend his feeble call,  
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.  
 Souls that have long despised their heavenly birth,  
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,  
 For threescore years employ'd with ceaseless care  
 In catching smoke and feeding upon air,  
 Conversant only with the ways of men,  
 Rarely redeem the short remaining ten. 40  
 Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,  
 Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,  
 And, draining its nutritious powers to feed  
 Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.  
 Happy, if full of days—but happier far,  
 If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,

Sick of the service of a world that feeds 47  
 Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,  
 We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,  
 To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey.  
 Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd  
 (Infinite skill!) in all that he has made!  
 To trace in Nature's most minute design  
 The signature and stamp of power divine,  
 Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,  
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,  
 The shapely limb and lubricated joint,  
 Within the small dimensions of a point,  
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,  
 His mighty work, who speaks and it is done, 60  
 The invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,  
 To whom an atom is an ample field;  
 To wonder at a thousand insect forms,  
 These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,  
 New life ordain'd, and brighter scenes to share,  
 Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,  
 Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,  
 More hideous foes than fancy can devise;  
 With helmet heads and dragon scales adorn'd,  
 The mighty myriads, now securely scorn'd, 70  
 Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,  
 Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth:  
 Then with a glance of fancy to survey,  
 Far as the faculty can stretch away,  
 Ten thousand rivers pour'd at his command,  
 From urns that never fail, through every land;  
 These like a deluge with impetuous force,  
 Those winding modestly a silent course;  
 The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales;  
 Seas on which every nation spreads her sails; 80

The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light, 81  
 The crescent moon, the diadem of night :  
 Stars countless, each in his appointed place,  
 Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—  
 At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,  
 And with a rapture like his own exclaim,  
 These are thy glorious works, thou Source of Good !  
 How dimly seen, how faintly understood !  
 Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,  
 This universal frame, thus wondrous fair ; 90  
 Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,  
 Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.  
 Absorb'd in that immensity I see,  
 I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee ;  
 Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day  
 Thy words, more clearly than thy works, display,  
 That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,  
 I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.  
 O blest proficiency ! surpassing all  
 That men erroneously their glory call, 100  
 The recompence that arts or arms can yield,  
 The bar, the senate, or the tented field.  
 Compared with this sublimest life below,  
 Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show ?  
 Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,  
 On earth what is, seems form'd indeed for us ;  
 Not as the plaything of a froward child,  
 Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,  
 Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires  
 Of pride, ambition, or impure desires, 110  
 But as a scale by which the soul ascends  
 From mighty means to more important ends,  
 Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,  
 Mounts from inferior beings up to God,

And sees, by no fallacious light or dim, 115  
 Earth made for man, and man himself for Him.

Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,  
 A superstitious and monastic course ;  
 Truth is not local, God alike pervades 120  
 And fills the world of traffic and the shades,  
 And may be fear'd amid the busiest scenes,  
 Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.

But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,  
 Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,  
 And in a world where, other ills apart,  
 The roving eye misleads the careless heart,  
 To limit Thought, by nature prone to stray  
 Wherever freakish Fancy points the way ;  
 To bid the pleadings of Self-love be still,  
 Resign our own and seek our Maker's will ; 130

To spread the page of Scripture, and compare  
 Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;  
 To measure all that passes in the breast,  
 Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;  
 To dive into the secret deeps within,  
 To spare no passion and no favourite sin,  
 And search the themes, important above all,  
 Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.

But leisure, silence, and a mind released  
 From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased ; 140  
 How to secure, in some propitious hour,  
 The point of interest or the post of power ;  
 A soul serene, and equally retired  
 From objects too much dreaded or desired,  
 Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,  
 At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,  
 We find a little isle, this life of man ;

Eternity's unknown expanse appears 149  
 Circling around and limiting his years.  
 The busy race examine and explore  
 Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,  
 With care collect what in their eyes excels,  
 Some, shining pebbles, and some, weeds and shells ;  
 Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,  
 And happiest he that groans beneath his weight :  
 The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,  
 And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;  
 They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,  
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep : 160  
 A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes  
 Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,  
 Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,  
 Seal'd with His signet whom they serve and love ;  
 Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait  
 A kind release from their imperfect state,  
 And unregretted are soon snatch'd away  
 From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.  
 Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,  
 Who seek retirement for its proper use ; 170  
 The love of change, that lives in every breast,  
 Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,  
 Discordant motives in one centre meet,  
 And each inclines its votary to retreat.  
 Some minds by nature are averse to noise,  
 And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,  
 The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize  
 That courts display before ambitious eyes ;  
 The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,  
 Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them. 180  
 To them the deep recess of dusky groves,  
 Or forest where the deer securely roves,

The fall of waters and the song of birds, 183  
 And hills that echo to the distant herds,  
 Are luxuries excelling all the glare  
 The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.  
 With eager step, and carelessly array'd,  
 For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,  
 From all he sees he catches new delight,  
 Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight, 190  
 The rising or the setting orb of day,  
 The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,  
 Nature in all the various shapes she wears,  
 Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,  
 The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,  
 Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,—  
 All, all alike transport the glowing bard,  
 Success in rhyme his glory and reward.  
 O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose  
 His bright perfections at whose word they rose, 200  
 Next to that power who form'd thee and sustains,  
 Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.  
 Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand  
 Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,  
 That I may catch a fire but rarely known,  
 Give useful light, though I should miss renown,  
 And, poring on thy page, whose every line  
 Bears proof of an intelligence divine,  
 May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,  
 That builds its glory on its Maker's praise. 210  
 Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,  
 Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,  
 Who studies nature with a wanton eye,  
 Admires the work, but slips the lesson by ;  
 His hours of leisure and recess employs  
 In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,



Retires to blazon his own worthless name, 217  
 Or shoot the careless with a surer aim !  
 The lover too shuns business and alarms,  
 Tender idolater of absent charms.  
 Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers,  
 That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;  
 'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time ;  
 And every thought that wanders is a crime.  
 In sighs he worships his supremely fair,  
 And weeps a sad libation in despair ;  
 Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,  
 Wins in return an answer of disdain.  
 As woodbine weds the plants within her reach,  
 Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech, 230  
 In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays  
 Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,  
 But does a mischief while she lends a grace,  
 Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace ;  
 So love, that clings around the noblest minds,  
 Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds ;  
 The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,  
 And forms it to the taste of her he loves,  
 Teaches his eyes a language, and no less  
 Refines his speech and fashions his address ; 240  
 But farewell promises of happier fruits,  
 Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits ;  
 Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,  
 His only bliss is sorrow for her sake ;  
 Who will may pant for glory and excel,  
 Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !  
 Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name  
 May least offend against so pure a flame,  
 Though sage advice of friends the most sincere  
 Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear, 250

And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild, 251  
 Can least brook management, however mild,  
 Yet let a poet (poetry disarms  
 The fiercest animals with magic charms)  
 Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,  
 And woo and win thee to thy proper good.  
 Pastoral images and still retreats,  
 Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,  
 Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,  
 Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams, 260  
 Are all enchantments in a case like thine,  
 Conspire against thy peace with one design,  
 Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,  
 And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.  
 Up!—God has form'd thee with a wiser view,  
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue ;  
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first  
 Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.  
 Woman, indeed, a gift he would bestow  
 When he design'd a Paradise below, 270  
 The richest earthly boon his hands afford,  
 Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.  
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes,  
 Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,  
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,  
 No longer give an image all thine heart ;  
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,  
 'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.  
 Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN ! whose skill  
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil, 280  
 Gives Melancholy up to Nature's care,  
 And sends the patient into purer air.  
 Look where he comes !—in this embower'd alcove  
 Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move :

Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow, 285  
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,  
 Interpret to the marking eye distress,  
 Such as its symptoms can alone express.  
 That tongue is silent now ;—that silent tongue  
 Could argue once, could jest, or join the song, 290  
 Could give advice, could censure or commend,  
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.  
 Renounced alike its office and its sport,  
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;  
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,  
 And, like a summer brook, are past away.  
 This is a sight for Pity to peruse,  
 Till she resemble faintly what she views,  
 Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,  
 Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain. 300  
 This, of all maladies that man infest,  
 Claims most compassion, and receives the least ;  
 Job felt it, when he groan'd beneath the rod,  
 And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God ;  
 And such emollients as his friends could spare,  
 Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.  
 Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,  
 Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,  
 With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,  
 And minds that deem derided pain a treat ; 310  
 With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,  
 And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,  
 Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke  
 On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.  
 But with a soul that ever felt the sting  
 Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing ;  
 Not to molest, or irritate, or raise  
 A laugh at his expense, is slender praise ;

He that has not usurp'd the name of man 319  
 Does all, and deems too little, all he can,  
 To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part  
 And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart.  
 'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,  
 Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes ;  
 Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,  
 Each yielding harmony, disposed aright ;  
 The screws reversed (a task which, if he please,  
 God in a moment executes with ease),  
 Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,  
 Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use. 330  
 Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair  
 As ever recompensed the peasant's care,  
 Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,  
 Nor view of waters turning busy mills,  
 Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,  
 Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,  
 Nor gales that catch the scent of blooming groves,  
 And waft it to the mourner as he roves,  
 Can call up life into his faded eye,  
 That passes all he sees unheeded by : 340  
 No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,  
 No cure for such, till God who makes them, heals.  
 And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,  
 That yields not to the touch of human skill,  
 Improve the kind occasion, understand  
 A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand :  
 To thee the dayspring and the blaze of noon,  
 The purple evening and resplendent moon,  
 The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,  
 Seem drops descending in a shower of light, 350  
 Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,  
 Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :

Yet seek Him, in his favour life is found, 353  
 All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound :  
 Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,  
 Shall seem to start into a second birth ;  
 Nature, assuming a more lovely face,  
 Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,  
 Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,  
 Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before, 360  
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,  
 And bid her moutains and her hills rejoice ;  
 The sound shall run along the winding vales,  
 And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.  
 Ye groves (the statesman at his desk exclaims,  
 Sick of a thousand disappointed aims),  
 My patrimonial treasure and my pride,  
 Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide !  
 Receive me, languishing for that repose  
 The servant of the public never knows. 370  
 Ye saw me once, (ah, those regretted days,  
 When boyish innocence was all my praise !)  
 Hour after hour delightfully allot  
 To studies then familiar, since forgot,  
 And cultivate a taste for ancient song,  
 Catching its ardour as I mused along ;  
 Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,  
 What once I valued and could boast, a friend,  
 Were witnesses how cordially I press'd  
 His undissembling virtue to my breast ; 380  
 Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,  
 Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,  
 But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay  
 A falling empire, hasten its decay.  
 To the fair haven of my native home,  
 The wreck of what I was, fatigued, I come ;

For once I can approve the patriot's voice, 387  
 And make the course he recommends, my choice :  
 We meet at last in one sincere desire,—  
 His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.  
 'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,  
 Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,  
 That whirl away from business and debate  
 The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.  
 Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn  
 First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,  
 Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush  
 Sits linking cherry-stones or plating rush,  
 How fair is Freedom ?—he was always free :  
 To carve his rustic name upon a tree, 400  
 To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook  
 To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,  
 Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,  
 His flock the chief concern he ever knew :  
 She shines but little in his heedless eyes,  
 The good we never miss we rarely prize :  
 But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,  
 Escaped from office and its constant cares,  
 What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,  
 In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd ; 410  
 The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,  
 Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,  
 Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,  
 Or plead its silence as its best applause.  
 He knows indeed that, whether dress'd or rude,  
 Wild without art, or artfully subdued,  
 Nature in every form inspires delight,  
 But never mark'd her with so just a sight.  
 Her hedgerow shrubs, a variegated store,  
 With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er, 420

Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that spreads  
 Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads, 422  
 Downs that almost escape the inquiring eye,  
 That melt and fade into the distant sky ;  
 Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,  
 Seem all created since he travell'd last.  
 Master of all the enjoyments he design'd,  
 No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,  
 What early philosophic hours he keeps,  
 How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps ! 430  
 Not sounder he that on the mainmast-head,  
 While morning kindles with a windy red,  
 Begins a long look-out for distant land,  
 Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,  
 Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,  
 Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.  
 He chooses company, but not the squire's,  
 Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires ;  
 Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,  
 Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ; 440  
 Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,  
 Whose toe of emulation treads too near ;  
 But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,  
 With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend,—  
 A man whom marks of condescending grace  
 Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place,—  
 Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,  
 Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause ;  
 Some plain mechanic, who without pretence  
 To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence ; 450  
 On whom he rests, well pleased, his weary powers,  
 And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.  
 The tide of life, swift always in its course,  
 May run in cities with a brisker force,

But nowhere with a current so serene, 455  
 Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.  
 Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,  
 What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss !  
 Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,  
 But short the date of all we gather here ; 460  
 Nor happiness is felt, except the true,  
 That does not charm the more for being new.  
 This observation, as it chanced, not made,  
 Or, if the thought occur'd, not duly weigh'd,  
 He sighs—for after all, by slow degrees,  
 The spot he loved has lost the power to please ;  
 To cross his ambling pony day by day,  
 Seems, at the best, but dreaming life away ;  
 The prospect, such as might enchant despair,  
 He views it not, or sees no beauty there ; 470  
 With aching heart and discontented looks,  
 Returns at noon to billiards or to books ;  
 But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,  
 A secret thirst of his renounced employs.  
 He chides the tardiness of every post,  
 Pants to be told of battles won or lost,  
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,  
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,  
 Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,  
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place. 480  
 Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,  
 That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,  
 Tight boxes, neatly sash'd, and in a blaze  
 With all a July sun's collected rays,  
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,  
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.  
 O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought,  
 That could afford retirement, or could not ?



'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,— 489  
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate ;  
 A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,  
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.  
 There, prison'd in a parlour snug and small,  
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,  
 The man of business and his friends compress'd,  
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest ;  
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen  
 From every window, and the fields are green ;  
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,  
 And what could a remoter scene show more ? 500  
 A sense of elegance we rarely find  
 The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,  
 And ignorance of better things makes man,  
 Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;  
 And he that deems his leisure well bestow'd  
 In contemplation of a turnpike road,  
 Is occupied as well, employs his hours  
 As wisely, and as much improves his powers,  
 As he that slumbers in pavilions graced  
 With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste. 510  
 Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies, and hence  
 The unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,  
 From all his wearisome engagements freed,  
 Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

Your prudent grandmamas, ye modern belles,  
 Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,  
 When health required it, would consent to roam,  
 Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home ;  
 But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,  
 Ingenious to diversify dull life, 520  
 In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,  
 Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,

And all, impatient of dry land, agree 523  
 With one consent to rush into the sea.—  
 Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,  
 Much of the power and majesty of God.  
 He swathes about the swelling of the deep,  
 That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;  
 Vast as it is, it answers as it flows  
 The breathings of the lightest air that blows ; 530  
 Curling and whitening over all the waste,  
 The rising waves obey the increasing blast,  
 Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,  
 Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores ;  
 Till He that rides the whirlwind checks the rein,  
 Then all the world of waters sleeps again.—  
 Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,  
 Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,  
 Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,  
 Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells. 540  
 O grant a poet leave to recommend  
 (A poet fond of nature, and your friend)  
 Her slighted works to your admiring view ;  
 Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.  
 Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,  
 With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,  
 Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,  
 To waste unheard the music of his strains,  
 And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,  
 That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong, 550  
 Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,  
 The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,  
 Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd  
 In gathering plenty yet to be enjoy'd,  
 Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise  
 Of God, beneficent in all his ways ;—

Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine ! 557  
 Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,  
 Force many a shining youth into the shade,  
 Not to redeem his time, but his estate,  
 And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.  
 There hid in loathed obscurity, removed  
 From pleasures left, but never more beloved,  
 He just endures, and with a sickly spleen  
 Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.  
 Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme ;  
 Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime :  
 The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,  
 Are musical enough in Thomson's song ; 570  
 And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,  
 When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets ;  
 He likes the country, but in truth must own,  
 Most likes it, when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame  
 I pity, and must therefore sink the name,—  
 Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,  
 And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.  
 The estate his sires had own'd in ancient years,  
 Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's. 580  
 Jack vanish'd, was regretted, and forgot ;  
 'Tis wild good-nature's never failing lot.  
 At length, when all had long supposed him dead,  
 By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,  
 My lord, alighting at his usual place,  
 The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.  
 Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise  
 He might escape the most observing eyes,  
 And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,  
 Curried his nag, and look'd another way. 590

Convinced at last, upon a nearer view, 591  
 'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,  
 O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,  
 He press'd him much to quit his base employ,—  
 His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,  
 Influence, and power, were all at his command :  
 Peers are not always generous as well-bred ;  
 But Granby was, meant truly what he said :  
 Jack bow'd, and was obliged—confess'd 'twas strange  
 That so retired he should not wish a change, 600  
 But knew no medium between guzzling beer,  
 And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe ;  
 Some seeking happiness not found below ;  
 Some to comply with humour, and a mind  
 To social scenes by nature disinclined ;  
 Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust ;  
 Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must ;  
 But few that court Retirement are aware  
 Of half the toils they must encounter there. 610

Lucrative offices are seldom lost  
 For want of powers proportion'd to the post :  
 Give even a dunce the employment he desires,  
 And he soon finds the talents it requires ;  
 A business with an income at its heels  
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.  
 But in his arduous enterprise to close  
 His active years with indolent repose,  
 He finds the labours of that state exceed  
 His utmost faculties, severe indeed. 620  
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,  
 But not to manage leisure with a grace ;  
 Absence of occupation is not rest,  
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.

The veteran steed, excused his task at length, 625  
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,  
 And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,  
 Exempt from future service all his days,  
 There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,  
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind : 630  
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,  
 To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,  
 He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,  
 A life of ease a difficult pursuit.  
 Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem  
 As natural as when asleep to dream ;  
 But reveries (for human minds will act),  
 Specious in show, impossible in fact,  
 Those flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought,  
 Attain not to the dignity of thought : 640  
 Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,  
 Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;  
 Nor such as useless conversation breeds,  
 Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.  
 Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordain'd ?  
 What means the drama by the world sustain'd ?  
 Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,  
 Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.  
 Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?  
 Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ? 650  
 Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture say,  
 Cause to provide for a great future day,  
 When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,  
 Man shall be summon'd, and the dead attend ?  
 The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise ?  
 And show the august tribunal of the skies,  
 Where no prevarication shall avail,  
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,

The pride of arrogant distinctions fall, 659  
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all ?  
 Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil  
 To learned cares or philosophic toil,  
 Though I revere your honourable names,  
 Your useful labours, and important aims,  
 And hold the world indebted to your aid,  
 Enrich'd with the discoveries ye have made ;  
 Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem  
 A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,  
 Pushing her bold inquiry to the date  
 And outline of the present transient state, 670  
 And, after poisoning her adventurous wings,  
 Settling at last upon eternal things,  
 Far more intelligent, and better taught  
 The strenuous use of profitable thought,  
 Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,  
 And highest in renown, can justly boast.  
 A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear  
 The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,  
 Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,  
 Must change her nature, or in vain retires. 680  
 An idler is a watch that wants both hands,  
 As useless if it goes as when it stands.  
 Books, therefore,—not the scandal of the shelves,  
 In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;  
 Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,  
 With what success, let modern manners show ;  
 Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,  
 Built<sup>1</sup> God a church, and laugh'd his Word to scorn,  
 Skilful alike to seem devout and just,  
 And stab religion with a sly side-thrust ; 690

<sup>1</sup> ' Built : ' Voltaire, with the inscription, *Deo erexit Voltaire.*

Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase 691  
 A panting syllable through time and space,  
 Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark  
 To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;  
 But such as Learning, without false pretence,  
 The friend of Truth, the associate of sound Sense,  
 And such as, in the zeal of good design,  
 Strong judgment labouring in the Scripture mine,  
 All such as manly and great souls produce,  
 Worthy to live, and of eternal use ; 700  
 Behold in these what leisure hours demand,  
 Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.  
 Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,  
 And, while she polishes, perverts the taste ;  
 Habits of close attention, thinking heads,  
 Become more rare as dissipation spreads,  
 Till authors hear at length one general cry,  
 Tickle and entertain us, or we die !  
 The loud demand, from year to year the same,  
 Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame ; 710  
 Till Farce itself, most mournfully jejune,  
 Calls for the kind assistance of a tune ;  
 And novels (witness every month's *Review*)  
 Belie their name, and offer nothing new.  
 The mind, relaxing into needful sport,  
 Should turn to writers of an abler sort,  
 Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,  
 Give Truth a lustre, and make Wisdom smile.  
 Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,  
 Too rigid in my view, that name to one ; 720  
 Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast  
 Will stand advanced a step above the rest ;  
 Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,  
 But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—

Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste, 725  
 But chosen with a nice discerning taste,  
 Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart  
 From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,  
 And (though the world may think the ingredients odd)  
 The love of virtue, and the fear of God ! 730  
 Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,  
 A temper rustic as the life we lead,  
 And keep the polish of the manners clean,  
 As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene.  
 For solitude, however some may rave,  
 Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,  
 A sepulchre, in which the living lie,  
 Where all good qualities grow sick and die.  
 I praise the Frenchman,<sup>1</sup> his remark was shrewd—  
 How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude ! 740  
 But grant me still a friend in my retreat,  
 Whom I may whisper—Solitude is sweet.  
 Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,  
 That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,  
 Can save us always from a tedious day,  
 Or shine the dulness of still life away ;  
 Divine communion, carefully enjoy'd,  
 Or sought with energy, must fill the void.  
 O sacred art ! to which alone life owes  
 Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close ; 750  
 Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn  
 For evils daily felt and hardly borne,  
 Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,  
 Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,  
 And, while Experience cautions us in vain,  
 Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.

<sup>1</sup> ' Frenchman : ' Bruyère.



Despondence, self-deserted in her grief. 757  
 Lost by abandoning her own relief ;  
 Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,  
 That scorns afflictions mercifully meant ;  
 Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,  
 Which idleness and weariness beget,—  
 These, and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,  
 Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,  
 Divine communion chases, as the day  
 Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.  
 See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,  
 Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,  
 To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,  
 To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies. 770  
 Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice ;  
 Hear him o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice ;  
 No womanish or wailing grief has part,  
 No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;  
 'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,  
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake ;  
 His soul exults, hope animates his lays,  
 The sense of mercy kindles into praise,  
 And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,  
 Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before : 780  
 'Tis love like his that can alone defeat  
 The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.  
 Religion does not censure or exclude  
 Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued.  
 To study culture, and with artful toil  
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;  
 To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands  
 The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands ;  
 To cherish virtue in an humble state,  
 And share the joys your bounty may create ; 790

To mark the matchless workings of the power 791  
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,  
 Bid these in elegance of form excel,  
 In colour these, and those delight the smell,  
 Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,  
 To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;  
 To teach the canvas innocent deceit,  
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet ;—  
 These, these are arts pursued without a crime,  
 That leave no stain upon the wing of Time. 800

Me poetry (or, rather, notes that aim  
 Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)  
 Employs, shut out from more important views,  
 Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse ;  
 Content if, thus sequester'd, I may raise  
 A monitor's though not a poet's praise,  
 And, while I teach an art too little known,  
 To close life wisely, may not waste my own.



# THE TASK.

A POEM. IN SIX BOOKS.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the Author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the Poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel therefore is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK I.—THE SOFA.

### THE ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa, 1—A schoolboy's ramble, 109—A walk in the country, 140—The scene described, 159—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful, 181—Another walk, 210—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected, 233—Colonnades commended, 252—Alcove, and the view from it, 278—The wilderness, 350—The grove, 354—The thresher, 356—The necessity and the benefits of exercise, 367—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art, 409—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure, 462—Change of scene sometimes expedient, 506—A common described, and the character of Crazy Kate introduced, 526—Gipsies, 557—The blessings of a civilised life, 592—The state most favourable to virtue, 600—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai, 620—His present state of mind supposed, 654—Civilised life friendly to virtue, but not great cities, 678—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured, 693—Fête champêtre, 739—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures, 749.

I SING the SOFA. I who lately sang  
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe  
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,  
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,  
Now seek repose upon a humbler theme ;  
The theme though humble, yet august and proud  
The occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing, sumptuous or for use,  
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.

As yet black breeches were not ; satin smooth, 10  
 Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :  
 The hardy chief upon the rugged rock  
 Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank  
 Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,  
 Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.  
 Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next  
 The birthday of Invention ; weak at first,  
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.  
 Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs  
 Upborne they stood—three legs upholding firm 20  
 A massy slab, in fashion square or round.  
 On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,  
 And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms :  
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear  
 May still be seen ; but perforated sore,  
 And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,  
 By worms voracious eating through and through.  
 At length a generation more refined  
 Improved the simple plan ; made three legs four,  
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular, 30  
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,  
 Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,  
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought  
 And woven close, or needlework sublime.  
 There might ye see the peony spread wide,  
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,  
 Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,  
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.  
 Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright  
 With Nature's varnish ; sever'd into stripes 40  
 That interlaced each other ; these supplied  
 Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced  
 The new machine, and it became a chair.

But restless was the chair ; the back erect 44  
 Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease ;  
 The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part  
 That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,  
 Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.  
 These for the rich : the rest, whom Fate had placed  
 In modest mediocrity, content 50  
 With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,  
 Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,  
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,  
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,  
 If cushion might be call'd what harder seem'd  
 Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.  
 No want of timber then was felt or fear'd  
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood  
 Ponderous, and fix'd by its own massy weight.  
 But elbows still were wanting ; these, some say, 60  
 An alderman of Cripplegate contrived ;  
 And some ascribe the invention to a priest,  
 Burly and big, and studious of his ease.  
 But, rude at first, and not with easy slope  
 Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,  
 And bruised the side ; and elevated high,  
 Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.  
 Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires  
 Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,  
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first 70  
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.  
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased  
 Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,  
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised  
 The soft settee ; one elbow at each end,  
 And in the midst an elbow it received,  
 United yet divided, twain at once.

So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne ; 78  
 And so two citizens, who take the air,  
 Close pack'd, and smiling, in a chaise and one.  
 But relaxation of the languid frame,  
 By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,  
 Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow  
 The growth of what is excellent ; so hard  
 To attain perfection in this nether world.  
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,  
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,  
 And Luxury the accomplish'd SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,  
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he 90  
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,  
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,  
 His legs depending at the open door.  
 Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,  
 The tedious rector drawling o'er his head ;  
 And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep  
 Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,  
 Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour  
 To slumber in the carriage more secure,  
 Nor sleep enjoy'd by curate in his desk, 100  
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,  
 Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live  
 Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)  
 From pangs arthritic that infest the toe  
 Of libertine Excess ! The Sofa suits  
 The gouty limb, 'tis true ; but gouty limb,  
 Though on a Sofa, may I never feel :  
 For I have loved the rural walk through lanes  
 Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep, 110  
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm



Of thorny boughs ; have loved the rural walk 112  
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,  
 E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds  
 To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames :  
 And still remember, nor without regret,  
 Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,  
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,  
 Still hungering, penniless, and far from home,  
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws, 120  
 Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss  
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.  
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite  
 Disdains not, nor the palate, undepraved  
 By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.  
 No Sofa then awaited my return ;  
 Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs  
 His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil  
 Incurring short fatigue ; and though our years,  
 As life declines, speed rapidly away, 130  
 And not a year but pilfers, as he goes,  
 Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep ;  
 A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees  
 Their length and colour from the locks they spare ;  
 The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,  
 That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence ;  
 That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
 Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
 Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,  
 Mine have not pilfer'd yet ; nor yet impair'd 140  
 My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that soothed  
 Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find  
 Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.  
 And witness, dear companion<sup>1</sup> of my walks,

<sup>1</sup> ' Dear companion : ' Mrs Unwin.

Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive 145  
 Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,  
 Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth  
 And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—  
 Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.  
 Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere, 150  
 And that my raptures are not conjured up  
 To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
 But genuine, and art partner of them all.  
 How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
 Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne  
 The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew ;  
 While Admiration, feeding at the eye,  
 And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.  
 Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd  
 The distant plough slow moving, and beside 160  
 His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,  
 The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy !  
 Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain  
 Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,  
 Conducts the eye along his sinuous course  
 Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
 Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms,  
 That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;  
 While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
 That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale, 170  
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;  
 Displaying on its varied side the grace  
 Of hedgerow beauties numberless, square tower,  
 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells  
 Just undulates upon the listening ear ;  
 Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.  
 Scenes must be beautiful which, daily view'd,  
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives

Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years— 179  
 Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds  
 Exhilarate the spirit, and restore  
 The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,  
 That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood  
 Of ancient growth, make music not unlike  
 The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,  
 And lull the spirit while they fill the mind ;  
 Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,  
 And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.

Nor less composure waits upon the roar 190  
 Of distant floods, or on the softer voice  
 Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip  
 Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall  
 Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length  
 In matted grass, that with a livelier green  
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.

Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,  
 But animated Nature sweeter still,  
 To soothe and satisfy the human ear.  
 Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one 200  
 The livelong night ; nor these alone, whose notes  
 Nice-finger'd Art must emulate in vain,  
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime  
 In still-repeated circles, screaming loud,  
 The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl  
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.  
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,  
 Yet, heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,  
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought 210  
 Devised the weather-house, that useful toy !  
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,

Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself! 213  
 More delicate his timorous mate retires.  
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,  
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,  
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,  
 The task of new discoveries falls on me.  
 At such a season, and with such a charge,  
 Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown, 220  
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair:  
 'Tis perch'd upon the green hill-top, but close  
 Environ'd with a ring of branching elms,  
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen  
 Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset  
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth,  
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.  
 And, hidden as it is, and far remote  
 From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear  
 In village or in town, the bay of curs 230  
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,  
 And infants clamorous whether pleased or pain'd—  
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.  
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess  
 The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge  
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.  
 Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat  
 Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.  
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch  
 To drink sweet waters of the crystal well; 240  
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,  
 And, heavy laden, brings his beverage home,  
 Far fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,  
 Dependent on the baker's punctual call,  
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door,  
 Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.

So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest!* 247  
 If solitude make scant the means of life,  
 Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,  
 Be still a pleasing object in my view ;  
 My visit still, but never mine abode !

Not distant far, a length of colonnade  
 Invites us : monument of ancient taste,  
 Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.  
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen  
 From sultry suns ; and in their shaded walks  
 And long-protracted bowers, enjoy'd at noon  
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.  
 We bear our shades about us ; self-deprived  
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread, 260  
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.  
 Thanks to Benevolus ;<sup>1</sup> he spares me yet  
 These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines ;  
 And though himself so polish'd, still reprieves  
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)  
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge  
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip  
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.  
 Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme, 270  
 We mount again, and feel at every step  
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,  
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.  
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,  
 Disfigures Earth ; and, plotting in the dark,  
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,  
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove  
 That crowns it ! yet not all its pride secures

<sup>1</sup> 'Benevolus : ' John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.

The grand retreat from injuries impress'd                   280  
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface  
 The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,  
 In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.  
 So strong the zeal to immortalise himself  
 Beats in the breast of man, that even a few,  
 Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorr'd  
 Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,  
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,  
 And, posted on this speculative height,  
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here                   290  
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.  
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek  
 The middle field ; but, scatter'd by degrees,  
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.  
 There, from the sun-burnt hayfield homeward creeps  
 The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge,  
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by—  
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team  
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.  
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,                   300  
 Diversified with trees of every growth—  
 Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks  
 Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine  
 Within the twilight of their distant shades ;  
 There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood  
 Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.  
 No tree in all the grove but has its charms,  
 Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,  
 And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,  
 And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,                   310  
 And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm :  
 Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,  
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.

Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun, 314  
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts  
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve  
 Diffusing odours : nor unnoted pass  
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,  
 Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet  
 Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright. 320  
 O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map  
 Of hill and valley interposed between),  
 The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,  
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,  
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,  
 And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps  
 A little Naiad her impoverish'd urn  
 All summer long, which winter fills again.  
 The folded gates would bar my progress now, 330  
 But that the lord<sup>1</sup> of this enclosed demesne,  
 Communicative of the good he owns,  
 Admits me to a share : the guiltless eye  
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.  
 Refreshing change ! where now the blazing sun ?  
 By short transition we have lost his glare,  
 And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.  
 Ye fallen avenues ! once more I mourn  
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice  
 That yet a remnant of your race survives. 340  
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,  
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof  
 Re-echoing pious anthems ! while beneath,  
 The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood  
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light  
 Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,  
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,

<sup>1</sup> 'Lord : ' see the foregoing note.

And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves      348  
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new braced and spirits cheer'd,  
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks,  
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—  
Deception innocent—give ample space  
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next ;  
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms  
We may discern the thresher at his task.

Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,  
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls  
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff ;  
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist      360  
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.

Come hither, ye that press your beds of down  
And sleep not—see him sweating o'er his bread  
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,  
But soften'd into mercy ; made the pledge  
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.  
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel  
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,  
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads      370  
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.  
Its own revolvency upholds the world.

Winds from all quarters agitate the air,  
And fit the limpid element for use,  
Else noxious : oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,  
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed  
By restless undulation. Even the oak  
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm :  
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel  
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,      380  
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm



He held the thunder. But the monarch owes 382  
 His firm stability to what he scorns—  
 More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.  
 The law, by which all creatures else are bound,  
 Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives  
 No mean advantage from a kindred cause,  
 From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.  
 The sedentary stretch their lazy length  
 When Custom bids, but no refreshment find, 390  
 For none they need : the languid eye, the cheek  
 Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,  
 And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,  
 Reproach their owner with that love of rest  
 To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.  
 Not such the alert and active. Measure life  
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,  
 And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.  
 Good health, and, its associate in the most,  
 Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake, 400  
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;  
 The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;  
 Even age itself seems privileged in them  
 With clear exemption from its own defects.  
 A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front  
 The veteran shows, and, gracing a gray beard  
 With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave  
 Sprightly and old almost without decay.  
 Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,  
 Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine 410  
 Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.  
 The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,  
 Is Nature's dictate. Strange ! there should be found,  
 Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,  
 Renounce the odours of the open field

For the unscented fictions of the loom ; 416  
 Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,  
 Prefer to the performance of a God  
 The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.  
 Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art ;  
 But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—  
 None more admires—the painter's magic skill,  
 Who shows me that which I shall never see,  
 Conveys a distant country into mine,  
 And throws Italian light on English walls :  
 But imitative strokes can do no more  
 Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense.  
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,  
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,  
 And music of her woods—no works of man 430  
 May rival these ; these all bespeak a power  
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.  
 Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;  
 'Tis free to all—'tis every day renew'd ;  
 Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.  
 He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long  
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey  
 To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank  
 And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,  
 Escapes at last to liberty and light : 440  
 His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue ;  
 His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires ;  
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,  
 And riots in the sweets of every breeze.  
 He does not scorn it who has long endured  
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.  
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed  
 With acrid salts ; his very heart athirst  
 To gaze at Nature in her green array,

Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd 450  
 With visions prompted by intense desire :  
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left  
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—  
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.  
 The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ;  
 The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,  
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,  
 And mar the face of Beauty, when no cause  
 For such immeasurable woe appears—  
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460  
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.  
 It is the constant revolution, stale  
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,  
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life  
 A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.  
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb ; the heart  
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast  
 Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,  
 No smartness in the jest ; and wonders why.  
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on, 470  
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.  
 The paralytic, who can hold her cards,  
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand  
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort  
 Her mingled suits and sequences ; and sits,  
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad  
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.  
 Others are dragg'd into the crowded room  
 Between supporters ; and, once seated, sit,  
 Through downright inability to rise, 480  
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.  
 These speak a loud memento. Yet even these  
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he

That overhangs a torrent, to a twig. 484  
 They love it, and yet loathe it ; fear to die,  
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.  
 Then wherefore not renounce them ? No—the dread,  
 The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds  
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,  
 And their inveterate habits, all forbid. 490

Whom call we gay ? That honour has been long  
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.  
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,  
 That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,  
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams  
 Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.  
 The peasant, too, a witness of his song,  
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.  
 But save me from the gaiety of those  
 Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed ; 500  
 And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes  
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs  
 For property stripp'd off by cruel chance ;  
 From gaiety, that fills the bones with pain,  
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind  
 Of desultory man, studious of change,  
 And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.  
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen  
 Till half their beauties fade ; the weary sight, 510  
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off  
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.  
 Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,  
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,  
 Delight us ; happy to renounce awhile,  
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,  
 That such short absence may endear it more.

Then forests, or the savage rock, may please, 518  
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts  
 Above the reach of man. His hoary head,  
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,  
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,  
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist  
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,  
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough  
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,  
 And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,  
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,  
 Yields no unpleasing ramble ; there the turf 530  
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs  
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense  
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days  
 Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd  
 With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.  
 A serving maid was she, and fell in love  
 With one who left her, went to sea, and died.  
 Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves  
 To distant shores ; and she would sit and weep 540

At what a sailor suffers ; fancy too,  
 Delusive most where warmest wishes are,  
 Would oft anticipate his glad return,  
 And dream of transports she was not to know.  
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death—  
 And never smiled again ! And now she roams  
 The dreary waste ; there spends the livelong day,  
 And there, unless when charity forbids,  
 The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,  
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown 550  
 More tatter'd still ; and both but ill conceal

A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs. 552  
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,  
 And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food,  
 Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,  
 Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed !

I see a column of slow-rising smoke  
 O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.  
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
 Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung 560  
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,  
 Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,  
 Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloin'd  
 From his accustom'd perch. Hard faring race !  
 They pick their fuel out of every hedge,  
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd  
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide  
 Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,  
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.

Great skill have they in palmistry, and more 570  
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,  
 Conveying worthless dross into its place ;  
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.  
 Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast  
 In human mould, should brutalize by choice  
 His nature ; and, though capable of arts  
 By which the world might profit, and himself,  
 Self-banish'd from society, prefer  
 Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !

Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft, 580  
 They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,  
 And vex their flesh with artificial sores,—  
 Can change their whine into a mirthful note,  
 When safe occasion offers ; and with dance,  
 And music of the bladder and the bag,

Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound. 586  
 Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy  
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;  
 And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,  
 Need other physic none to heal the effects  
 Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd  
 By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,  
 Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside  
 His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,  
 The manners and the arts of civil life.

His wants, indeed, are many ; but supply  
 Is obvious, placed within the easy reach  
 Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.

Here Virtue thrives as in her proper soil ; 600  
 Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,  
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs  
 (If e'er she springs spontaneous) in remote  
 And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,  
 And strength is lord of all ; but gentle, kind,  
 By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,  
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.

War and the chase engross the savage whole :  
 War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant  
 The envied tenants of some happier spot : 610

The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !  
 His hard condition with severe constraint  
 Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth  
 Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns  
 Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,  
 Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.  
 Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,  
 And thus the rangers of the western world,  
 Where it advances far into the deep,

Towards the Antarctic. Even the favour'd isles 620  
 So lately found, although the constant sun  
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,  
 Can boast but little virtue ; and inert  
 Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain  
 In manners—victims of luxurious ease.  
 These therefore I can pity, placed remote  
 From all that science traces, art invents,  
 Or inspiration teaches ; and enclosed  
 In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd  
 By navigators uninform'd as they, 630  
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.  
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,  
 Thee, gentle savage !<sup>1</sup> whom no love of thee  
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,  
 Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw  
 Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here  
 With what superior skill we can abuse  
 The gifts of Providence, and squander life.  
 The dream is past ; and thou hast found again  
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams, 640  
 And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found  
 Their former charms ? And, having seen our state,  
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp  
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,  
 And heard our music ; are thy simple friends,  
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,  
 As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys  
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?  
 Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude  
 And ignorant, except of outward show), 650  
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart  
 And spiritless, as never to regret

<sup>1</sup> ' Gentle savage : ' Omai.



Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known. 653  
 Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,  
 And asking of the surge, that bathes thy foot,  
 If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.  
 I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,  
 A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad  
 At thought of her forlorn and abject state,  
 From which no power of thine can raise her up. 660  
 Thus Fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,  
 Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.  
 She tells me too, that duly every morn  
 Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye  
 Exploring far and wide the watery waste  
 For sight of ship from England. Every speck  
 Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale  
 With conflict of contending hopes and fears.  
 But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,  
 And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared 670  
 To dream all night of what the day denied.  
 Alas! expect it not. We found no bait  
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,  
 Disinterested good, is not our trade.  
 We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought ;  
 And must be bribed to compass Earth again  
 By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.  
 But though true worth and virtue in the mild  
 And genial soil of cultivated life  
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there ; 680  
 Yet not in cities oft—in proud, and gay,  
 And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,  
 As to a common and most noisome sewer,  
 The dregs and feculence of every land.  
 In cities, foul example on most minds  
 Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,

In gross and pamper'd cities, sloth, and lust, 687  
 And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.  
 In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,  
 Or seen with least reproach ; and virtue, taught  
 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there  
 Beyond the achievement of successful flight.  
 I do confess them nurseries of the arts,  
 In which they flourish most ; where, in the beams  
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye  
 Of public note, they reach their perfect size.  
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd  
 The fairest capital of all the world,  
 By riot and incontinence the worst.  
 There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes 700  
 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees  
 All her reflected features. Bacon there  
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,  
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.  
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone  
 The powers of sculpture, but the style as much ;  
 Each province of her art her equal care.  
 With nice incision of her guided steel  
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil  
 So sterile, with what charms soe'er she will, 710  
 The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.  
 Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,  
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk  
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?  
 In London. Where her implements exact,  
 With which she calculates, computes, and scans  
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now  
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world ?  
 In London. Where has commerce such a mart,  
 So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied, 720

As London—opulent, enlarged, and still 721  
 Increasing, London? Babylon of old  
 Not more the glory of the earth than she  
 A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,  
 That so much beauty would do well to purge ;  
 And show this Queen of Cities, that so fair  
 May yet be foul ; so witty, yet not wise.  
 It is not seemly, nor of good report,  
 That she is slack in discipline—more prompt 730  
 To avenge than to prevent the breach of law :  
 That she is rigid in denouncing death  
 On petty robbers, and indulges life  
 And liberty, and oftentimes honour too,  
 To peculators of the public gold :  
 That thieves at home must hang ; but he that puts  
 Into his overgorged and bloated purse  
 The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.  
 Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,  
 That, through profane and infidel contempt 740  
 Of Holy Writ, she has presumed to annul  
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,  
 The total ordinance and will of God ;  
 Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,  
 And centering all authority in modes  
 And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites  
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,  
 And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town :  
 What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts 750  
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught  
 That life holds out to all, should most abound  
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?  
 Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about

In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755  
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes  
But such as art contrives—possess ye still  
Your element ; there only ye can shine ;  
There only minds like yours can do no harm.  
Our groves were planted to console at noon 760  
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve  
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between  
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish—  
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare  
The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse  
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound  
Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs  
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.  
There is a public mischief in your mirth ;  
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours, 770  
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,  
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,  
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,  
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

## BOOK II.—THE TIME-PIECE.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book, 1—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow, 48—Prodigies enumerated, 53—Sicilian earthquakes, 75—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin, 133—God the agent in them, 161—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved, 174—Our own late miscarriages accounted for, 206—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainebleau, 255—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation, 285—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons, 351—Petit-maitre parson, 372—The good preacher, 395—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb, 414—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved, 463—Apostrophe to popular applause, 481—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with, 499—Sum of the whole matter, 531—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity, 545—Their folly and extravagance, 574—The mischiefs of profusion, 667—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities, 699.

OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
 Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
 Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
 Of unsuccessful or successful war,  
 Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd,  
 My soul is sick, with every day's report  
 Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.  
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart;  
 It does not feel for man. The natural bond  
 Of brotherhood is sever'd, as the flax  
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.  
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
 Not colour'd like his own; and having power  
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause

Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey. ' 15  
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed  
 Make enemies of nations, who had else  
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.  
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ; 20  
 And, worse than all, and most to be deplored,  
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
 With stripes, that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,  
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.  
 Then what is man ? And what man, seeing this,  
 And having human feelings, does not blush  
 And hang his head, to think himself a man ?  
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep, 30  
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.  
 No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
 Just estimation prized above all price,  
 I had much rather be myself the slave,  
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.  
 We have no slaves at home—then why abroad ?  
 And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave  
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.  
 Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs 40  
 Receive our air, that moment they are free ;  
 They touch our country, and their shackles fall.  
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
 And let it circulate through every vein  
 Of all your empire ! that, where Britain's power  
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,

Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid, 49  
 Between the nations in a world that seems  
 To toll the death-bell of its own decease,  
 And by the voice of all its elements  
 To preach the general doom.<sup>1</sup> When were the winds  
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy ?  
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap  
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry ?  
 Fires from beneath, and meteors<sup>2</sup> from above,  
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,  
 Have kindled beacons in the skies ; and the old  
 And crazy Earth has had her shaking fits 60  
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.  
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props  
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,  
 And Nature<sup>3</sup> with a dim and sickly eye  
 To wait the close of all ? But grant her end  
 More distant, and that prophecy demands  
 A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet ;  
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak  
 Displeasure in His breast who smites the Earth  
 Or hēals it, makes it languish or rejoice. 70  
 And 'tis but seemly, that where all deserve  
 And stand exposed by common peccancy  
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,  
 And brethren in calamity should love.  
 Alas for Sicily ! rude fragments now  
 Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.  
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets  
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord  
 Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,  
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause ; 80

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.—<sup>2</sup> August 18, 1783.—<sup>3</sup> Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

While God performs upon the trembling stage 81  
 Of his own works his dreadful part alone.  
 How does the Earth receive him ?—with what signs  
 Of gratulation and delight her King ?  
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,  
 Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,  
 Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads ?  
 She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,  
 Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps  
 And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot. 90  
 The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,  
 For He has touch'd them. From the extremest point  
 Of elevation down into the abyss,  
 His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.  
 The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise ;  
 The rivers die into offensive pools,  
 And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross  
 And mortal nuisance into all the air.  
 What solid was, by transformation strange,  
 Grows fluid ; and the fix'd and rooted earth, 100  
 Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,  
 Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl  
 Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense  
 The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs  
 And agonies of human and of brute  
 Multitudes, fugitive on every side,  
 And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene  
 Migrates uplifted ; and with all its soil  
 Alighting in far distant fields, finds out  
 A new possessor, and survives the change. 110  
 Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought  
 To an enormous and o'erbearing height,  
 Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice  
 Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore



Resistless. Never such a sudden flood, 115  
 Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,  
 Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng  
 That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,  
 Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,  
 Gone with the reflux wave into the deep— 120  
 A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,  
 And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,  
 Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume  
 Life in the unproductive shades of death,  
 Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,  
 And, happy in their unforeseen release  
 From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy  
 The terrors of the day that sets them free.  
 Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,  
 Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret, 130  
 That even a judgment, making way for thee,  
 Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake?  
 Such evils Sin hath wrought; and such a flame  
 Kindled in Heaven, that it burns down to Earth,  
 And, in the furious inquest that it makes  
 On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.  
 The very elements, though each be meant  
 The minister of man, to serve his wants,  
 Conspire against him. With his breath he draws  
 A plague into his blood; and cannot use 140  
 Life's necessary means, but he must die.  
 Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds  
 Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,  
 And, needing none assistance of the storm,  
 Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.  
 The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,  
 Or make his house his grave: nor so content,  
 Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,

And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs. 149  
 What then!—were they the wicked above all,  
 And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle  
 Moved not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff,  
 The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,  
 And none than we more guilty. But, where all  
 Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts  
 Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:  
 May punish, if he please, the less, to warn  
 The more malignant. If he spared not them,  
 Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,  
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee! 160  
 Happy the man who sees a God employ'd  
 In all the good and ill that chequer life!  
 Resolving all events, with their effects  
 And manifold results, into the will  
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme.  
 Did not his eye rule all things, and intend  
 The least of our concerns (since from the least  
 The greatest oft originate)—could chance  
 Find place in his dominion, or dispose  
 One lawless particle to thwart his plan; 170  
 Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen  
 Contingence might alarm him, and disturb  
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.  
 This truth, Philosophy, though eagle-eyed  
 In Nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;  
 And, having found his instrument, forgets,  
 Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,  
 Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims  
 His hot displeasure against foolish men,  
 That live an atheist life: involves the Heaven 180  
 In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,  
 And gives them all their fury; bids a plague

Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin, 183  
 And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.  
 He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend  
 Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,  
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,  
 And desolates a nation at a blast.  
 Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells  
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs 190  
 And principles ; of causes, how they work  
 By necessary laws their sure effects ;  
 Of action and re-action : he has found  
 The source of the disease that Nature feels,  
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear.  
 Thou fool ! will thy discovery of the cause  
 Suspend the effect, or heal it ? Has not God  
 Still wrought by means since first he made the world ?  
 And did he not of old employ his means  
 To drown it ? What is his creation less 200  
 Than a capacious reservoir of means  
 Form'd for his use, and ready at his will ?  
 Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve ; ask of him,  
 Or ask of whomsoever he has taught ;  
 And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.  
 England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
 My country ! and, while yet a nook is left,  
 Where English minds and manners may be found,  
 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
 Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd 210  
 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost—  
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,  
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France  
 With all her vines ; nor for Ausonia's groves  
 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.  
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime

Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire 217  
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :  
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
 Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart  
 As any thunderer there. And I can feel  
 Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain  
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks  
 Reflect dishonour on the land I love.  
 How, in the name of soldiership and sense,  
 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth  
 And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er  
 With odours, and as profligate as sweet—  
 Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
 And love when they should fight ; when such as these 230  
 Presume to lay their hand upon the ark  
 Of her magnificent and awful cause ?  
 Time was when it was praise and boast enough  
 In every clime, and travel where we might,  
 That we were born her children. Praise enough  
 To fill the ambition of a private man,  
 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,  
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
 Farewell those honours, and farewell with them  
 The hope of such hereafter ! They have fallen 240  
 Each in his field of glory ; one in arms,  
 And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap  
 Of smiling Victory that moment won,  
 And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame !  
 They made us many soldiers. Chatham still  
 Consulting England's happiness at home,  
 Secured it by an unforgiving frown,  
 If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,  
 Put so much of his heart into his act,  
 That his example had a magnet's force, 250

And all were swift to follow whom all loved. 251  
 Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such !  
 Or all that we have left is empty talk  
 Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float  
 Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck  
 With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,  
 That no rude savour maritime invade  
 The nose of nice nobility ! Breathe soft,  
 Ye clarionets ; and softer still, ye flutes ; 260  
 That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,  
 May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore !  
 True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.  
 True, we may thank the perfidy of France,  
 That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,  
 With all the cunning of an envious shrew.

And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state !  
 A brave man knows no malice, but at once  
 Forgets in peace the injuries of war,  
 And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace. 270

And, shamed as we have been, to the very beard  
 Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved  
 Too weak for those decisive blows, that once  
 Insured us mastery there, we yet retain  
 Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast  
 At least superior jockeyship, and claim  
 The honours of the turf as all our own !  
 Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,  
 And show the shame, ye might conceal at home,  
 In foreign eyes !—be grooms, and win the plate, 280  
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—

'Tis generous to communicate your skill  
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd ;  
 And, under such preceptors, who can fail ?

There is a pleasure in poetic pains 285  
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,  
 The expedients and inventions multiform,  
 To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms  
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—  
 To arrest the fleeting images that fill 290  
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,  
 And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off  
 A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;  
 Then to dispose his copies with such art,  
 That each may find its most propitious light,  
 And shine by situation, hardly less  
 Than by the labour and the skill it cost—  
 Are occupations of the poet's mind  
 So pleasing, and that steal away the thought  
 With such address from themes of sad import, 300  
 That, lost in his own musings, happy man !  
 He feels the anxieties of life, denied  
 Their wonted entertainment, all retire.  
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah ! not such,  
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.  
 Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps  
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task  
 They never undertook, they little note  
 His dangers or escapes, and haply find  
 Their least amusement where he found the most. 310  
 But is amusement all ? Studios of song,  
 And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,  
 I would not trifle merely, though the world  
 Be loudest in their praise who do no more.  
 Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay ?  
 It may correct a foible, may chastise  
 The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,  
 Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch ;

But where are its sublimer trophies found ? 319

What vice has it subdued ? whose heart reclaim'd

By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform ?

Alas ! Leviathan is not so tamed :

Laugh'd at, he laughs again ; and, stricken hard,

Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,

That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore (and I name it fill'd

With solemn awe, that bids me well beware

With what intent I touch that holy thing)—

The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,

Strutting and vapouring in an empty school, 330

Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—

I say the pulpit (in the sober use

Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)

Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,

The most important and effectual guard,

Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.

There stands the messenger of truth. There stands

The legate of the skies. His theme divine,

His office sacred, his credentials clear.

By him the violated Law speaks out 340

Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet

As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.

He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,

Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,

And, arm'd himself in panoply complete

Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms

Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule

Of holy discipline, to glorious war,

The sacramental host of God's elect.

Are all such teachers ? would to Heaven all were ! 350

But hark—the doctor's voice !—fast wedged between

Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks

Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far 353  
 Than all invective is his bold harangue,  
 While through that public organ of report  
 He hails the clergy ; and, defying shame,  
 Announces to the world his own and theirs.  
 He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,  
 And colleges, untaught ; sells accent, tone,  
 And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer 360  
 The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.  
 He grinds divinity of other days  
 Down into modern use ; transforms old print  
 To zig-zag manuscript, and cheats the eyes  
 Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.—  
 Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware ?  
 Oh, name it not in Gath !—it cannot be,  
 That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.  
 He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,  
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before— 370  
 Grand-caterer and dry-nurse of the Church !  
 I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,  
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,  
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
 That he is honest in the sacred cause.  
 To such I render more than mere respect,  
 Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.  
 But loose in morals, and in manners vain,  
 In conversation frivolous, in dress  
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse ; 380  
 Frequent in park, with lady at his side,  
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes ;  
 But rare at home, and never at his books,  
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;  
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round  
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;



Ambitious of preferment for its gold, 387  
 And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,  
 By infidelity and love of world,  
 To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave  
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride ;—  
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
 Preserve the Church ! and lay not careless hands  
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
 His master-strokes, and draw from his design.  
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;  
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain, 400  
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And natural in gesture ; much impress'd  
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
 May feel it too ; affectionate in look,  
 And tender in address, as well becomes  
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.  
 Behold the picture !—Is it like ?—Like whom ?  
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
 And then skip down again ; pronounce a text, 410  
 Cry, hem ! and reading what they never wrote—  
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,  
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !

In man or woman, but far most in man,  
 And most of all in man that ministers  
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe  
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;  
 Object of my implacable disgust.  
 What !—will a man play tricks, will he indulge  
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form 420

And just proportion, fashionable mien, 421  
 And pretty face, in presence of his God ?  
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,  
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,  
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,  
 When I am hungry for the bread of life ?  
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames  
 His noble office ; and, instead of truth,  
 Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.  
 Therefore, avaunt all attitude and stare, 430  
 And start theatric, practised at the glass !  
 I seek divine simplicity in him  
 Who handles things divine ; and all besides,  
 Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired  
 By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,  
 To me is odious as the nasal twang  
 Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,  
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes  
 Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrud.  
 Some, decent in demeanour while they preach— 440  
 That task perform'd, relapse into themselves ;  
 And having spoken wisely, at the close  
 Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye—  
 Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.  
 Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke  
 An eyebrow ; next, compose a straggling lock ;  
 Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,  
 Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,  
 And lay it at its ease with gentle care,  
 With handkerchief in hand, depending low : 450  
 The better hand more busy, gives the nose  
 Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye,  
 With opera glass, to watch the moving scene,  
 And recognise the slow retiring fair.—

Now this is fulsome, and offends me more 455  
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect  
 And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind  
 May be indifferent to her house of clay,  
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;  
 But how a body so fantastic, trim, 460  
 And quaint, in its deportment and attire,  
 Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negotiates between God and man,  
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns  
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware  
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful  
 To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;  
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire  
 Pathetic exhortation ; and to address  
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales, 470  
 When sent with God's commission to the heart !  
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip  
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,  
 And I consent you take it for your text,  
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.  
 No : he was serious in a serious cause,  
 And understood too well the weighty terms  
 That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop  
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,  
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain. 480

O Popular Applause ! what heart of man  
 Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms ?  
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need  
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales ;  
 But swell'd into a gust—who then, alas !  
 With all his canvas set, and inexpert,  
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power ?  
 Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald

Decrepitude ; and in the looks of lean 486  
 And craving Poverty ; and in the bow  
 Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,  
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb  
 The bias of the purpose. How much more  
 Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,  
 In language soft as adoration breathes ?  
 Ah, spare your idol ! think him human still.  
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too :  
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source  
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome, 500  
 Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we  
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.  
 To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled  
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams  
 Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,  
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove  
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught  
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced  
 The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred  
 Intoxication and delirium wild. 510

In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth  
 And spring-time of the world ; ask'd, Whence is man ?  
 Why form'd at all ? and wherefore as he is ?  
 Where must he find his Maker ? with what rites  
 Adore Him ? will He hear, accept, and bless ?  
 Or does He sit regardless of his works ?  
 Has man within him an immortal seed ?  
 Or does the tomb take all ? If he survive  
 His ashes, where ? and in what weal or woe ?  
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520  
 A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague  
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,

Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life, 523  
 Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak  
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead  
 Blind Nature to a God not yet reveal'd.  
 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,  
 Explains all mysteries, except her own,  
 And so illuminates the path of life,  
 That fools discover it, and stray no more. 530  
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,  
 My man of morals, nurtured in the shades  
 Of Academus—is this false or true ?  
 Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools ?  
 If Christ, then why resort at every turn  
 To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short  
 Of man's occasions, when in Him reside  
 Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store ?  
 How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,  
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd ! 540  
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content  
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,  
 Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,  
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too !  
 And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain  
 By nature, or by flattery made so, taught  
 To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt  
 Absurdly, not his office, but himself ;  
 Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn ;  
 Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach ; 550  
 Perverting often by the stress of lewd  
 And loose example, whom he should instruct ;  
 Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,  
 The noblest function, and discredits much  
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.  
 For ghostly counsel, if it either fall

Below the exigence, or be not back'd 557  
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof  
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part ;  
 Or be dishonour'd in the exterior form  
 And mode of its conveyance by such tricks  
 As move derision, or by foppish airs  
 And histrionic mummery, that let down  
 The pulpit to the level of the stage—  
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.  
 The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught ;  
 While prejudice in men of stronger minds  
 Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.  
 A relaxation of religion's hold  
 Upon the roving and untutor'd heart 570  
 Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd,  
 The laity run wild.—But do they now ?  
 Note their extravagance, and be convinced.  
 As nations, ignorant of God, contrive  
 A wooden one, so we, no longer taught  
 By monitors that mother Church supplies,  
 Now make our own. Posterity will ask  
 (If e'er posterity see verse of mine),  
 Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,  
 What was a monitor in George's days ? 580  
 My very gentle reader, yet unborn,  
 Of whom I needs must augur better things,  
 Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world  
 Productive only of a race like ours,  
 A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.  
 We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced  
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard  
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,  
 And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use  
 Sovereign and most effectual to secure 590

A form, not now gymnastic as of yore, 591  
 From rickets and distortion, else our lot.  
 But thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—  
 One proof at least of manhood! while the friend  
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.  
 Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,  
 And by caprice as multiplied as his,  
 Just please us while the fashion is at full,  
 But change with every moon. The sycophant,  
 Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date ; 600  
 Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye ;  
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete,  
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived ;  
 And, making prize of all that he condemns,  
 With our expenditure defrays his own.  
 Variety's the very spice of life,  
 That gives it all its flavour. We have run  
 Through every change that Fancy, at the loom  
 Exhausted, has had genius to supply ;  
 And, studious of mutation still, discard 610  
 A real elegance, a little used,  
 For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.  
 We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
 And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
 And keeps our larder lean ; puts out our fires,  
 And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,  
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.  
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,  
 Would fail to exhibit at the public shows  
 A form as splendid as the proudest there, 620  
 Though appetite raise outcries at the cost ?  
 A man o' the town dines late, but soon enough,  
 With reasonable forecast and despatch,  
 To insure a side-box station at half-price.

You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress, 625  
 His daily fare as delicate. Alas !  
 He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems  
 With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.  
 The rout is Folly's circle, which she draws  
 With magic wand. So potent is the spell, 630  
 That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,  
 Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.  
 There we grow early gray, but never wise ;  
 There form connexions, but acquire no friend ;  
 Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success ;  
 Waste youth in occupations only fit  
 For second childhood ; and devote old age  
 To sports which only childhood could excuse.  
 There they are happiest who dissemble best  
 Their weariness ; and they the most polite 640  
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile,  
 Though at their own destruction. She that asks  
 Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,  
 And hates their coming. They (what can they less ?)  
 Make just reprisals ; and, with cringe and shrug,  
 And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.  
 All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,  
 Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,  
 And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,  
 To her, who, frugal only that her thrift 650  
 May feed excesses she can ill afford,  
 Is hackney'd home unlackey'd,—who, in haste  
 Alighting, turns the key in her own door,  
 And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,  
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.  
 Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives ;  
 On Fortune's velvet altar offering up  
 Their last poor pittance,—Fortune, most severe  
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far



Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven.— 660  
 So fare we in this prison-house, the World.  
 And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.  
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast  
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,  
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again !  
 Now basket up the family of plagues  
 That waste our vitals ;—peculation, sale  
 Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds  
 By forgery, by subterfuge of law, 670  
 By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen  
 As the necessities their authors feel ;  
 Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat  
 At the right door. Profusion is the fire.  
 Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base  
 In character, has litter'd all the land,  
 And bred, within the memory of no few,  
 A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,  
 A people such as never was till now.  
 It is a hungry vice :—it eats up all 680  
 That gives society its beauty, strength,  
 Convenience, and security, and use ;  
 Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd  
 And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws  
 Can seize the slippery prey : unties the knot  
 Of union, and converts the sacred band  
 That holds mankind together, to a scourge.  
 Profusion, deluging a state with lusts  
 Of grossest nature and of worst effects,  
 Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds, 690  
 And warps the consciences of public men,  
 Till they can laugh at Virtue ; mock the fools  
 That trust them ; and, in the end, disclose a face  
 That would have shock'd Credulity herself,

Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse— 695  
 Since all alike are selfish, why not they ?  
 This does Profusion, and the accursed cause  
 Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.  
 In colleges and halls in ancient days,  
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth 700  
 Were precious, and inculcated with care,  
 There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,  
 Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,  
 Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,  
 But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.  
 His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile  
 Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard  
 Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.  
 The occupation dearest to his heart  
 Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke 710  
 The head of modest and ingenuous worth,  
 That blush'd at its own praise ; and press the youth  
 Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew  
 Beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant ;  
 The mind was well inform'd, the passions held  
 Subordinate, and diligence was choice.  
 If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,  
 That one among so many overleap'd  
 The limits of control, his gentle eye  
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke ; 720  
 His frown was full of terror, and his voice  
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,  
 As left him not, till penitence had won  
 Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.  
 But Discipline, a faithful servant long,  
 Declined at length into the vale of years ;  
 A palsy struck his arm ; his sparkling eye  
 Was quench'd in rheums of age ; his voice, unstrung,  
 Grew tremulous, and moved derision more

Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth. 730  
 So colleges and halls neglected much  
 Their good old friend ; and Discipline at length  
 O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.  
 Then Study languish'd, Emulation slept,  
 And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene  
 Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,  
 His cap well lined with logic not his own,  
 With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,  
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.  
 Then Compromise had place, and Scrutiny 740  
 Became stone blind ; Precedence went in truck,  
 And he was competent whose purse was so.  
 A dissolution of all bonds ensued ;  
 The curbs invented for the mulish mouth  
 Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts  
 Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates  
 Forgot their office, opening with a touch ;  
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade ;  
 The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,  
 A mockery of the world ! What need of these 750  
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,  
 Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen  
 With belted waist, and pointers at their heels,  
 Than in the bounds of duty ? What was learn'd,  
 If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot ;  
 And such expense as pinches parents blue,  
 And mortifies the liberal hand of love,  
 Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports  
 And vicious pleasures ; buys the boy a name,  
 That sits a stigma on his father's house, 760  
 And cleaves through life inseparably close  
 To him that wears it. What can after-games  
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,  
 The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,

Add to such erudition, thus acquired, 765  
 Where science and where virtue are profess'd ?  
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast  
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task  
 That bids defiance to the united powers  
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews. 770  
 Now, blame we most the nurslings or the nurse ?  
 The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,  
 Through want of care ; or her, whose winking eye  
 And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood ?  
 The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge,  
 She needs herself correction ; needs to learn  
 That it is dangerous sporting with the world,  
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,  
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.  
 All are not such. I had a brother once— 780  
 Peace to the memory of a man of worth,  
 A man of letters, and of manners too !  
 Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,  
 When gay Good-nature dresses her in smiles.  
 He graced a college,<sup>1</sup> in which order yet  
 Was sacred ; and was honour'd, loved, and wept,  
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.  
 Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd  
 With such ingredients of good sense and taste  
 Of what is excellent in man ; they thirst 790  
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,  
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more  
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.  
 Nor can example hurt them ; what they see  
 Of vice in others but enhancing more  
 The charms of virtue in their just esteem.  
 If such escape contagion, and emerge  
 Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,

<sup>1</sup> Bene't College, Cambridge.

And give the world their talents and themselves— 799  
 Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth  
 Exposed their inexperience to the snare,  
 And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decay'd,  
 In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there  
 In wild disorder, and unfit for use,  
 What wonder if, discharged into the world,  
 They shame their shooters with a random flight,  
 Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine!  
 Well may the Church wage unsuccessful war,  
 With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide 810  
 The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,  
 And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found  
 His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns,  
 Mourns, because every plague that can infest  
 Society, and that saps and worms the base  
 Of the edifice that Policy has raised,  
 Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear;  
 And suffocates the breath at every turn.  
 Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself 820  
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found—  
 Found too where most offensive, in the skirts  
 Of the robed pedagogue! Else let the arraign'd  
 Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.  
 So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,  
 And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,  
 Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,  
 Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains,  
 Were cover'd with the pest; the streets were fill'd;  
 The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook; 830  
 Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped;  
 And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

## BOOK III.—THE GARDEN.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof, 1—Address to domestic happiness, 41—Some account of myself, 108—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise, 124—Justification of my censures, 191—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher, 221—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions, 261—Domestic happiness addressed again, 290—Few lovers of the country, 293—My tame hare, 334—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden, 352—Pruning, 408—Framing, 435—Raising the cucumber, 446—Greenhouse, 566—Sowing of flower seeds, 624—The country preferable to the town, even in the winter, 675—Reasons why it is deserted at that season, 728—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvements, 760—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis, 811.

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes  
 Entangled, winds now this way and now that  
 His devious course uncertain, seeking home ;  
 Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd,  
 And sore discomfited, from slough to slough  
 Plunging, and half despairing of escape ;  
 If chance at length he find a greensward smooth  
 And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
 He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
 And winds his way with pleasure and with ease ;      10  
 So I, designing other themes, and call'd  
 To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,  
 To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,  
 Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat  
 Of academic fame (howe'er deserved),  
 Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.  
 But now with pleasant pace, a cleaner road

I mean to tread. I feel myself at large, 18  
 Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,  
 If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect  
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,  
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,  
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,  
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope  
 Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far  
 For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,  
 And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,  
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,  
 My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains; 30  
 Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft  
 And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air  
 Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;  
 There, undisturb'd by Folly, and apprized  
 How great the danger of disturbing her,  
 To muse in silence, or at least confine  
 Remarks that gall so many, to the few  
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd  
 Is ofttimes proof of wisdom, when the fault  
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach. 40

Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss  
 Of Paradise that has survived the fall!  
 Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,  
 Or tasting, long enjoy thee! too infirm,  
 Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets  
 Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect  
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup:  
 Thou art the nurse of Virtue. In thine arms  
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
 Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again. 50  
 Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,

That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist                   52  
 And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm  
 Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support ;  
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change,  
 And finding in the calm of truth-tried love  
 Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.  
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made  
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown !  
 Till prostitution elbows us aside                                   60  
 In all our crowded streets ; and senates seem  
 Convened for purposes of empire less  
 Than to release the adulteress from her bond.  
 The adulteress ! what a theme for angry verse !  
 What provocation to the indignant heart,  
 That feels for injured love ! but I disdain  
 The nauseous task to paint her as she is—  
 Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame !  
 No : let her pass, and charioted along  
 In guilty splendour, shake the public ways !                   70  
 The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,  
 And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,  
 Whom matrons now, of character unsmirch'd,  
 And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.  
 Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,  
 Not to be pass'd : and she that had renounced  
 Her sex's honour, was renounced herself  
 By all that prized it ; not for prudery's sake,  
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.  
 'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,                   80  
 Desirous to return, and not received ;  
 But was a wholesome rigour in the main,  
 And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care  
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.  
 Men too were nice in honour in those days,



And judged offenders well. And he that sharp'd, 86  
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,  
 Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold  
 His country, or was slack when she required  
 His every nerve in action and at stretch, 90  
 Paid, with the blood that he had basely spared,  
 The price of his default. But now, yes, now,  
 We are become so candid and so fair,  
 So liberal in construction, and so rich  
 In Christian charity, a good-natured age !  
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,  
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,  
 Well equipaged, is ticket good enough  
 To pass us readily through every door.  
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may 100  
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet),  
 May claim this merit still, that she admits  
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,  
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause ;  
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,  
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts  
 And specious semblances have lost their use.  
 I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
 Long since ; with many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew, 110  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by one who had himself  
 Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,  
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
 He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.  
 Since then, with few associates, in remote  
 And silent woods I wander, far from those  
 My former partners of the peopled scene ;

With few associates, and not wishing more. 120  
 Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,  
 With other views of men and manners now  
 Than once, and others of a life to come.  
 I see that all are wanderers, gone astray  
 Each in his own delusions ; they are lost  
 In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd  
 And never won. Dream after dream ensues ;  
 And still they dream that they shall still succeed ;  
 And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
 With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind, 130  
 And add two-thirds of the remaining half,  
 And find the total of their hopes and fears  
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay  
 As if created only like the fly,  
 That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,  
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.  
 The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
 And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.  
 Some write a narrative of wars, and feats  
 Of heroes little known ; and call the rant 140  
 A history : describe the man, of whom  
 His own coevals took but little note ;  
 And paint his person, character, and views,  
 As they had known him from his mother's womb.  
 They disentangle from the puzzled skein,  
 In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,  
 The threads of politic and shrewd design,  
 That ran through all his purposes, and charge  
 His mind with meanings that he never had,  
 Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore 150  
 The solid earth, and from the strata there  
 Extract a register, by which we learn  
 That He who made it, and reveal'd its date

To Moses, was mistaken in its age. 154  
 Some more acute, and more industrious still,  
 Contrive creation ; travel nature up  
 To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,  
 And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd,  
 And planetary some ; what gave them first  
 Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light. 160  
 Great contest follows, and much learned dust  
 Involves the combatants ; each claiming truth,  
 And truth disclaiming both. . And thus they spend  
 The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp  
 In playing tricks with nature, giving laws  
 To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.  
 Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums  
 Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight  
 Of oracles like these ? Great pity too,  
 That, having wielded the elements, and built 170  
 A thousand systems, each in his own way,  
 They should go out in fume and be forgot ?  
 Ah ! what is life thus spent ? and what are they  
 But frantic who thus spend it ? all for smoke—  
 Eternity for bubbles, proves at last  
 A senseless bargain. When I see such games  
 Play'd by the creatures of a Power who swears  
 That he will judge the earth, and call the fool  
 To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain ;  
 And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well, 180  
 And prove it in the infallible result  
 So hollow and so false—I feel my heart  
 Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,  
 If this be learning, most of all deceived.  
 Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps  
 While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.  
 Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,

From reveries so airy, from the toil 188  
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
 And growing old in drawing nothing up !  
 'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,  
 Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,  
 And overbuilt with most impending brows—  
 'Twere well, could you permit the world to live  
 As the world pleases : what's the world to you ?—  
 Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,  
 As sweet as charity, from human breasts.  
 I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,  
 And exercise all functions of a man.  
 How then should I and any man that lives 200  
 Be strangers to each other ? Pierce my vein,  
 Take of the crimson stream meandering there,  
 And catechise it well ; apply your glass,  
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood  
 Congenial with thine own : and, if it be,  
 What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose  
 Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,  
 To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
 One common Maker bound me to the kind ?  
 True ; I am no proficient, I confess, 210  
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift  
 And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,  
 And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath ;  
 I cannot analyse the air, nor catch  
 The parallax of yonder luminous point  
 That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss :  
 Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest  
 A silent witness of the headlong rage  
 Or heedless folly by which thousands die,  
 Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine. 220  
 God never meant that man should scale the Heavens

By strides of human wisdom—in his works, 222  
 Though wondrous ; He commands us in his Word  
 To seek him rather, where his mercy shines.  
 The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,  
 Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause  
 The grand effect ; acknowledges with joy  
 His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.  
 But never yet did philosophic tube,  
 That brings the planets home into the eye 230  
 Of Observation, and discovers, else  
 Not visible, his family of worlds,  
 Discover Him that rules them : such a veil  
 Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
 And dark in things divine. Full often too  
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn  
 Of nature, overlooks her Author more ;  
 From instrumental causes proud to draw  
 Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.  
 But if his Word once teach us, shoot a ray 240  
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal  
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,  
 Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized  
 In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
 Has eyes indeed ; and, viewing all she sees  
 As meant to indicate a God to man,  
 Gives *Him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.  
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
 On all her branches : piety has found  
 Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer 250  
 Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.  
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage !  
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
 And in his Word sagacious. Such too thine,  
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,

And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom 256  
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,  
 And sound integrity, not more than famed  
 For sanctity of manners undefiled.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades  
 Like the fair flower dishevell'd in the wind ;  
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream :  
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,  
 And we that worship him, ignoble graves.  
 Nothing is proof against the general curse  
 Of vanity, that seizes all below.

The only amaranthine flower on earth  
 Is virtue ; the only lasting treasure, truth.  
 But what is truth ? 'Twas Pilate's question put 270  
 To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.

And wherefore ? will not God impart his light  
 To them that ask it ?—Freely—'tis his joy,  
 His glory, and his nature to impart :  
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,  
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.

What's that which brings contempt upon a book,  
 And him who writes it, though the style be neat,  
 The method clear, and argument exact ?—

That makes a minister in holy things 280  
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,  
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach ?—  
 That, while it gives us worth in God's account,  
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own ?

What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,  
 That learning is too proud to gather up ;  
 But which the poor, and the despised of all,  
 Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ?  
 Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O friendly to the best pursuits of man, 290  
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
 Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd !  
 Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets ;  
 Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
 To understand and choose thee for their own.  
 But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,  
 Even as his first progenitor, and quits,  
 Though placed in Paradise (for Earth has still  
 Some traces of her youthful beauty left),  
 Substantial happiness for transient joy. 300  
 Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse  
 The growing seeds of wisdom ; that suggest,  
 By every pleasing image they present,  
 Reflections such as meliorate the heart,  
 Compose the passions, and exalt the mind ;  
 Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight  
 To fill with riot and defile with blood.  
 Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes  
 We persecute, annihilate the tribes  
 That draw the sportsman over hill and dale, 310  
 Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares ;  
 Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,  
 Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye ;  
 Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,  
 Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats ;  
 How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,  
 Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,  
 Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,  
 And crowd the roads, impatient for the town !  
 They love the country, and none else, who seek 320  
 For their own sake its silence and its shade.  
 Delights which who would leave, that has a heart  
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind

Cultured and capable of sober thought, 324  
 For all the savage din of the swift pack,  
 And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,  
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain ;  
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks  
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued  
 With eloquence that agonies inspire, 330  
 Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs !  
 Vain tears, alas ! and sighs that never find  
 A corresponding tone in jovial souls !

Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare  
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell  
 Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.  
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,  
 Whom ten long years' experience of my care  
 Has made at last familiar ; she has lost  
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread, 340  
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
 Yes—thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
 That feeds thee ; thou may'st frolic on the floor  
 At evening, and at night retire secure  
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd ;  
 For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledged  
 All that is human in me, to protect  
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.  
 If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave ;  
 And when I place thee in it, sighing say, 350  
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world  
 Calls idle ; and who justly, in return,  
 Esteems that busy world an idler too !  
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,  
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,  
 And Nature in her cultivated trim



Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad : 358  
 Can he want occupation who has these ?  
 Will he be idle who has much to enjoy ?  
 Me therefore studious of laborious ease,  
 Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,  
 Not waste it, and aware that human life  
 Is but a loan to be repaid with use,  
 When He shall call his debtors to account,  
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds  
 Even here. While sedulous I seek to improve,  
 At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,  
 The mind he gave me ; driving it, though slack  
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work 370  
 By causes not to be divulged in vain,  
 To its just point—the service of mankind.  
 He that attends to his interior self,  
 That has a heart, and keeps it ; has a mind  
 That hungers, and supplies it ; and who seeks  
 A social, not a dissipated life,  
 Has business ; feels himself engaged to achieve  
 No unimportant, though a silent task.  
 A life all turbulence and noise may seem,  
 To him that leads it, wise, and to be praised ; 380  
 But wisdom is a pearl with most success  
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.  
 He that is ever occupied in storms,  
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,  
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.  
 The morning finds the self-sequester'd man  
 Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.  
 Whether inclement seasons recommend  
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,  
 With her who shares his pleasures and his heart, 390  
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph

Which neatly she prepares ; then to his book 392  
 Well chosen, and not sullenly perused  
 In selfish silence, but imparted oft,  
 As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,  
 Or turn to nourishment, digested well.  
 Or if the garden with its many cares,  
 All well repaid, demand him, he attends  
 The welcome call, conscious how much the hand  
 Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye, 400  
 Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,  
 Or misapplying his unskilful strength.  
 Nor does he govern only or direct,  
 But much performs himself. No works indeed  
 That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,  
 Servile employ ; but such as may amuse,  
 Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.  
 Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,  
 That meet (no barren interval between),  
 With pleasure more than even their fruits afford ; 410  
 Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.  
 These therefore are his own peculiar charge ;  
 No meaner hand may discipline the shoots—  
 None but his steel approach them. What is weak,  
 Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers,  
 Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand  
 Dooms to the knife : nor does he spare the soft  
 And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,  
 But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs  
 Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick 420  
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left  
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint  
 Large expectation, he disposes neat  
 At measured distances, that air and sun,  
 Admitted freely, may afford their aid,

And ventilate and warm the swelling buds. 426  
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,  
 And hence even Winter fills his wither'd hand  
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.<sup>1</sup>  
 Fair recompence of labour well bestow'd,  
 And wise precaution, which a clime so rude  
 Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child  
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods  
 Discovering much the temper of her sire.  
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild  
 Maternal nature had reversed its course,  
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles ;  
 But once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.  
 He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies  
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm 440  
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep  
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft  
 As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,  
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,  
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.  
 To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,  
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare  
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—  
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art  
 That toiling ages have but just matured, 450  
 And at this moment unassay'd in song.  
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,  
 Their eulogy ; those sang the Mantuan bard,  
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains ;  
 And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye  
 The Solitary Shilling. Pardon, then,  
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame !  
 The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,

<sup>1</sup> *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.*—VIRG.

Presuming an attempt not less sublime, 459  
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste  
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,  
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,  
 Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,  
 And potent to resist the freezing blast ;  
 For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf  
 Deciduous, when now November dark  
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant  
 Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.

Warily therefore, and with prudent heed, 470  
 He seeks a favour'd spot ; that where he builds  
 The agglomerated pile, his frame may front  
 The sun's meridian disk, and at the back  
 Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge  
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread  
 Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe  
 The ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,  
 And lightly, shaking it with agile hand  
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.

What longest binds the closest, forms secure 480  
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes,  
 By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,  
 Sheltering the base with its projected eaves ;  
 The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,  
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass,  
 He settles next upon the sloping mount,  
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure  
 From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls :  
 He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.

Thrice must the voluble and restless Earth 490  
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,  
 Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass

Diffused, attain the surface : when, behold ! 498  
 A pestilent and most corrosive steam,  
 Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,  
 And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,  
 Asks egress ; which obtain'd, the overcharged  
 And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,  
 In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank ;  
 And, purified, rejoices to have lost 500  
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage  
 The impatient fervour which it first conceives  
 Within its reeking bosom, threatening death  
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.  
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft  
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,  
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch  
 The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,  
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford  
 Soft fomentation, and invite the seed. 510  
 The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,  
 And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
 Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepared  
 And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,  
 And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds :  
 These, on the warm and genial earth that hides  
 The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,  
 He places lightly, and as time subdues  
 The rage of fermentation, plunges deep  
 In the soft medium, till they stand immersed. 520  
 Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,  
 And spreading wide their spongy lobes ; at first  
 Pale, wan, and livid ; but assuming soon,  
 If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,  
 Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.

Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves, 526  
 Cautious he pinches from the second stalk  
 A pimple, that portends a future sprout,  
 And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed  
 The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish ;  
 Prolific all, and harbingers of more.  
 The crowded roots demand enlargement now,  
 And transplantation in an ampler space.  
 Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply  
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,  
 Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.  
 These have their sexes ; and, when summer shines,  
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal  
 From flower to flower, and even the breathing air  
 Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540  
 Not so when Winter scowls. Assistant Art  
 Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass  
 The glad espousals, and insures the crop.  
 Grudge not, ye rich (since Luxury must have  
 His dainties, and the World's more numerous half  
 Lives by contriving delicates for you),  
 Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,  
 The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,  
 That day and night are exercised, and hang  
 Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550  
 That ye may garnish your profuse regales  
 With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.  
 Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart  
 The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,  
 Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,  
 Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work  
 Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,  
 And which no care can obviate. It were long,  
 Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts

Which he that fights a season so severe 560  
 Devises, while he guards his tender trust ;  
 And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise  
 Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song  
 Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit  
 Of too much labour, worthless when produced.

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too.  
 Unconscious of a less propitious clime,  
 There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,  
 While the winds whistle and the snows descend.  
 The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf 570  
 Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast  
 Of Portugal and Western India there,  
 The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,  
 Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,  
 And seem to smile at what they need not fear.  
 The amomum there with intermingling flowers  
 And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts  
 Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,  
 Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.

All plants, of every leaf, that can endure 580  
 The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,  
 Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,  
 Levantine regions these ; the Azores send  
 Their jessamine, her jessamine remote  
 Caffraia ; foreigners from many lands,  
 They form one social shade, as if convened  
 By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.  
 Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass  
 But by a master's hand, disposing well  
 The gay diversities of leaf and flower, 590  
 Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,  
 And dress the regular yet various scene.  
 Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van

The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still 594  
 Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.  
 So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,  
 A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage,  
 And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,  
 The sons of Albion—fearing each to lose  
 Some note of Nature's music from his lips, 600  
 And covetous of Shakespeare's beauty, seen  
 In every flash of his far-beaming eye.  
 Nor taste alone and well-contrived display  
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace  
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains  
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,  
 And more laborious; cares on which depends  
 Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.  
 The soil must be renew'd, which, often wash'd,  
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts, 610  
 And disappoints the roots; the slender roots  
 Close interwoven, where they meet the vase  
 Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch  
 Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf  
 Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor  
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else  
 Contagion, and disseminating death.  
 Discharge but these kind offices, (and who  
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)  
 Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased, 620  
 The scent regaled; each odoriferous leaf,  
 Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad  
 Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.  
 So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,  
 All healthful, are the employs of rural life,  
 Reiterated as the wheel of time  
 Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.



Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll, 628  
 That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears  
 A flowery island, from the dark green lawn  
 Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due  
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.  
 Here also grateful mixture of well match'd  
 And sorted hues (each giving each relief,  
 And by contrasted beauty shining more),  
 Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,  
 May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home ;  
 But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,  
 And most attractive, is the fair result  
 Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind. 640  
 Without it, all is Gothic as the scene  
 To which the insipid citizen resorts  
 Near yonder heath ; where Industry misspent,  
 But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,  
 Has made a heaven on earth ; with suns and moons  
 Of close-ramm'd stones has charged the encumber'd soil,  
 And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.  
 He therefore who would see his flowers disposed  
 Sightly and in just order, ere he gives  
 The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds, 650  
 Forecasts the future whole ; and when the scene  
 Shall break into its preconceived display,  
 Each for itself, and all as with one voice  
 Conspiring, may attest his bright design.  
 Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd  
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.  
 Few self-supported flowers endure the wind  
 Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid  
 Of the smooth-shaven prop ; and, neatly tied,  
 Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age, 660  
 For interest sake, the living to the dead.

Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused 662  
 And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,  
 Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.  
 Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub  
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,  
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon  
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well  
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.  
 All hate the rank society of weeds, 670  
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust  
 The impoverish'd earth ; an overbearing race,  
 That, like the multitude made faction-mad,  
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.  
 O blest seclusion from a jarring world,  
 Which he, thus occupied, enjoys ! Retreat  
 Cannot indeed to guilty man restore  
 Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;  
 But it has peace, and much secures the mind  
 From all assaults of evil ; proving still 680  
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease  
 By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd  
 Abroad, and desolating public life.  
 When fierce Temptation, seconded within  
 By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts  
 Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast—  
 To combat may be glorious, and success  
 Perhaps may crown us ; but to fly is safe.  
 Had I the choice of sublunary good,  
 What could I wish, that I possess not here ? 690  
 Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,  
 No loose or wanton, though a wandering, Muse,  
 And constant occupation without care.  
 Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss ;  
 Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,

And profligate abusers of a world 696  
 Created fair so much in vain for them,  
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,  
 Allured by my report : but sure no less,  
 That, self-condemn'd, they must neglect the prize,  
 And what they will not taste, must yet approve.  
 What we admire we praise ; and, when we praise,  
 Advance it into notice, that, its worth  
 Acknowledged, others may admire it too.  
 I therefore recommend, though at the risk  
 Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,  
 The cause of piety and sacred truth,  
 And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd  
 Should best secure them, and promote them most ;  
 Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive 710  
 Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.  
 Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,  
 And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol ;  
 Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,  
 Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth  
 To grace the full pavilion. His design  
 Was but to boast his own peculiar good,  
 Which all might view with envy, none partake.  
 My charmer is not mine alone ; my sweets, 720  
 And she that sweetens all my bitters too,  
 Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form  
 And lineaments divine I trace a hand  
 That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,  
 Is free to all men—universal prize.  
 Strange that so fair a creature should yet want  
 Admirers, and be destined to divide  
 With meaner objects even the few she finds !  
 Stript of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,  
 She loses all her influence. Cities then

Attract us, and neglected Nature pines, 730  
 Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.  
 But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed  
 By roses ; and clear suns, though scarcely felt ;  
 And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure  
 From clamour, and whose very silence charms ;  
 To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse  
 That metropolitan volcanoes make,  
 Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long ;  
 And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,  
 And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels ? 740  
 They would be, were not madness in the head,  
 And folly in the heart ; were England now  
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
 And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell  
 To all the virtues of those better days,  
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once  
 Knew their own masters ; and laborious hinds,  
 Who had survived the father, served the son.  
 Now the legitimate and rightful lord  
 Is but a transient guest, newly arrived, 750  
 And soon to be supplanted. He that saw  
 His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,  
 Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price  
 To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.  
 Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,  
 Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.  
 The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged  
 And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,  
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.  
 The wings, that waft our riches out of sight, 760  
 Grow on the gamester's elbows ; and the alert  
 And nimble motion of those restless joints,  
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.

Improvement too, the idol of the age, 764  
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes !  
 The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears !  
 Down falls the venerable pile, the abode  
 Of our forefathers—a grave whisker'd race,  
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,  
 But in a distant spot ; where more exposed, 770  
 It may enjoy the advantage of the north,  
 And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd  
 Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.  
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn ;  
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise ;  
 And streams, as if created for his use,  
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,  
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,  
 Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—  
 Even as he bids ! The enraptured owner smiles. 780  
 'Tis finish'd ! and yet, finish'd as it seems,  
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show—  
 A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.  
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,  
 He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan,  
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day  
 Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,  
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven  
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy !  
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come, 790  
 When, having no stake left, no pledge to endear  
 Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause  
 A moment's operation on his love,  
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal  
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace  
 Deals him out money from the public chest ;  
 Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse

Supplies his need with a usurious loan, 798  
 To be refunded duly, when his vote,  
 Well managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.  
 O innocent, compared with arts like these,  
 Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball  
 Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds  
 One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,  
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well content,  
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags  
 At his last gasp ; but could not for a world  
 Fish up his dirty and dependent bread  
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,  
 Sordid and sickening at his own success. 810

Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd  
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
 Of pleasure and variety, despatch,  
 As duly as the swallows disappear,  
 The world of wandering knights and squires to town.  
 London engulfs them all! The shark is there,  
 And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech  
 That sucks him ; there the sycophant, and he  
 Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,  
 Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail 820  
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.  
 The levee swarms, as if, in golden pomp,  
 Were character'd on every statesman's door,  
 " BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."  
 These are the charms that sully and eclipse  
 The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe  
 That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,  
 The hope of better things, the chance to win,  
 The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,  
 That, at the sound of Winter's hoary wing, 830  
 Unpeople all our counties of such herds

Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose, 832  
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

O thou, resort and mart of all the earth,  
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,  
And spotted with all crimes ; in whom I see  
Much that I love, and more that I admire,  
And all that I abhor ; thou freckled fair,  
That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh, 840  
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,  
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee !  
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,  
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee,  
That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else,  
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,  
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,  
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

## BOOK IV.—THE WINTER EVENING.

## THE ARGUMENT.

The post comes in, 1—The newspaper is read, 36—The world contemplated at a distance, 88—Address to Winter, 120—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones, 193—Address to Evening, 243—A brown study, 267—Fall of snow in the evening, 302—The waggoner, 330—A poor family piece, 374—The rural thief, 429—Public houses, 466—The multitude of them censured, 500—The farmer's daughter, what she was, 513—What she is, 534—The simplicity of country manners almost lost, 553—Causes of the change, 576—Desertion of the country by the rich, 587—Neglect of magistrates, 593—The militia principally in fault, 613—The new recruit and his transformation, 623—Reflection on bodies corporate, 659—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished, 691.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! o'er yonder bridge,  
 That with its wearisome but needful length  
 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—  
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
 With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;  
 News from all nations lumbering at his back.  
 True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,  
 Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
 Is to conduct it to the destined inn, 10  
 And, having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on.  
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,  
 Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief  
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;  
 To him indifferent whether grief or joy.  
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet



With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks 18  
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
 Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,  
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
 But O the important budget ! usher'd in  
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
 What are its tidings ? have our troops awaked ?  
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,  
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave ?  
 Is India free ? and does she wear her plumed  
 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,  
 Or do we grind her still ? The grand debate, 30  
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,  
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;  
 I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,  
 And give them voice and utterance once again.  
 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40  
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.  
 Not such his evening, who with shining face  
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed  
 And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,  
 Outcolds the ranting actor on the stage :  
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,  
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath  
 Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,  
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
 This folio of four pages, happy work ! 50  
 Which not even critics criticise ; that holds

Inquisitive Attention, while I read, 52  
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;—  
 What is it but a map of busy life,  
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?  
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge  
 That tempts Ambition. On the summit see  
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;  
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels, 60  
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
 And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,  
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.  
 Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft  
 Meanders lubricate the course they take ;  
 The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved  
 To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,  
 Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
 However trivial all that he conceives.  
 Sweet bashfulness ! it claims at least this praise ; 70  
 The dearth of information and good sense,  
 That it foretells us, always comes to pass.  
 Cataracts of declamation thunder here ;  
 There forests of no meaning spread the page,  
 In which all comprehension wanders lost ;  
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there  
 With merry descants on a nation's woes.  
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
 But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,  
 And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80  
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,  
 Heaven, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their sweets,  
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,  
 Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,  
 Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,

And Katerfelto, with his hair on end 88  
 At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.  
 'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,  
 To peep at such a world ; to see the stir  
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ;  
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates,  
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound  
 Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.  
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease  
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced  
 To some secure and more than mortal height,  
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.  
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round  
 With all its generations ; I behold  
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war 100  
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me ;  
 Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride  
 And avarice that make man a wolf to man ;  
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats  
 By which he speaks the language of his heart,  
 And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.  
 He travels and expatiates, as the bee  
 From flower to flower, so he from land to land ;  
 The manners, customs, policy of all  
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans ; 110  
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,  
 And spreads the honey of his deep research  
 At his return—a rich repast for me.  
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,  
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes  
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart  
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;  
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

O Winter ! ruler of the inverted year, 120  
 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,  
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
 Fringed with a beard made white with other snows  
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,  
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,  
 But urged by storms along its slippery way ;  
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,  
 And dreaded as thou art ! Thou hold'st the sun  
 A prisoner in the yet undawning east, 130  
 Shortening his journey between morn and noon,  
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,  
 Down to the rosy west ; but kindly still  
 Compensating his loss with added hours  
 Of social converse and instructive ease,  
 And gathering, at short notice, in one group,  
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought,  
 Not less dispersed, by daylight and its cares.  
 I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
 Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness, 140  
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
 Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours  
 Of long uninterrupted evening, know.  
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;  
 No powder'd pert proficient in the art  
 Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors  
 Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds  
 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake :  
 But here the needle plies its busy task, 150  
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
 Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,

And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed, 154  
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair ;  
 A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow  
 With most success when all besides decay.  
 The poet's or historian's page, by one  
 Made vocal for the amusement of the rest ;  
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds 160  
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;  
 And the clear voice, symphonious, yet distinct,  
 And in the charming strife triumphant still,—  
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
 On female industry : the threaded steel  
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.  
 The volume closed, the customary rites  
 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal ;  
 Such as the mistress of the world once found  
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note, 170  
 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,  
 Enjoy'd, spare feast ! a radish and an egg.  
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,  
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play  
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth :  
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
 That made them an intruder on their joys,  
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise 180  
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,  
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
 While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,  
 That calls the past to our exact review,  
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
 The disappointed foe, deliverance found  
 Unlook'd for, life preserved, and peace restored—

Fruits of omnipotent eternal love. 188  
 O evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd  
 The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,  
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,  
 As more illumined, and with nobler truths,  
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy!  
 Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?  
 Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,  
 The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,  
 To thaw him into feeling; or the smart  
 And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits  
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?  
 The self-complacent actor, when he views 200  
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)  
 The slope of faces from the floor to the roof  
 (As if one master-spring controll'd them all)  
 Relax'd into a universal grin,  
 Sees not a countenance there that speaks a joy  
 Half so refined or so sincere as ours.  
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks  
 That Idleness has ever yet contrived  
 To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,  
 To palliate dulness, and give time a shove. 210  
 Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,  
 Unsoil'd and swift, and of a silken sound;  
 But the World's Time, is Time in masquerade!  
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged  
 With motley plumes; and, where the peacock shows  
 His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red  
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,  
 Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
 What should be, and what was, an hour-glass once, 220  
 Becomes a dice-box; and a billiard-mace

Well does the work of his destructive scythe. 222  
 Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom Fashion blinds  
 To his true worth, most pleased when idle most ;  
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours.  
 Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
 The backstring and the bib, assume the dress  
 Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school  
 Of card-devoted Time, and, night by night,  
 Placed at some vacant corner of the board, 230  
 Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.  
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,  
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed ?  
 As he that travels far, oft turns aside  
 To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,  
 Which, seen, delights him not ; then coming home,  
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know  
 How far he went for what was nothing worth ;  
 So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,  
 With colours mix'd for a far different use, 240  
 Paint cards, and dolls, and every idle thing  
 That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.  
 Come, Evening, once again, season of peace ;  
 Return, sweet Evening, and continue long !  
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,  
 With matron step slow moving, while the Night  
 Treads on thy sweeping train ; one hand employ'd  
 In letting fall the curtain of repose  
 On bird and beast, the other charged for man  
 With sweet oblivion of the cares of day : 250  
 Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,  
 Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems ;  
 A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,  
 Suffices thee ; save that the moon is thine  
 No less than hers, not worn indeed on high

With ostentatious pageantry, but set 256  
 With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.  
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,  
 Or make me so ! Composure is thy gift :  
 And, whether I devote thy gentle hours  
 To books, to music, or the poet's toil ;  
 To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;  
 Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,  
 When they command whom man was born to please ;  
 I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
 With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
 From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,  
 Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270  
 Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,  
 My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps  
 The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile  
 With faint illumination, that uplifts  
 The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits  
 Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.  
 Not undelightful is an hour to me  
 So spent in parlour twilight ; such a gloom  
 Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,  
 The mind contemplative, with some new theme 280  
 Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.  
 Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,  
 That never feel a stupor, know no pause,  
 Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess,  
 Fearless, a soul that does not always think.  
 Me oft has Fancy, ludicrous and wild,  
 Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,  
 Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd  
 In the red cinders, while with poring eye



I gazed, myself creating what I saw. 290  
 Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd  
 The sooty films that play upon the bars  
 Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view  
 Of superstition, prophesying still,  
 Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.  
 'Tis thus the understanding takes repose  
 In indolent vacuity of thought,  
 And sleeps, and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face  
 Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask  
 Of deep deliberation, as the man 300  
 Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.  
 Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour  
 At evening, till at length the freezing blast,  
 That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home  
 The recollected powers, and, snapping short  
 The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves  
 Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.  
 How calm is my recess ; and how the frost,  
 Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear  
 The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within ! 310  
 I saw the woods and fields, at close of day,  
 A variegated show ; the meadows green,  
 Though faded ; and the lands, where lately waved  
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,  
 Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.  
 I saw far off the weedy fallows smile  
 With verdure not unprofitable, grazed  
 By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each  
 His favourite herb ; while all the leafless groves,  
 That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue, 320  
 Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.  
 To-morrow brings a change, a total change !  
 Which even now, though silently perform'd,

And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face 324  
Of universal nature undergoes.

Fast falls a fleecy shower : the downy flakes  
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives  
Gladly the thickening mantle ; and the green 330  
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,  
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,  
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
Against the law of love, to measure lots  
With less distinguish'd than ourselves ; that thus  
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,  
And sympathize with others suffering more. 340

Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks  
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.  
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore  
By congregated loads adhering close  
To the clogg'd wheels ; and in its sluggish pace  
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.  
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide ;  
While every breath, by respiration strong  
Forced downward, is consolidated soon  
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear 350  
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth  
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.  
One hand secures his hat, save when with both  
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,  
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
Oh, happy ! and, in my account, denied

That sensibility of pain with which 358  
 Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou !  
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.  
 The learned finger never need explore  
 Thy vigorous pulse ; and the unhealthful east,  
 That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone  
 Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.  
 Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;  
 Thy waggon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts  
 That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
 Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.  
 Ah, treat them kindly ! rude as thou appear'st, 370  
 Yet show that thou hast mercy ; which the great,  
 With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,  
 Humane as they would seem, not always show.  
 Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat  
 Such claim compassion in a night like this,  
 And have a friend in every feeling heart.  
 Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long  
 They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
 Ill clad, and fed but sparely, time to cool.  
 The frugal housewife trembles when she lights 380  
 Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,  
 But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.  
 The few small embers left she nurses well ;  
 And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,  
 And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,  
 Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.  
 The man feels least, as more inured than she  
 To winter, and the current in his veins  
 More briskly moved by his severer toil ;  
 Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs. 390  
 The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw

Dangled along at the cold finger's end 392  
 Just when the day declined ; and the brown loaf  
 Lodged on the shelf, half-eaten without sauce  
 Of savoury cheese, or butter, costlier still ;  
 Sleep seems their only refuge : for, alas !  
 Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,  
 And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.  
 With all this thrift, they thrive not. All the care  
 Ingenious parsimony takes, but just 400  
 Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,  
 Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.  
 They live, and live without extorted alms  
 From grudging hands, but other boast have none  
 To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg ;  
 Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.  
 I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,  
 For ye are worthy ; choosing rather far  
 A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,  
 And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410  
 The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs  
 Of knaves in office, partial in the work  
 Of distribution ; liberal of their aid  
 To clamorous Importunity in rags,  
 But oftentimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush  
 To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,  
 Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth :  
 These ask with painful shyness, and refused  
 Because deserving, silently retire.  
 But be ye of good courage ! Time itself 420  
 Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase ;  
 And all your numerous progeny, well train'd  
 But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,  
 And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want  
 What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare ;

Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send. 426  
 I mean the man,<sup>1</sup> who, when the distant poor  
 Need help, denies them nothing but his name.  
 But poverty, with most who whimper forth  
 Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe ;  
 The effect of laziness or sottish waste.  
 Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad  
 For plunder ; much solicitous how best  
 He may compensate for a day of sloth  
 By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.  
 Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,  
 Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes  
 Deep in the loamy bank ! Uptorn by strength,  
 Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame  
 To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil, 440  
 An ass's burden ; and, when laden most  
 And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.  
 Nor does the boarded hovel better guard  
 The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots  
 From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave  
 Unwrench'd the door, however well secured,  
 Where Chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps  
 In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,  
 He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,  
 To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450  
 And loudly wondering at the sudden change.  
 Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,  
 Did pity of their sufferings warp aside  
 His principle, and tempt him into sin  
 For their support, so destitute. But they  
 Neglected pine at home ; themselves, as more  
 Exposed than others, with less scruple made  
 His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.

<sup>1</sup> 'The man : ' John Thornton.

Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst 459  
 Of ruinous ebriety that prompts  
 His every action, and imbrutes the man.  
 O for a law to noose the villain's neck  
 Who starves his own ! who persecutes the blood  
 He gave them in his children's veins, and hates  
 And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love !  
 Pass where we may, through city or through town,  
 Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,  
 Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace  
 Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff 470  
 Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes  
 That Law has licensed, as makes Temperance reel.  
 There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds  
 Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,  
 The lackey, and the groom : the craftsman there  
 Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil ;  
 Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,  
 And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,  
 All learned, and all drunk ! The fiddle screams  
 Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd  
 Its wasted tones and harmony unheard : 480  
 Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme : while she,  
 Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,  
 Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand  
 Her undecisive scales. In this she lays  
 A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ;  
 And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.  
 Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,  
 The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised  
 As ornamental, musical, polite,  
 Like those which modern senators employ, 490  
 Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame !  
 Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,

Once simple, are initiated in arts 493  
 Which some may practise with politer grace,  
 But none with readier skill! 'Tis here they learn  
 The road that leads from competence and peace  
 To indigence and rapine; till at last  
 Society, grown weary of the load,  
 Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.  
 But censure profits little: vain the attempt 500  
 To advertise in verse a public pest,  
 That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds  
 His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.  
 The excise is fatten'd with the rich result  
 Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,  
 For ever dribbling out their base contents,  
 Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,  
 Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.  
 Drink, and be mad, then! 'tis your country bids!  
 Gloriously drunk, obey the important call! 510  
 Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;—  
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.  
 Would I had fallen upon those happier days  
 That poets celebrate! those golden times,  
 And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,  
 And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.  
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts  
 That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,  
 From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves;  
 The footsteps of Simplicity, impress'd 520  
 Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing),  
 Then were not all effaced: then speech profane,  
 And manners profligate, were rarely found,  
 Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.  
 Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams  
 Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,

Imparting substance to an empty shade, 527  
 Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.  
 Grant it : I still must envy them an age  
 That favour'd such a dream ; in days like these  
 Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,  
 That, to suppose a scene where she presides,  
 Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.  
 No ! We are polish'd now. The rural lass,  
 Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,  
 Her artless manners, and her neat attire,  
 So dignified, that she was hardly less  
 Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,  
 Is seen no more. The character is lost !  
 Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft, 540  
 And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,  
 And magnified beyond all human size,  
 Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand  
 For more than half the tresses it sustains ;  
 Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form  
 Ill propp'd upon French heels ; she might be deem'd  
 (But that the basket dangling on her arm  
 Interprets her more truly) of a rank  
 Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs.  
 Expect her soon with footboy at her heels, 550  
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,  
 Her train and her umbrella all her care !

The town has tinged the country ; and the stain  
 Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,  
 The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs  
 Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas !  
 Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.  
 Time was when, in the pastoral retreat,  
 The unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch  
 To invade another's right, or guard their own. 560



Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared 561  
 By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale  
 Of midnight murder was a wonder heard  
 With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.  
 But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,  
 And slumbers unalarm'd ! Now, ere you sleep,  
 See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,  
 And drop the nightbolt : ruffians are abroad ;  
 And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat  
 May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear 570  
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.  
 Even daylight has its dangers ; and the walk  
 Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once  
 Of other tenants than melodious birds,  
 Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.  
 Lamented change ! to which full many a cause  
 Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.  
 The course of human things from good to ill,  
 From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.  
 Increase of power begets increase of wealth ; 580  
 Wealth luxury, and luxury excess ;  
 Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague  
 That seizes first the opulent, descends  
 To the next rank contagious, and in time  
 Taints downward all the graduated scale  
 Of order, from the chariot to the plough.  
 The rich, and they that have an arm to check  
 The licence of the lowest in degree,  
 Desert their office ; and themselves, intent  
 On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590  
 To all the violence of lawless hands  
 Resign the scenes their presence might protect.  
 Authority herself not seldom sleeps,  
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.

The plump convivial parson often bears 595  
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays  
 His reverence and his worship both to rest  
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.  
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm ;  
 When he should strike he trembles, and sets free, 600  
 Himself enslaved by terror of the band,  
 The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.  
 Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,  
 He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove  
 Less dainty than becomes his grave outside  
 In lucrative concerns. Examine well  
 His milk-white hand : the palm is hardly clean—  
 But here and there an ugly smutch appears.  
 Foh ! 'twas a bribe that left it : he has touch'd  
 Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here 610  
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
 Wild fowl or venison, and his errand speeds.  
 But faster far, and more than all the rest,  
 A noble cause, which none who bears a spark  
 Of public virtue ever wish'd removed,  
 Works the deplored and mischievous effect.  
 'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd  
 The heart of merit in the meaner class.  
 Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage  
 Of those that bear them, in whatever cause, 620  
 Seem most at variance with all moral good,  
 And incompatible with serious thought.  
 The clown, the child of nature, without guile,  
 Blest with an infant's ignorance of all  
 But his own simple pleasures ; now and then  
 A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair ;  
 Is balloted, and trembles at the news.  
 Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears

A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please— 629  
 To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,—  
 That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,  
 His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.  
 His awkward gait, his introverted toes,  
 Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,  
 Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,  
 Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,  
 He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,  
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.  
 He stands erect ; his slouch becomes a walk ;  
 He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640  
 His form, and movement ; is as smart above  
 As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears  
 His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace ;  
 And, his three years of heroship expired,  
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough.  
 He hates the field, in which no fife or drum  
 Attends him ; drives his cattle to a march ;  
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.  
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all—  
 But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost 650  
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
 To swear, to game, to drink ; to show at home,  
 By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath-breach,  
 The great proficiency he made abroad ;  
 To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends ;  
 To break some maiden's and his mother's heart ;  
 To be a pest where he was useful once ;  
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.  
 Man in society is like a flower  
 Blown in its native bed : 'tis there alone 660  
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
 Shine out ; there only reach their proper use.

But man, associated and leagued with man 663  
 By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond  
 For interest sake, or swarming into clans  
 Beneath one head, for purposes of war,  
 Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound  
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,  
 Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,  
 Contracts defilement not to be endured. 670  
 Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues ;  
 And burghers, men immaculate perhaps  
 In all their private functions, once combined,  
 Become a loathsome body, only fit  
 For dissolution, hurtful to the main.  
 Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin  
 Against the charities of domestic life,  
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose  
 Their nature ; and, disclaiming all regard  
 For mercy and the common rights of man, 680  
 Build factories with blood ; conducting trade  
 At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe  
 Of innocent commercial Justice red.  
 Hence too the field of glory, as the world  
 Misdems it, dazzled by its bright array,  
 With all its majesty of thundering pomp,  
 Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,  
 Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught  
 On principle, where foppery atones  
 For folly, gallantry for every vice. 690

But, slighted as it is, and by the great  
 Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,  
 Infected with the manners and the modes  
 It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
 I never framed a wish, or form'd a plan,  
 That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
 But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd

My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice 698  
 Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
 My very dreams were rural ; rural too  
 The first-born efforts of my youthful Muse,  
 Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,  
 Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.  
 No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned  
 To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats  
 Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe  
 Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,  
 The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.  
 Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms :  
 New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd 710  
 The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue  
 To speak its excellence : I danced for joy.  
 I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age  
 As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
 Engaged my wonder ; and admiring still,  
 And still admiring, with regret supposed  
 The joy half lost, because not sooner found.  
 Thee too, enamour'd of the life I loved,  
 Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit  
 Determined, and possessing it at last 720  
 With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,  
 I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,  
 Ingenious Cowley ! and, though now reclaim'd,  
 By modern lights, from an erroneous taste,  
 I cannot but lament thy splendid wit  
 Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.  
 I still revere thee, courtly though retired,  
 Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,  
 Not unemploy'd ; and finding rich amends  
 For a lost world, in solitude and verse. 730  
 'Tis born with all : the love of Nature's works  
 Is an ingredient in the compound man,

Infused at the creation of the kind. 733  
 And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout  
 Discriminated each from each, by strokes  
 And touches of his hand, with so much art  
 Diversified, that two were never found  
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,  
 That all discern a beauty in his works,  
 And all can taste them : minds that have been form'd 740  
 And tutor'd with a relish more exact,  
 But none without some relish, none unmoved.  
 It is a flame that dies not even there,  
 Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,  
 Nor habits of luxurious city life,  
 Whatever else they smother of true worth  
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.  
 The villas with which London stands begirt,  
 Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,  
 Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air, 750  
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer  
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame !  
 Even in the stifling bosom of the town,  
 A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms  
 That soothe the rich possessor ; much consoled  
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,  
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint  
 That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green  
 Is still the livery she delights to wear, 760  
 Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.  
 What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,  
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range  
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,  
 The Frenchman's darling ?<sup>1</sup> Are they not all proofs  
 That man, immured in cities, still retains

<sup>1</sup> ' Frenchman's darling : ' mignonette.

His inborn inextinguishable thirst 767  
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss  
 By supplemental shifts the best he may ?  
 The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,  
 And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds  
 To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,  
 Yet feel the burning instinct ; over-head  
 Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,  
 And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands  
 A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there ;  
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets  
 The country, with what ardour he contrives  
 A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease, 780  
 And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,  
 And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode  
 Of multitudes unknown ! hail, rural life !  
 Address himself who will to the pursuit  
 Of honours, or emolument, or fame ;  
 I shall not add myself to such a chase,  
 Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.  
 Some must be great. Great offices will have  
 Great talents. And God gives to every man  
 The virtue, temper, understanding, taste, 790  
 That lifts him into life ; and lets him fall  
 Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.

To the deliverer of an injured land  
 He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart  
 To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs ;  
 To monarchs dignity ; to judges sense ;  
 To artists ingenuity and skill ;  
 To me an unambitious mind, content  
 In the low vale of life, that early felt  
 A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long 800  
 Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

## BOOK V.—THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

## THE ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning, 1—The foddering of cattle, 27—The woodman and his dog, 41—The poultry, 58—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall, 96—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice, 127—Amusements of monarchs, 177—War, one of them, 185—Wars, whence, 193—And whence monarchy, 230—The evils of it, 242—English and French loyalty contrasted, 346—The Bastile, and a prisoner there, 379—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country, 446—Modern patriotism questionable, and why, 491—The perishable nature of the best human institutions, 509—Spiritual liberty not perishable, 538—The slavish state of man by nature, 581—Deliver him, Deist, if you can, 670—Grace must do it, 688—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated, 704—Their different treatment, 707, 718—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free, 733—His relish of the works of God, 779—Address to the Creator, 845.

'Tis morning ; and the sun, with ruddy orb  
 Ascending, fires the horizon ; while the clouds,  
 That crowd away before the driving wind,  
 More ardent as the disk emerges more,  
 Resemble most some city in a blaze,  
 Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray  
 Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,  
 And, tingeing all with his own rosy hue,  
 From every herb and every spiry blade  
 Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field. 10  
 Mine, spindling into longitude immense,  
 In spite of gravity, and sage remark  
 That I myself am but a fleeting shade,  
 Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance  
 I view the muscular proportion'd limb  
 Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,



As they design'd to mock me, at my side 17  
 Take step for step ; and, as I near approach  
 The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,  
 Preposterous sight ! the legs without the man.  
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
 Beneath the dazzling deluge ; and the bents,  
 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,  
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine  
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,  
 And, fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.  
 The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence  
 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep  
 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
 Their wonted fodder ; not like hungering man, 30  
 Fretful if unsupplied ; but silent, meek,  
 And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.  
 He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,  
 Deep plunging, and again deep plunging oft  
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass.  
 Smooth as a 'wall the upright remnant stands,  
 With such undeviating and even force  
 He severs it away : no needless care,  
 Lest storms should overset the leaning pile  
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight. 40

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd  
 The cheerful haunts of man ; to wield the axe,  
 And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,  
 From morn to eve his solitary task.  
 Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,  
 And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,  
 His dog attends him. Close behind his heel  
 Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk  
 Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow  
 With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ; 50

Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy. 51  
 Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl  
 Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught,  
 But now and then, with pressure of his thumb  
 To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,  
 That fumes beneath his nose : the trailing cloud  
 Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale  
 Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam  
 Of smiling day, they gossipp'd side by side, 60  
 Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call  
 The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,  
 And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,  
 Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.  
 The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,  
 To seize the fair occasion ; well they eye  
 The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved  
 To escape the impending famine, often scared  
 As oft return, a pert voracious kind.  
 Clean riddance quickly made, one only care 70  
 Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,  
 Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd  
 To sad necessity, the cock foregoes  
 His wonted strut ; and, wading at their head  
 With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent  
 His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.  
 How find the myriads, that in summer cheer  
 The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,  
 Due sustenance, or where subsist they now ?  
 Earth yields them nought : the imprison'd worm is safe 80  
 Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs  
 Lie cover'd close ; and berry-bearing thorns  
 That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)  
 Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.

The long protracted rigour of the year 85  
 Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes  
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,  
 As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.  
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,  
 Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut now 90  
 Repays their labour more ; and perch'd aloft  
 By the wayside, or stalking in the path,  
 Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,  
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,  
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.

The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,  
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,  
 Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight  
 Lies undissolved ; while silently beneath,  
 And unperceived, the current steals away. 100  
 Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps  
 The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,  
 And wantons in the pebbly gulf below :  
 No frost can bind it there ; its utmost force  
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist  
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.  
 And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks  
 With forms so various, that no powers of art,  
 The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !  
 Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high 110  
 (Fantastic misarrangement !) on the roof  
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees  
 And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,  
 That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,  
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,  
 And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.  
 Here, grotto within grotto safe defies  
 The sunbeam : there, emboss'd and fretted wild,

The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes 119  
 Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain  
 The likeness of some object seen before.  
 Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,  
 And in defiance of her rival powers ;  
 By these fortuitous and random strokes  
 Performing such inimitable feats  
 As she with all her rules can never reach.

Less worthy of applause, though more admired,  
 Because a novelty, the work of man,  
 Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ !  
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130  
 The wonder of the North. No forest fell  
 When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores  
 To enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods,  
 And make thy marble of the glassy wave.

In such a palace Aristæus found  
 Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale  
 Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.  
 In such a palace Poetry might place  
 The armoury of Winter, where his troops,  
 The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet, 140  
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,  
 And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,  
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.

Silently as a dream the fabric rose ;  
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there.  
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts  
 Were soon conjoin'd ; nor other cement ask'd  
 Than water interfused to make them one.  
 Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,  
 Illumined every side : a watery light 150  
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd  
 Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen

From Heaven to Earth, of lambent flame serene. 153  
 So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth  
 And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound  
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,  
 That royal residence might well befit,  
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths  
 Of flowers, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,  
 Blush'd on the panels. Mirror needed none 160  
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due  
 Convivial table and commodious seat  
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there ;  
 Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.  
 The same lubricity was found in all,  
 And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene  
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,  
 And soon to slide into a stream again.  
 Alas ! 'twas but a mortifying stroke  
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanced 170  
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,  
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.  
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show  
 'Twas durable ; as worthless, as it seem'd  
 Intrinsically precious ; to the foot  
 Treacherous and false ; it smiled, and it was cold.  
 Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd  
 At hewing mountains into men, and some  
 At building human wonders mountain-high.  
 Some have amused the dull sad years of life 180  
 (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)  
 With schemes of monumental fame ; and sought  
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,  
 Short-lived themselves, to immortalise their bones.  
 Some seek diversion in the tented field,  
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.

But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise, 187  
 Kings would not play at. Nations would do well  
 To extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
 Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds  
 Are gratified with mischief ; and who spoil,  
 Because men suffer it, their toy the World.

When Babel was confounded, and the great  
 Confederacy of projectors wild and vain  
 Was split into diversity of tongues,  
 Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,  
 These to the upland, to the valley those,  
 God drave asunder, and assign'd their lot  
 To all the nations. Ample was the boon  
 He gave them, in its distribution fair 200  
 And equal ; and he bade them dwell in peace.  
 Peace was awhile their care : they plough'd and sow'd  
 And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.  
 But violence can never longer sleep  
 Than human passions please. In every heart  
 Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war ;  
 Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.  
 Cain had already shed a brother's blood :  
 The deluge wash'd it out, but left unquench'd  
 The seeds of murder in the breast of man. 210  
 Soon by a righteous judgment in the line  
 Of his descending progeny was found  
 The first artificer of death ; the shrewd  
 Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,  
 And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel  
 To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.  
 Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,  
 The sword and falchion their inventor claim ;  
 And the first smith was the first murderer's son.  
 His art survived the waters ; and ere long, 220

When man was multiplied and spread abroad \* 221  
 In tribes and clans, and had begun to call  
 These meadows and that range of hills his own,  
 The tasted sweets of property begat  
 Desire of more ; and industry in some  
 To improve and cultivate their just demesne,  
 Made others covet what they saw so fair.  
 Thus war began on earth : these fought for spoil,  
 And those in self-defence. Savage at first,  
 The onset, and irregular. At length, 230  
 One eminent above the rest for strength,  
 For stratagem, or courage, or for all,  
 Was chosen leader : him they served in war,  
 And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds  
 Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare ?  
 Or who so worthy to control themselves  
 As he whose prowess had subdued their foes ?  
 Thus war, affording field for the display  
 Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,  
 Which have their exigencies too, and call 240  
 For skill in government, at length made king.  
 King was a name too proud for man to wear  
 With modesty and meekness ; and the crown,  
 So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,  
 Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.  
 It is the abject property of most,  
 That, being parcel of the common mass,  
 And destitute of means to raise themselves,  
 They sink, and settle lower than they need.  
 They know not what it is to feel within 250  
 A comprehensive faculty, that grasps  
 Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,  
 Almost without an effort, plans too vast  
 For their conception, which they cannot move.

Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk 255  
 With gazing, when they see an able man  
 Step forth to notice ; and, besotted thus,  
 Build him a pedestal, and say, " Stand there,  
 And be our admiration and our praise."  
 They roll themselves before him in the dust, 260  
 Then most deserving in their own account,  
 When most extravagant in his applause,  
 As if exalting him they raised themselves.  
 Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound  
 And sober judgment, that he is but man,  
 They demi-deify and fume him so,  
 That in due season he forgets it too.  
 Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,  
 He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,  
 Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks 270  
 The world was made in vain, if not for him.  
 Thenceforth they are his cattle : drudges, born  
 To bear his burdens ; drawing in his gears,  
 And sweating in his service ; his caprice  
 Becomes the soul that animates them all.  
 He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,  
 Spent in the purchase of renown for him,  
 An easy reckoning ; and they think the same.  
 Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings  
 Were burnish'd into heroes, and became 280  
 The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp ;  
 Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.  
 Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man  
 To eminence fit only for a god,  
 Should ever drivel out of human lips,  
 Even in the cradled weakness of the World !  
 Still stranger much, that when at length mankind  
 Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,



And could discriminate and argue well 289  
 On subjects more mysterious, they were yet  
 Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear  
 And quake before the gods themselves had made :  
 But above measure strange, that neither proof  
 Of sad experience, nor examples set  
 By some, whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,  
 Can even now, when they are grown mature  
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps  
 Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest !  
 Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone  
 To reverence what is ancient, and can plead 300  
 A course of long observance for its use,  
 That even servitude, the worst of ills,  
 Because deliver'd down from sire to son,  
 Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.  
 But is it fit, or can it bear the shock  
 Of rational discussion, that a man,  
 Compounded and made up like other men  
 Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust  
 And folly in as ample measure meet  
 As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules, 310  
 Should be a despot absolute, and boast  
 Himself the only freeman of his land ?—  
 Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,  
 Wage war, with any or with no pretence  
 Of provocation given or wrong sustain'd,  
 And force the beggarly last doit, by means  
 That his own humour dictates, from the clutch  
 Of Poverty, that thus he may procure  
 His thousands, weary of penurious life,  
 A splendid opportunity to die ? 320  
 Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
 Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees

In politic convention) put your trust 323  
 In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined  
 In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,  
 Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway—  
 Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs  
 Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good  
 To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang  
 His thorns with streamers of continual praise? 330  
 We too are friends to loyalty. We love  
 The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,  
 And reigns content within them: him we serve  
 Freely and with delight, who leaves us free;  
 But recollecting still that he is man,  
 We trust him not too far. King though he be,  
 And king in England too, he may be weak,  
 And vain enough to be ambitious still;  
 May exercise amiss his proper powers,  
 Or covet more than freemen choose to grant: 340  
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,  
 To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,  
 But not to warp or change it. We are his,  
 To serve him nobly in the common cause,  
 True to the death, but not to be his slaves.  
 Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love  
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.  
 We love the man; the paltry pageant you:  
 We the chief patron of the commonwealth;  
 You the regardless author of its woes: 350  
 We, for the sake of liberty, a king;  
 You chains and bondage, for a tyrant's sake.  
 Our love is principle, and has its root  
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free;  
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,  
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.

Were kingship as true treasure as it seems, 357  
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,  
 I would not be a king to be beloved  
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,  
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,  
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will  
 Of a superior, he is never free.

Who lives, and is not weary of a life  
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.  
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,  
 And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,  
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,  
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause 370  
 Not often unsuccessful : power usurp'd  
 Is weakness when opposed ; conscious of wrong,  
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.  
 But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought  
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess  
 All that the contest calls for ; spirit, strength,  
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts ;  
 The surest presage of the good they seek.<sup>1</sup>

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
 To France than all her losses and defeats, 380  
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
 Her house of bondage, worse than that of old  
 Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.  
 Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts ;  
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,  
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age  
 With music such as suits their sovereign ears,

<sup>1</sup> The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatise such sentiments as no better than empty declamation ; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

The sighs and groans of miserable men ! 388  
 There's not an English heart that would not leap  
 To hear that ye were fallen at last ; to know  
 That even our enemies, so oft employ'd  
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
 For he who values Liberty, confines  
 His zeal for her predominance within  
 No narrow bounds ; her cause engages him  
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.  
 There dwell the most forlorn of humankind,  
 Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,  
 Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape !  
 There, like the visionary emblem seen 400  
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,  
 And filleted about with hoops of brass,  
 Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.  
 To count the hour-bell and expect no change ;  
 And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,  
 Still to reflect, that though a joyless note  
 To him whose moments all have one dull pace,  
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large  
 Account it music ; that it summons some  
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball ; 410  
 The wearied hireling finds it a release  
 From labour ; and the lover, who has chid  
 Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke  
 Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight :  
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought  
 To such amusements as ingenious woe  
 Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools ;  
 To read engraven on the mouldy walls,  
 In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,  
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own ; 420  
 To turn purveyor to an overgorged

And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest 422  
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,  
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend ;  
 To wear out time in numbering to and fro  
 The studs that thick emboss his iron door ;  
 Then downward and then upward, then aslant,  
 And then alternate ; with a sickly hope,  
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task  
 Some relish ; till the sum, exactly found 430  
 In all directions, he begins again :  
 Oh, comfortless existence ! hemm'd around  
 With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel  
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death ?  
 That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,  
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,  
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold  
 Upon the endearments of domestic life  
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,  
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word 440  
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,  
 Moves indignation, makes the name of king  
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please)  
 As dreadful as the Manichean god,  
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.  
     'Tis Liberty alone that gives the flower  
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume ;  
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,  
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
 Is evil ; hurts the faculties, impedes 450  
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds  
 The eyesight of Discovery, and begets,  
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind  
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.

Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art, 456  
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed  
 By public exigence till annual food  
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state—  
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief  
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free!  
 My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,  
 Replete with vapours, and disposes much  
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine :  
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft  
 And plausible than social life requires ;  
 And thou hast need of discipline and art  
 To give thee what politer France receives  
 From Nature's bounty—that humane address  
 And sweetness, without which no pleasure is 470  
 In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
 Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.  
 Yet being free I love thee : for the sake  
 Of that one feature can be well content,  
 Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,  
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.  
 But, once enslaved, farewell! I could endure  
 Chains nowhere patiently ; and chains at home,  
 Where I am free by birthright, not at all.  
 Then what were left of roughness in the grain 480  
 Of British natures, wanting its excuse  
 That it belongs to freemen, would disgust  
 And shock me. I should then, with double pain,  
 Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;  
 And if I must bewail the blessing lost,  
 For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,  
 I would at least bewail it under skies  
 Milder, among a people less austere ;  
 In scenes which, having never known me free,

Would not reproach me with the loss I felt. 490  
 Do I forebode impossible events,  
 And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!  
 But the age of virtuous politics is past,  
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.  
 Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,  
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes  
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp  
 Design'd by loud declaimers on the part  
 Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,  
 Incurs derision for his easy faith 500  
 And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:  
 For when was public virtue to be found  
 Where private was not? Can he love the whole  
 Who loves no part?—he be a nation's friend  
 Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?  
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause  
 Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake  
 That country, if at all, must be beloved?  
 'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad  
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510  
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts  
 So loose to private duty, that no brain,  
 Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,  
 Can dream them trusty to the general weal.  
 Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades  
 Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd control,  
 And hew'd them link from link: then Albion's sons  
 Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart  
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;  
 And shining each in his domestic sphere, 520  
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.  
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot  
 Forbids their interference, looking on,

Anticipate perforce some dire event ; 524  
 And, seeing the old castle of the state,  
 That promised once more firmness, so assail'd,  
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,  
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.  
 All has its date below : the fatal hour  
 Was register'd in Heaven ere time began. 530  
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
 Die too : the deep foundations that we lay.  
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.  
 We build with what we deem eternal rock :  
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;  
 And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,  
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unsung  
 By poets, and by senators unpraised,  
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers 540  
 Of earth and hell confederate take away :  
 A liberty, which persecution, fraud,  
 Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind ;  
 Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.  
 'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,  
 Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,  
 And seal'd with the same token. It is held  
 By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure  
 By the unimpeachable and awful oath  
 And promise of a God. His other gifts 550  
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,  
 And are august ; but this transcends them all.  
 His other works, this visible display  
 Of all-creating energy and might,  
 Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the Word  
 That, finding an interminable space  
 Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,



And made so sparkling what was dark before. 558  
 But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,  
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,  
 Might well suppose the Artificer divine  
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself  
 Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,  
 And, still designing a more glorious far,  
 Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise.  
 These therefore are occasional, and pass ;  
 Form'd for the confutation of the fool,  
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God ;  
 That office served, they must be swept away.  
 Not so the labours of his love : they shine 570  
 In other heavens than these that we behold,  
 And fade not. There is Paradise that fears  
 No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends  
 Large prelibation oft to saints below.  
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge  
 And confident assurance of the rest,  
 Is Liberty : a flight into his arms,  
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,  
 A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,  
 And full immunity from penal woe. 580  
 Chains are the portion of revolted man,  
 Stripes and a dungeon ; and his body serves  
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,  
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.  
 Propense his heart to idols, he is held  
 In silly dotage on created things,  
 Careless of their Creator. And that low  
 And sordid gravitation of his powers  
 To a vile clod so draws him, with such force  
 Resistless, from the centre he should seek, 590  
 That he at last forgets it. All his hopes

Tend downward ; his ambition is to sink, 592  
 To reach a depth profounder still, and still  
 Profounder, in the fathomless abyss  
 Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.  
 But, ere he gain the comfortless repose  
 He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul,  
 In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—  
 What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,  
 And self-reproaching conscience ? He foresees 600  
 The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,  
 Fortune, and dignity ; the loss of all  
 That can ennoble man, and make frail life,  
 Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,  
 Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins  
 Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes  
 Ages of hopeless misery ; future death,  
 And death still future : not a hasty stroke,  
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave ;  
 But unrepealable enduring death. 610  
 Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears :  
 What none can prove a forgery, may be true ;  
 What none but bad men wish exploded, must.  
 That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud  
 Nor drunk enough, to drown it. In the midst  
 Of laughter his compunctions are sincere ;  
 And he abhors the jest by which he shines.  
 Remorse begets reform. His master-lust  
 Falls first before his resolute rebuke,  
 And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues, 620  
 But spurious and short-lived ; the puny child  
 Of self-congratulating Pride, begot  
 On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,  
 And fights again ; but finds his best essay  
 A presage ominous, portending still

Its own dishonour by a worse relapse. 626  
 Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd  
 So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,  
 Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now  
 Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause  
 Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd ;  
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn  
 And tatter'd in the service of debauch,  
 Covering his shame from his offended sight.

“ Hath God indeed given appetites to man,  
 And stored the earth so plenteously with means  
 To gratify the hunger of his wish ;  
 And doth he reprobate, and will he damn  
 The use of his own bounty ? making first  
 So frail a kind, and then enacting laws 640  
 So strict, that less than perfect must despair ?  
 Falsehood ! which whoso but suspects of truth  
 Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.  
 Do they themselves, who undertake for hire  
 The teacher's office, and dispense at large  
 Their weekly dole of edifying strains,  
 Attend to their own music ? have they faith  
 In what, with such solemnity of tone  
 And gesture, they propound to our belief ?  
 Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice 650  
 Is but an instrument, on which the priest  
 May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,  
 The unequivocal, authentic deed,  
 We find sound argument, we read the heart.”

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong  
 To excuses in which Reason has no part)  
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclined  
 To live on terms of amity with Vice,  
 And sin without disturbance. Often urged

(As often as libidinous discourse 660  
 Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes  
 Of theological and grave import),  
 They gain at last his unreserved assent ;  
 Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge  
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,  
 He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,  
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill ;  
 Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease ;  
 'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.  
 Haste now, philosopher, and set him free ! 670  
 Charm the deaf serpent wisely ! Make him hear  
 Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth  
 How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,  
 Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps  
 Directly, to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.  
 Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers  
 Of rant and rhapsody in Virtue's praise :  
 Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,  
 And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,  
 Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.— 680  
 Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,  
 Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm  
 The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,  
 And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.  
 The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He must speak,  
 Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect ;  
 Who calls for things that are not, and they come.  
 Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change  
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech  
 And stately tone of moralists, who boast, 690  
 As if, like him of fabulous renown,  
 They had indeed ability to smooth  
 The shag of savage nature, and were each

An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song. 694  
 But transformation of apostate man  
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,  
 Is work for Him that made him. He alone,  
 And He by means in philosophic eyes  
 Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves  
 The wonder ; humanizing what is brute 700  
 In the lost kind ; extracting from the lips  
 Of asps their venom, overpowering strength  
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause  
 Bled nobly ; and their deeds, as they deserve,  
 Receive proud recompence. We give in charge  
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,  
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
 To latest times ; and Sculpture, in her turn,  
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass 710  
 To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.  
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,  
 Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,  
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,  
 And for a time insure, to his loved land,  
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws ;  
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed  
 In confirmation of the noblest claim— 720  
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies.  
 Yet few remember them. They lived unknown  
 Till Persecution dragg'd them into fame,  
 And chased them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew  
 —No marble tells us whither. With their names

No bard embalms and sanctifies his song ; 728  
 And History, so warm on meaner themes,  
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed  
 The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,  
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.<sup>1</sup>

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
 And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain  
 That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,  
 Can wind around him, but he casts it off  
 With as much ease as Samson his green withes.

He looks abroad into the varied field  
 Of Nature, and though poor perhaps, compared  
 With those whose mansions glitter in his sight, 740  
 Calls the delightful scenery all his own.

His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
 And the resplendent rivers : his to enjoy  
 With a propriety that none can feel,  
 But who, with filial confidence inspired,  
 Can lift to Heaven an unpretentious eye,  
 And smiling say—" My Father made them all ! "

Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
 And by an emphasis of interest his,  
 Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy, 750

Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind  
 With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love  
 That plann'd, and built, and still upholds, a world  
 So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man ?

Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap  
 The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good  
 In senseless riot ; but ye will not find

In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,  
 A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd  
 Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong, 760

<sup>1</sup> ' Little praise : ' see Hume.

Appropriates nature as his Father's work, 761  
 And has a richer use of yours than you.  
 He is indeed a freeman : free by birth  
 Of no mean city ; plann'd or e'er the hills  
 Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea  
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.  
 His freedom is the same in every state ;  
 And no condition of this changeful life,  
 So manifold in cares, whose every day  
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less : 770  
 For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,  
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.  
 No nook so narrow but he spreads them there  
 With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds  
 His body bound, but knows not what a range  
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain ;  
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,  
 Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.  
 Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste  
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780  
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before :  
 Thine eye shall be instructed ; and thine heart,  
 Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight  
 Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.  
 Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone  
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb  
 It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,  
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread  
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
 From inland regions to the distant main. 790  
 Man views it, and admires, but rests content  
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,  
 But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd  
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,

And such well pleased to find it, asks no more. 795

Not so the mind that has been touch'd from Heaven,  
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught  
To read His wonders, in whose thought the World,  
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

Not for its own sake merely, but for His 800

Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;  
Praise that, from Earth resulting, as it ought,  
To Earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once  
Its only just proprietor in Him.

The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed  
New faculties, or learns at least to employ  
More worthily the powers he own'd before,  
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,

A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms 810

Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute ;  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God  
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds  
With those fair ministers of light to man,  
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
Sweet conference : inquires what strains were they  
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste  
To gratulate the new-created Earth, 820

Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts  
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,  
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,  
If from your elevation, whence ye view  
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,  
And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet  
Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race



Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb, 829  
 And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,  
 And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours ?  
 As one who, long detain'd on foreign shores,  
 Pants to return, and when he sees afar  
 His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,  
 From the green wave emerging, darts an eye  
 Radiant with joy towards the happy land ;  
 So I with animated hopes behold,  
 And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,  
 That show like beacons in the blue abyss,  
 Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home 840  
 From toilsome life to never-ending rest.  
 Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires  
 That give assurance of their own success,  
 And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth  
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word !  
 Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,  
 With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,  
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,  
 With means that were not till by thee employ'd, 850  
 Worlds that had never been hadst thou in strength  
 Been less, or less benevolent than strong.  
 They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power  
 And goodness infinite, but speak in ears  
 That hear not, or receive not their report.  
 In vain thy creatures testify of thee,  
 Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed  
 A teaching voice ; but 'tis the praise of thine  
 That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,  
 And with the boon gives talents for its use. 860  
 Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain  
 Possess the heart ; and fables false as hell,

Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death 863  
 The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.  
 We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind,  
 The glory of thy work ; which yet appears  
 Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,  
 Challenging human scrutiny, and proved  
 Then skilful most when most severely judged.  
 But Chance is not ; or is not where thou reign'st : 870  
 Thy Providence forbids that fickle power  
 (If power she be that works but to confound)  
 To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.  
 Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can  
 Instruction, and inventing to ourselves  
 Gods such as guilt makes welcome ; gods that sleep,  
 Or disregard our follies, or that sit  
 Amused spectators of this bustling stage.  
 Thee we reject, unable to abide  
 Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure ; 880  
 Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause,  
 For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.  
 Then we are free : then liberty, like day,  
 Breaks on the soul, and, by a flash from Heaven,  
 Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.  
 A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not  
 Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,  
 A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works ;  
 Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,  
 And adds his rapture to the general praise. 890  
 In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide  
 Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile  
 The Author of her beauties, who, retired  
 Behind his own creation, works unseen  
 By the impure, and hears his power denied.  
 Thou art the source and centre of all minds,

Their only point of rest, eternal Word !  
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove  
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.  
From thee is all that soothes the life of man,  
His high endeavour, and his glad success,  
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ;  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

## BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance, 1—Their effect, 6—A fine noon in winter, 57—A sheltered walk, 72—Meditation better than books, 84—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is, 118—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described, 140—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected, 198—God maintains it by an unremitted act, 221—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd, 262—Animals happy, a delightful sight, 321—Origin of cruelty to animals, 348—That it is a great crime, proved from Scripture, 459—That proof illustrated by a tale, 483—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them, 560—Their good and useful properties insisted on, 601—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals, 621—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man, 632—The groans of the creation shall have an end, 729—A view taken of the restoration of all things, 747—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass, 818—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness, 906—Conclusion, 995.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds ;  
 And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleas'd  
 With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.  
 Some chord in unison with what we hear  
 Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.  
 How soft the music of those village bells,  
 Falling at intervals upon the ear  
 In cadence sweet, now dying all away,  
 Now pealing loud again, and louder still,  
 Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on !  
 With easy force it opens all the cells  
 Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard  
 A kindred melody, the scene recurs,  
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.

Such comprehensive views the spirit takes, 15  
 That in a few short moments I retrace  
 (As in a map the voyager his course)  
 The windings of my way through many years.  
 Short as in retrospect the journey seems,  
 It seem'd not always short ; the rugged path, 20  
 And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,  
 Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.  
 Yet feeling present evils, while the past  
 Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,  
 How readily we wish time spent revoked,  
 That we might try the ground again, where once  
 (Through inexperience, as we now perceive)  
 We miss'd that happiness we might have found !  
 Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,  
 A father, whose authority, in show 30  
 When most severe, and mustering all its force,  
 Was but the graver countenance of love ;  
 Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,  
 And utter now and then an awful voice,  
 But had a blessing in its darkest frown,  
 Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.  
 We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand  
 That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allured  
 By every gilded folly, we renounced  
 His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent 40  
 That converse which we now in vain regret.  
 How gladly would the man recall to life  
 The boy's neglected sire ! a mother too,  
 That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,  
 Might he demand them at the gates of death.  
 Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed  
 The playful humour ; he could now endure,  
 (Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)

And feel a parent's presence no restraint. 49  
 But not to understand a treasure's worth,  
 Till time has stolen away the slighted good,  
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
 And makes the World the wilderness it is.  
 The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,  
 And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,  
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.  
 The night was winter in his roughest mood ;  
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon  
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast, 60  
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.  
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ;  
 And through the trees I view the embattled tower  
 Whence all the music. I again perceive  
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
 And settle in soft musings as I tread  
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms, 70  
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
 The roof, though moveable through all its length  
 As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,  
 And, intercepting in their silent fall  
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.  
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.  
 The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
 With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd ;  
 Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light  
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes 80  
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice  
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.

Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft, 83  
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here  
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
 May give a useful lesson to the head,  
 And Learning wiser grow without his books.  
 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,  
 Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men ; 90  
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,  
 Till smooth'd and squared, and fitted to its place,  
 Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.  
 Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much ;  
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.  
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,  
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits  
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthral'd. 100  
 Some to the fascination of a name  
 Surrender judgment, hoodwink'd. Some the style  
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds  
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.  
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear  
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,  
 And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice,  
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.  
 But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course  
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110  
 And sheep-walks, populous with bleating lambs,  
 And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time  
 Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,  
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,  
 Not shy, as in the world, and to be won

By slow solicitation, seize at once 116  
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.  
 What prodigies can power divine perform  
 More grand than it produces year by year,  
 And all in sight of inattentive man ?  
 Familiar with the effect, we slight the cause,  
 And, in the constancy of Nature's course,  
 The regular return of genial months,  
 And renovation of a faded world,  
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again,  
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
 Of the undeviating and punctual sun,  
 How would the world admire ! but speaks it less  
 An agency divine, to make him know  
 His moment when to sink and when to rise, 130  
 Age after age, than to arrest his course ?  
 All we behold is miracle ; but seen  
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.  
 Where now the vital energy that moved,  
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph  
 Through the imperceptible meandering veins  
 Of leaf and flower ? It sleeps ; and the icy touch  
 Of unprolific winter has impress'd  
 A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.  
 But let the months go round, a few short months, 140  
 And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,  
 Barren as lances, among which the wind  
 Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,  
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,  
 And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,  
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.  
 Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,  
 Shall publish, even to the distant eye,  
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich



In streaming gold ; syringa, ivory pure ; 150  
 The scented and the scentless rose ; this red,  
 And of an humbler growth, the other<sup>1</sup> tall,  
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
 Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,  
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf  
 That the wind severs from the broken wave ;  
 The lilac, various in array, now white,  
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set  
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if  
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolved 160  
 Which hue she most approved, she chose them all ;  
 Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,  
 But well compensating her sickly looks  
 With never-cloying odours, early and late ;  
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm  
 Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,  
 That scarce a leaf appears ; mezerion too,  
 Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset  
 With blushing wreaths, investing every spray ;  
 Althæa with the purple eye ; the broom, 170  
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,  
 Her blossoms ; and luxuriant above all  
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf  
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more  
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—  
 These have been, and these shall be in their day ;  
 And all this uniform uncolour'd scene  
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,  
 And flush into variety again. 180  
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man

<sup>1</sup> The guelder-rose.

In heavenly truth ; evincing, as she makes 183  
The grand transition, that there lives and works  
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.  
The beauties of the wilderness are his,  
That make so gay the solitary place,  
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,  
That cultivation glories in, are his.  
He sets the bright procession on its way, 190  
And marshals all the order of the year ;  
He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,  
And blunts his pointed fury ; in its case,  
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,  
Uninjured, with inimitable art ;  
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.  
Some say that in the origin of things,  
When all creation started into birth,  
The infant elements received a law, 200  
From which they swerve not since. That under force  
Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
And need not His immediate hand, who first  
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.  
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God  
The encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
The great Artificer of all that moves  
The stress of a continual act, the pain  
Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
As too laborious and severe a task. 210  
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,  
To span Omnipotence, and measure might,  
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule  
And standard of his own, that is to-day,  
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.  
But how should matter occupy a charge,

Dull as it is, and satisfy a law 217  
 So vast in its demands, unless impell'd  
 To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,  
 And under pressure of some conscious cause ?  
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,  
 Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
 Nature is but a name for an effect,  
 Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire  
 By which the mighty process is maintain'd,  
 Who sleeps not, is not weary ; in whose sight  
 Slow circling ages are as transient days ;  
 Whose work is without labour ; whose designs  
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts ;  
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts. 230  
 Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,  
 With self-taught rites, and under various names,  
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,  
 And Flora, and Vertumnus ; peopling earth  
 With tutelary goddesses and gods,  
 That were not ; and commending as they would  
 To each some province, garden, field, or grove.  
 But all are under One. One spirit—His  
 Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,  
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower 240  
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
 Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires  
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,  
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
 In grains as countless as the seaside sands,  
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
 Happy who walks with him ! whom what he finds  
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,  
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak 250

To the green blade that twinkles in the sun, 251  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God !  
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,  
 Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene  
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.  
 Though winter had been none, had man been true,  
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,  
 Yet not in vengeance ; as this smiling sky,  
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream 260  
 Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tuned  
 To contemplation, and within his reach  
 A scene so friendly to his favourite task,  
 Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,  
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
 Marching and counter-marching, with an eye  
 As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridged  
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand  
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung 270  
 In balance on his conduct of a pin ?  
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,  
 Who pant with application misapplied  
 To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls  
 Across a velvet level, feel a joy  
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds  
 Its destined goal, of difficult access.  
 Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon  
 To Miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop  
 Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks 280  
 The polish'd counter, and approving none,  
 Or promising with smiles to call again.  
 Nor him who, by his vanity seduced,  
 And soothed into a dream that he discerns

The difference of a Guido from a daub, 285  
 Frequents the crowded auction : station'd there  
 As duly as the Langford of the show,  
 With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,  
 And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant  
 And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease ; 290  
 Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,  
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,  
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,  
 That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here, unmolested, through whatever sign  
 The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,  
 Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,  
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.  
 Even in the spring and playtime of the year,  
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad 300  
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,  
 To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,  
 And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick  
 A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,  
 These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,  
 Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,  
 Scarce shuns me ; and the stockdove, unalarm'd,  
 Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends  
 His long love-ditty for my near approach.  
 Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm, 310  
 That age or injury has hollow'd deep,  
 Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,  
 He has outslept the winter, ventures forth  
 To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,  
 The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play :  
 He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,  
 Ascends the neighbouring beech ; there whisks his brush,  
 And perks his ears, and stamps, and scolds aloud,

With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm, 319  
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
For human fellowship, as being void  
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased  
With sight of animals enjoying life,  
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.  
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade  
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,  
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee ;  
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet, 330

That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,  
Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,  
Starts to the voluntary race again ;  
The very kine, that gambol at high noon,  
The total herd receiving first from one  
That leads the dance a summons to be gay,  
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth  
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent  
To give such act and utterance as they may  
To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd ;— 340

These, and a thousand images of bliss,  
With which kind Nature graces every scene,  
Where cruel man defeats not her design,  
Impart to the benevolent, who wish  
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,  
A far superior happiness to theirs,  
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call  
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,  
When he was crown'd as never king was since. 350  
God set the diadem upon his head,  
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood

The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd, 353  
 All happy, and all perfect in their kind,  
 The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts,  
 To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.  
 Vast was his empire, absolute his power,  
 Or bounded only by a law whose force  
 'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel  
 And own, the law of universal love. 360  
 He ruled with meekness, they obey'd with joy ;  
 No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,  
 And no distrust of his intent in theirs.  
 So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,  
 Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole  
 Begat a tranquil confidence in all,  
 And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.  
 But sin marr'd all ; and the revolt of man,  
 That source of evils not exhausted yet,  
 Was punish'd with revolt of his from him. 370  
 Garden of God, how terrible the change  
 Thy groves and lawns then witness'd ! Every heart,  
 Each animal, of every name, conceived  
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,  
 And, conscious of some danger, either fled  
 Precipitate the loathed abode of man,  
 Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,  
 As taught him too to tremble in his turn.  
 Thus harmony and family accord  
 Were driven from Paradise ; and in that hour 380  
 The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd  
 To such gigantic and enormous growth,  
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
 Hence date the persecution and the pain  
 That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,  
 Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,

To gratify the frenzy of his wrath, 387  
 Or his base gluttony, are causes good  
 And just, in his account, why bird and beast  
 Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed  
 With blood of their inhabitants impaled.  
 Earth groans beneath the burden of a war  
 Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,  
 Not satisfied to prey on all around,  
 Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs  
 Needless, and first torments ere he devours.  
 Now happiest they that occupy the scenes  
 The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,  
 Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,  
 They fear'd, and as his perfect image loved. 400  
 The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,  
 Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,  
 Unvisited by man. There they are free,  
 And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd ;  
 Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.  
 Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude  
 Within the confines of their wild domain !  
 The Lion tells him—I am monarch here !  
 And if he spare him, spares him on the terms  
 Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn 410  
 To rend a victim trembling at his foot.  
 In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
 Or by necessity constrain'd, they live  
 Dependent upon man ; those in his fields,  
 These at his crib, and some beneath his roof :  
 They prove too often at how dear a rate  
 He sells protection.—Witness at his foot  
 The spaniel dying for some venial fault,  
 Under dissection of the knotted scourge ;  
 Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells 420



Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs, 421  
 To madness ; while the savage at his heels  
 Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent  
 Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.  
 He too is witness, noblest of the train  
 That wait on man, the flight-performing horse ;  
 With unsuspecting readiness he takes  
 His murderer on his back, and, push'd all day,  
 With bleeding sides, and flanks that heave for life,  
 To the far distant goal, arrives and dies. 430  
 So little mercy shows who needs so much !  
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.  
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
 (As if barbarity were high desert)  
 The inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praise  
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
 The honours of his matchless horse his own.  
 But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,  
 Is register'd in Heaven ; and these, no doubt, 440  
 Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.  
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
 But God will never. When he charged the Jew  
 To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise ;  
 And when the bush-exploring boy, that seized  
 The young, to let the parent bird go free ;  
 Proved he not plainly that his meaner works  
 Are yet his care, and have an interest all,  
 All, in the universal Father's love ?  
 On Noah, and in him on all mankind, 450  
 The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold  
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim  
 O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.  
 But read the instrument, and mark it well :

The oppression of a tyrannous control 455  
 Can find no warrant there. Feed, then, and yield  
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute !

The Governor of all, himself to all  
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear 460  
 The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp  
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs  
 Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,  
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite  
 The injurious trampler upon Nature's law,  
 That claims forbearance even for a brute.

He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart ;  
 And, prophet as he was, he might not strike  
 The blameless animal, without rebuke,  
 On which he rode : her opportune offence 470  
 Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.  
 He sees that human equity is slack  
 To interfere, though in so just a cause ;  
 And makes the task his own : inspiring dumb  
 And helpless victims with a sense so keen  
 Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,  
 And such sagacity to take revenge,  
 That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.

An ancient, not a legendary tale,  
 By one of sound intelligence rehearsed 480  
 (If such who plead for Providence may seem  
 In modern eyes), shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,  
 Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,  
 Dwelt young Misagathus ; a scorner he  
 Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,  
 Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.  
 He journey'd ; and his chance was, as he went,

To join a traveller, of far different note— 489  
 Evander, famed for piety, for years  
 Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.  
 Fame had not left the venerable man  
 A stranger to the manners of the youth,  
 Whose face, too, was familiar to his view.  
 Their way was on the margin of the land,  
 O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base  
 Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.  
 The charity that warm'd his heart was moved  
 At sight of the man-monster. With a smile  
 Gentle, and affable, and full of grace, 500  
 As fearful of offending whom he wish'd  
 Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths  
 Not harshly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,  
 But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.  
 "And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man  
 Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,  
 And fantasies of dotards such as thou,  
 Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?  
 Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave  
 Need no such aids as superstition lends, 510  
 To steel their hearts against the dread of death!"  
 He spoke, and to the precipice at hand  
 Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,  
 And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought  
 Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.  
 But, though the felon on his back could dare  
 The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed  
 Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,  
 Or e'er his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,  
 Baffled his rider, saved against his will. 520  
 The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd  
 By medicine well applied, but without grace

The heart's insanity admits no cure. 523  
Enraged the more by what might have reform'd  
His horrible intent, again he sought  
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,  
With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.  
But still in vain. The Providence that meant  
A longer date to the far nobler beast,  
Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake. 530  
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere  
Incurable obduracy evinced,  
His rage grew cool ; and, pleased perhaps to have earn'd  
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,  
With looks of some complacence he resumed  
His road, deriding much the blank amaze  
Of good Evander, still where he was left  
Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.  
So on they fared : discourse on other themes  
Ensuing, seem'd to obliterate the past ; 540  
And tamer far for so much fury shown  
(As is the course of rash and fiery men),  
The rude companion smiled, as if transform'd.  
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,  
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.  
The impious challenger of Power divine  
Was now to learn, that Heaven, though slow to wrath,  
Is never with impunity defied.  
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,  
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage, 550  
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,  
Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.  
At once the shock unseated him : he flew  
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier ; and, immersed  
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,  
The death he had deserved, and died alone.

So God wrought double justice ; made the fool 557  
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,  
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends  
 (Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,  
 Yet wanting sensibility) the man  
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
 An inadvertent step may crush the snail  
 That crawls at evening in the public path ;  
 But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,  
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.

The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
 And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,  
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570

Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,  
 The chamber, or refectory, may die :

A necessary act incurs no blame.  
 Not so when, held within their proper bounds,  
 And guiltless of offence, they range the air,  
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field :  
 There they are privileged ; and he that hunts  
 Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong—  
 Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,  
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode. 580

The sum is this : If man's convenience, health,  
 Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims  
 Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.  
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are,  
 As free to live, and to enjoy that life,  
 As God was free to form them at the first,  
 Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.  
 Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons  
 To love it too. The spring-time of our years  
 Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most 590

By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand 591  
 To check them. But, alas ! none sooner shoots,  
 If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,  
 Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.  
 Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule  
 And righteous limitation of its act,  
 By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man ;  
 And he that shows none, being ripe in years,  
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
 Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn. 600

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more  
 By our capacity of grace divine,  
 From creatures that exist but for our sake,  
 Which, having served us, perish, we are held  
 Accountable ; and God, some future day,  
 Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse  
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.  
 Superior as we are, they yet depend  
 Not more on human help, than we on theirs.  
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given 610  
 In aid of our defects. In some are found  
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,  
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,  
 Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,  
 Are oftentimes vanquish'd, and thrown far behind.  
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,  
 And read with such discernment, in the port  
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,  
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill  
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn. 620  
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop  
 To quadruped instructors, many a good  
 And useful quality, and virtue too,  
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves ;—

Attachment never to be wean'd, or changed 625  
 By any change of fortune ; proof alike  
 Against unkindness, absence, and neglect ;  
 Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat  
 Can move or warp ; and gratitude for small  
 And trivial favours, lasting as the life, 630  
 And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms  
 Wins public honour ; and ten thousand sit  
 Patiently present at a sacred song,  
 Commemoration-mad ; content to hear  
 (O wonderful effect of music's power !)  
 Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.  
 But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—  
 (For, was it less, what heathen would have dared 640  
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,  
 And hang it up in honour of a man ?)  
 Much less might serve, when all that we design  
 Is but to gratify an itching ear,  
 And give the day to a musician's praise.  
 Remember Handel ? Who that was not born  
 Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,  
 Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?  
 Yes—we remember him ; and while we praise  
 A talent so divine, remember too  
 That His most holy book from whom it came, 650  
 Was never meant, was never used before,  
 To buckram out the memory of a man.  
 But hush !—the Muse perhaps is too severe ;  
 And with a gravity beyond the size  
 And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed  
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more  
 To want of judgment than to wrong design.  
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,

When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third, 659  
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,  
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,  
 And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,  
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George !  
 —Man praises man ; and Garrick's memory next,  
 When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made  
 The idol of our worship while he lived,  
 The god of our idolatry once more,  
 Shall have its altar ; and the world shall go  
 In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.  
 The theatre, too small, shall suffocate 670  
 Its squeezed contents ; and more than it admits  
 Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return  
 Ungratified. For there some noble lord  
 Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,  
 Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,  
 And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,  
 To show the world how Garrick did not act—  
 For Garrick was a worshipper himself ;  
 He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites  
 And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680  
 And call'd the world to worship on the banks  
 Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof  
 That piety has still in human hearts  
 Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.  
 The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths ;  
 The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance ;  
 The mulberry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs ;  
 And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree  
 Supplied such relics as devotion holds  
 Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690  
 So 'twas a hallow'd time : decorum reign'd,  
 And mirth without offence. No few return'd,



Doubtless, much edified, and all refresh'd. 693  
 —Man praises man. The rabble, all alive,  
 From tipping benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,  
 Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,  
 A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.  
 Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,  
 To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave  
 Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy : 700  
 While others, not so satisfied, unhorse  
 The gilded equipage, and, turning loose  
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.  
 Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?  
 No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.  
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,  
 That finds out every crevice of the head  
 That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs  
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,  
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon. 710  
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,  
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use  
 And just direction sacred, to a thing  
 Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.  
 Encomium in old time was poets' work :  
 But poets, having lavishly long since  
 Exhausted all materials of the art,  
 The task now falls into the public hand ;  
 And I, contented with an humble theme,  
 Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down 720  
 The vale of Nature, where it creeps and winds  
 Among her lovely works, with a secure  
 And unambitious course, reflecting clear,  
 If not the virtues, yet the worth of brutes.  
 And I am recompensed, and deem the toils  
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine

May stand between an animal and woe, 727  
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,  
 Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.  
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,  
 The time of rest, the promised Sabbath, comes.  
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh  
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course  
 Over a sinful world ; and what remains  
 Of this tempestuous state of human things  
 Is merely as the working of a sea

Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :  
 For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds 740  
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,  
 When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,  
 Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend  
 Propitious in his chariot paved with love ;  
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced  
 For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet  
 Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch :  
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung  
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss. 750

But when a poet, or when one like me,  
 Happy to rove among poetic flowers,  
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last  
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair—  
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels,  
 To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,  
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems  
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss ! which who can see, 760

Though but in distant prospect, and not feel 761  
 His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy ?  
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,  
 And clothe all climes with beauty ; the reproach  
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
 Laughs with abundance ; and the land, once lean,  
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
 Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.  
 The various seasons woven into one,  
 And that one season an eternal spring ; 770  
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
 For there is none to covet, all are full.  
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,  
 Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon  
 Together, or all gambol in the shade  
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.  
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
 Lurks in the serpent now : the mother sees,  
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
 Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm, 780  
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place :  
 That creeping pestilence is driven away ;  
 The breath of Heaven has chased it. In the heart  
 No passion touches a discordant string,  
 But all is harmony and love. Disease  
 Is not : the pure and uncontaminate blood  
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790  
 One song employs all nations ; and all cry,  
 " Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !"  
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 Shout to each other ; and the mountain tops

From distant mountains catch the flying joy ; 795  
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.  
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd ;  
 See Salem built, the labour of a God !  
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ; 800  
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
 Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands  
 Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy,  
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there  
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar<sup>1</sup> there ;  
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.  
 Praise is in all her gates : upon her walls,  
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there 810  
 Kneels with the native of the farthest west ;  
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth  
 Into all lands. From every clime they come  
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,  
 O Zion ! an assembly such as earth  
 Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.  
 Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once  
 Perfect, and all must be at length restored.  
 So God has greatly purposed ; who would else 820  
 In his dishonour'd works himself endure  
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.  
 Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,  
 Ye slow-revolving seasons ! we would see  
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)

<sup>1</sup> Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic Scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

A world that does not dread and hate his laws, 835  
 And suffer for its crime ; would learn how fair  
 The creature is that God pronounces good,  
 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
 Here every drop of honey hides a sting ;  
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers ;  
 And even the joy that haply some poor heart  
 Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,  
 Is sullied in the stream ; taking a taint  
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.  
 O for a world in principle as chaste  
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which  
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,  
 That govern all things here, shouldering aside  
 The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her 840  
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife  
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men :  
 Where Violence shall never lift the sword,  
 Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,  
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears :  
 Where he that fills an office shall esteem  
 The occasion it presents of doing good  
 More than the perquisite : where Law shall speak  
 Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts 850  
 And Equity ; not jealous more to guard  
 A worthless form, than to decide aright :  
 Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,  
 Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)  
 With lean performance ape the work of Love !  
 Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
 Thou who alone art worthy ! It was thine  
 By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth ;  
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,

And overpaid its value with thy blood. 860  
 Thy saints proclaim thee King ; and in their hearts  
 Thy title is engraven with a pen  
 Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.  
 Thy saints proclaim thee King ; and thy delay  
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see  
 The dawn of thy Last Advent, long desired,  
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,  
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.  
 The very spirit of the world is tired  
 Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long, 870  
 " Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ? "  
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,  
 Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,  
 He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,  
 And aims them at the shield of Truth again.  
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,  
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;  
 And all the mysteries to faith proposed,  
 Insulted and traduced, are cast aside,  
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats. 880  
 They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,  
 Who, constant only in rejecting thee,  
 Deny<sup>1</sup> thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,  
 And quit their office for their error's sake.  
 Blind, and in love with darkness ! yet even these  
 Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee  
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man !  
 So fares thy Church. But how thy Church may fare  
 The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,  
 And what they will. All pastors are alike 890  
 To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.

<sup>1</sup> 'Deny,' &c.: alluding to Theophilus Lindsay, who left the English Church to become a Unitarian clergyman.

Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain :      892  
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,  
 And in their service wage perpetual war  
 With Conscience and with thee.    Lust in their hearts,  
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth  
 To prey upon each other ; stubborn, fierce,  
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.  
 Thy prophets speak of such ; and, noting down  
 The features of the last degenerate times,      900  
 Exhibit every lineament of these.  
 Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
 Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world !  
     He is the happy man, whose life even now  
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come ;  
 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,  
 Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,  
 Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit  
 Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,      911  
 Prepare for happiness ; bespeak him one  
 Content indeed to sojourn while he must  
 Below the skies, but having there his home.  
 The world o'erlooks him in her busy search  
 Of objects more illustrious in her view ;  
 And, occupied as earnestly as she,  
 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.  
 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;  
 He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.      920  
 He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
 Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems  
 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.  
 Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
 Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth

She makes familiar with a Heaven unseen, 926  
 And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.  
 Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,  
 And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams  
 Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird  
 That flutters least, is longest on the wing.  
 Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,  
 Or what achievements of immortal fame  
 He purposes, and he shall answer—None.  
 His warfare is within. There unfatigued  
 His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,  
 And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,  
 And never-withering wreaths, compared with which  
 The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.  
 Perhaps the self-approving haughty world, 940  
 That, as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,  
 Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,  
 Deems him a cipher in the works of God,  
 Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,  
 Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes  
 Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring  
 And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,  
 When, Isaac like, the solitary saint  
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,  
 And think on her, who thinks not for herself. 950  
 Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns  
 Of little worth, and idler in the best,  
 If, author of no mischief and some good,  
 He seek his proper happiness by means  
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.  
 Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,  
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,  
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,  
 Receiving benefits, and rendering none.



His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere 960  
 Shine with his fair example, and though small  
 His influence, if that influence all be spent  
 In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,  
 In aiding helpless indigence, in works  
 From which at least a grateful few derive  
 Some taste of comfort in a world of woe ;  
 Then let the supercilious great confess  
 He serves his country, recompenses well  
 The state beneath the shadow of whose vine  
 He sits secure, and in the scale of life 970  
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.  
 The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,  
 Must drop indeed the hope of public praise ;  
 But he may boast, what few that win it can,  
 That, if his country stand not by his skill,  
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.  
 Polite Refinement offers him in vain  
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual world  
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well—  
 The neat conveyance hiding all the offence. 980  
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode  
 Because that world adopts it. If it bear  
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,  
 And be not costly more than of true worth,  
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake  
 Can wear it even as gracefully as she.  
 She judges of refinement by the eye,  
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart  
 Not soon deceived ; aware that what is base  
 No polish can make sterling ; and that vice, 990  
 Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,  
 Like an unburied carcase trick'd with flowers,

Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far 993  
 For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.  
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,  
 More golden than that age of fabled gold  
 Renown'd in ancient song ; not vex'd with care  
 Or stain'd with guilt ; beneficent, approved  
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.  
 So glide my life away ! and so at last, 1000  
 My share of duties decently fulfill'd,  
 May some disease, not tardy to perform  
 Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,  
 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,  
 Beneath the turf that I have often trod.  
 It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd  
 To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,  
 I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,  
 With that light task ; but soon, to please her more  
 Whom flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010  
 Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit ;  
 Roved far, and gather'd much : some harsh, 'tis true,  
 Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,  
 But wholesome, well digested ; grateful some  
 To palates that can taste immortal truth ;  
 Insipid else, and sure to be despised.  
 But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.  
 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,  
 If He regard not, though divine the theme.  
 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime 1020  
 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,  
 To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart ;  
 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
 Whose approbation—prosper even mine !

# TIROCINIUM; OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαίον δὴ παιδείας ὀρθῆ τροφῇ.—PLATO.  
'Ἀρχὴ πολιτείας ἀπάσης, νέων τροφά.—DIOG. LAERT.

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*To the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin, Rector of Stock in Essex, the  
tutor of his two sons, the following poem, recommending private tuition  
in preference to an education at school, is inscribed, by his affectionate  
friend,*

WILLIAM COWPER.

*Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.*

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## THE ARGUMENT.

Man's supremacy over the inferior creation not derived from his outward form, but from the soul, 1—Creation in vain, unless subservient to the purposes of an immortal being, 35—Heavenly truth not difficult to discover, 73—Man made to discover and declare it, 100—Duty of making it known to the young, 103—Importance of infant instruction, 109—Nursery knowledge, 127—Pilgrim's Progress, 131—Happy if such studies were approved in riper years, 147—Too often scorned and repudiated, 155—The gospel contemned, false philosophy prevails, and early religious impressions are effaced, 185—Corrupting influence of large schools, 201—Effects of pernicious example on the young, 220—College, 240—Errors in education arise from following established precedents, 255—Teachers connive at vices in the young which they practised themselves, 269—Degeneracy of schools, 279—Causes of this, 290—Early school associations, 296—Parents recounting their early follies to their children, 318—Advancement in the world expected from friendships formed at school, 393—Prosecuted by unworthy means, and tending to fatal results, 404—School friendships not always permanent, 436—Emulation a questionable motive of action, 458—Its evil consequences on the heart and temper, 470—Great and small schools alike, 515—Beauty of parental confidence and companionship, 537—Why resign the task of parental instruction to strangers? 551—The effect of absence in destroying confidence between father and son, 561—A faithful hand necessary to disperse the follies of youth, 591—The classics not enough, 605—Study of nature, 630—A private tutor recommended, 658—Danger of association with servants,

688—A worthy tutor to be treated with respect, 706—Where there is bad example at home, board in some retired spot recommended, 735—The author's advice not likely to be followed, 779—The middle ranks addressed on the disorders which prevail in the world as the result of school-breeding, 807—Earnestly warned against committing their sons to schools, 871—Which should be "better managed or encouraged less," 922.

It is not from his form, in which we trace  
 Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,  
 That Man, the master of this globe, derives  
 His right of empire over all that lives.  
 That form, indeed, the associate of a mind  
 Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind—  
 That form, the labour of Almighty skill,  
 Framed for the service of a freeborn will,  
 Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
 But borrows all its grandeur from the soul. 10  
 Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,  
 An intellectual kingdom, all her own.  
 For her the Memory fills her ample page  
 With truths pour'd down from every distant age ;  
 For her amasses an unbounded store,  
 The wisdom of great nations, now no more ;  
 Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil ;  
 Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil ;  
 When copiously supplied, then most enlarged ;  
 Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged. 20  
 For her, the Fancy roving unconfined,  
 The present Muse of every pensive mind,  
 Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue  
 To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew :  
 At her command, winds rise and waters roar,  
 Again she lays them slumbering on the shore ;  
 With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,  
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.

For her, the Judgment, umpire in the strife 29  
 That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,  
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,  
 Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,  
 Condemns, approves, and, with a faithful voice,  
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth  
 To yon fair Sun and his attendant Earth ?  
 And, when descending he resigns the skies,  
 Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,  
 Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,  
 And owns her power on every shore he laves ? 40  
 Why do the Seasons still enrich the year,  
 Fruitful and young as in their first career ?  
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,  
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze ;  
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives  
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,  
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews  
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—  
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,  
 Power misemploy'd, munificence misplaced, 50  
 Had not its Author dignified the plan,  
 And crown'd it with the majesty of Man.  
 Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,  
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,  
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws  
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause,  
 To press the important question on his heart,  
 " Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art ?"  
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,  
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave ; 60  
 Endued with reason only to descry  
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye ;

With passions, just that he may prove, with pain, 63  
 The force he spends against their fury vain ;  
 And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,  
 With every lust with which frail Nature burns,  
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,  
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond ;  
 Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,  
 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth, 70  
 And, useless while he lives, and when he dies,  
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought  
 Are not important always as dear-bought,  
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,  
 A childish waste of philosophic pains ;  
 But truths on which depends our main concern,  
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,  
 Shine by the side of every path we tread  
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read. 80  
 'Tis true that, if to trifle life away  
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,  
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore  
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,  
 Were all that Heaven required of humankind,  
 And all the plan their destiny design'd,  
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,  
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.  
 But Reason heard, and Nature well perused,  
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused. 90  
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
 Reflect His attributes who placed them there,  
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd  
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,  
 'Tis plain the creature whom he chose to invest  
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,

Received his nobler nature, and was made 97  
 Fit for the power in which he stands array'd ;  
 That first or last, hereafter if not here,  
 He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,  
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,  
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.  
 This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied  
 To prove a consequence by none denied,  
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth  
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,  
 That, taught of God, they may indeed be wise,  
 Nor, ignorantly wandering, miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most  
 A quickness, which in later life is lost : 110  
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,  
 Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.  
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,  
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,  
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care  
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare ;  
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees  
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.  
 Neatly secured from being soil'd or torn,  
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn, 120  
 A book (to please us at a tender age  
 'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)  
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,  
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.  
 Lispering our syllables, we scramble next  
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text ;  
 And learn with wonder how this world began,  
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man :  
 Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,  
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain. 130

O thou, whom, borne on Fancy's eager wing 181  
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,  
 I pleased remember, and, while memory yet  
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget ;  
 Ingenious dreamer ! in whose well-told tale  
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail ;  
 Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile ;  
 Witty, and well employ'd, and like thy Lord,  
 Speaking in parables his slighted Word ! 140  
 I name thee not, lest so despised a name  
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;  
 Yet even in transitory life's late day,  
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,  
 Revere the man, whose PILGRIM marks the road,  
 And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.  
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage  
 Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age ;  
 The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,  
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy, 150  
 And not with curses on his art who stole  
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.  
 The stamp of artless piety, impress'd  
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,  
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,  
 Regards with scorn, though once received with awe ;  
 And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies  
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,  
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan  
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man. 160  
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.



Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough : 164  
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross  
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss—  
 The young apostate sickens at the view,  
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,  
 Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves ! 170

While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,  
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.  
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange  
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.  
 Time was he closed as he began the day,  
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray ;  
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,  
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;  
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease  
 A power confess'd so lately on his knees. 180

But now, farewell all legendary tales !  
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;  
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves ;  
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves.  
 Priests have invented, and the world admired,  
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired ;  
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,  
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;  
 And, common sense diffusing real day,  
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away. 190

Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth  
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;  
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,  
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.  
 And thus, well tutor'd only while we share  
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;

And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,<sup>1</sup> 197  
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;  
 Our early notices of truth, disgraced,  
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;  
 That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste  
 For loose expense and fashionable waste  
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last ;  
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and, five in ten,  
 In infidelity and lewdness, men.

There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old, 210  
 That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold ;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;  
 There, waiter Dick, with bacchanalian lays,  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,  
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.  
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,  
 Detain their adolescent charge too long.

The management of tyros of eighteen 220  
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.

The stout tall captain, whose superior size  
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,  
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix  
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.

<sup>1</sup> The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,                   226  
 With them is courage, his effrontery wit.  
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,  
 Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,  
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,  
 Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.  
 In little bosoms such achievements strike  
 A kindred spark ; they burn to do the like.  
 Thus, half accomplish'd ere he yet begin  
 To show the peeping down upon his chin,  
 And, as maturity of years comes on,  
 Made just the adept that you design'd your son ;  
 To insure the perseverance of his course,  
 And give your monstrous project all its force,  
 Send him to college. If he there be tamed,                   240  
 Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,  
 Where no regard of ordinances is shown  
 Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.  
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,  
 Where neither strumpets' charms nor drinking bout,  
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out.  
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,  
 Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you :  
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds ;  
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.                   250  
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,  
 With packhorse constancy we keep the road,  
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,  
 True to the jingling of our leader's bells.  
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink  
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think :  
 And such an age as ours balks no expense,  
 Except of caution and of common sense ;

Else sure notorious fact, and proof so plain, 259  
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train.  
 I blame not those who, with what care they can,  
 O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan ;  
 Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare  
 Promise a work of which they must despair.  
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,  
 An ubiquarian presence and control—  
 Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,  
 Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd ?  
 Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves  
 Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves. 270  
 Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,  
 Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,  
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd  
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.  
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,  
 And evils not to be endured, endure ;  
 Lest power exerted, but without success,  
 Should make the little ye retain still less.  
 Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth  
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ; 280  
 And in the firmament of fame still shines  
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,  
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen and divines.  
 Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,  
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead.  
 Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays  
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;  
 And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,  
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.  
 Say, Muse (for education made the song, 290  
 No Muse can hesitate or linger long),

What causes move us, knowing, as we must, 292  
 That these *menageries* all fail their trust,  
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,  
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care ?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
 We love the play-place of our early days ;  
 The scene is touching, and the heart is stone  
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.

The wall on which we tried our graving skill, 300  
 The very name we carved subsisting still ;  
 The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,  
 Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd ;

The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,  
 Playing our games, and on the very spot ;  
 As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw ;  
 To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
 Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat ;  
 The pleasing spectacle at once excites 310

Such recollection of our own delights,  
 That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain  
 Our innocent, sweet, simple years again.  
 This fond attachment to the well known place,  
 Whence first we started into life's long race,  
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
 We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.

Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share  
 Of classic food begins to be his care,  
 With his own likeness placed on either knee, 320  
 Indulges all a father's heartfelt glee ;  
 And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,  
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box ;  
 Then turning, he regales his listening wife  
 With all the adventures of his early life ;

His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise, 326  
 In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;  
 What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,  
 How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape ;  
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold  
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.  
 Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name  
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame),  
 He gives the local bias all its sway ;  
 Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,  
 And destines their bright genius to be shown,  
 Just in the scene where he display'd his own.  
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught  
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;  
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough— 340  
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.  
 Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,  
 The event is sure ; expect it, and rejoice !  
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,  
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.  
 The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,  
 Excused the encumbrance of more solid worth,  
 Are best disposed of where with most success  
 They may acquire that confident address,  
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense, 350  
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense ;  
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,  
 With so much reason all expect from them.  
 But families of less illustrious fame,  
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,  
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,  
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all—  
 What dream they of, that with so little care  
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there ?

They dream of little Charles or William graced      360  
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist ;  
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,  
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.  
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,  
 Dreams him episcopally such at least ;  
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room  
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,  
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride  
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.  
 Events improbable, and strange as these,      370  
 Which only a parental eye foresees,  
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.  
 But how ? resides such virtue in that air  
 As must create an appetite for prayer ?  
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal  
 That candidates for such a prize should feel—  
 To take the lead and be the foremost still  
 In all true worth and literary skill ?  
 “ Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught  
 The knowledge of the World, and dull of thought !      380  
 Church ladders are not always mounted best  
 By learned clerks, and Latinists profess'd.  
 The exalted prize demands an upward look,  
 Not to be found by poring on a book.  
 Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,  
 Is more than adequate to all I seek.  
 Let erudition grace him, or not grace,  
 I give the bauble but the second place ;  
 His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,  
 Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.      390  
 A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
 Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.

His intercourse with peers, and sons of peers,— 393

There dawns the splendour of his future years :

In that bright quarter his propitious skies

Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.

Your Lordship, and Your Grace ! what school can teach

A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech ?

What need of Homer's verse or Tully's prose,

Sweet interjections ! if he learn but those ? 400

Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,

Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,

The parson knows enough who knows a duke."—

Egregious purpose ! worthily begun

In barbarous prostitution of your son ;

Press'd on *his* part by means that would disgrace

A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,

And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,

In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.

It may succeed ; and if his sins should call 416

For more than common punishment, it shall.

The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth

Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,

To occupy a sacred, awful post,

In which the best and worthiest tremble most.

The royal letters are a thing of course,

A king, that would, might recommend his horse ;

And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,

As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.

Behold your Bishop ! well he plays his part, 420

Christian in name, and Infidel in heart,

Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,

A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man :

Dumb as a senator, and as a priest

A piece of mere church furniture at best ;



To live estranged from God his total scope, 426  
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.  
 But, fair although and feasible it seem,  
 Depend not much upon your golden dream ;  
 For Providence, that seems concern'd to exempt  
 The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,  
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,  
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;  
 And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,  
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.  
 Besides, school friendships are not always found,  
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;  
 The most disinterested and virtuous minds,  
 In early years connected, time unbinds ;  
 New situations give a different cast 440  
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;  
 And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,  
 Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.  
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.  
 Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,  
 Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known.  
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
 But learns his error in maturer years,  
 When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd, 450  
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.  
 If, therefore, even when honest in design,  
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
 'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart  
 With just abhorrence of so mean a part,  
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade  
 For wages so unlikely to be paid.  
 Our public hives of puerile resort,  
 That are of chief and most approved report,

To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul, 460  
 Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.  
 A principle, whose proud pretensions pass  
 Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—  
 That with a world, not often over-nice,  
 Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ;  
 Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,  
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—  
 Contributes most, perhaps, to enhance their fame ;  
 And Emulation is its specious name.  
 Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal, 470  
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel ;  
 The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes  
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.  
 The spirit of that competition burns  
 With all varieties of ill by turns ;  
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,  
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,  
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,  
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,  
 And labours to surpass him day and night, 480  
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.  
 The spur is powerful, and I grant its force ;  
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,  
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth ;  
 And, felt alike by each, advances both :  
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,  
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.  
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert  
 Against a heart depraved and temper hurt ;  
 Hurt too, perhaps, for life ; for early wrong 490  
 Done to the nobler part affects it long ;  
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,  
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws  
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd 495  
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd ;  
 And Emulation, as engendering hate,  
 Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate ;  
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,  
 The Jachin and the Boaz<sup>1</sup> of them all. 500  
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell  
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,  
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,  
 And small academies win all the praise ?  
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent,  
 I praise a school, as Pope a government ;  
 So take my judgment in his language dress'd—  
 "Whate'er is best administer'd, is best."  
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,  
 But all are capable of living well ; 510  
 Then ask not whether limited or large,  
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge ?  
 If anxious only that their boys may learn,  
 While morals languish, a despised concern ;  
 The great and small deserve one common blame,  
 Different in size, but in effect the same.  
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,  
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;  
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,  
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ; 520  
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,  
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.  
 If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,  
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,  
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill,  
 As, wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will ;  
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,  
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.

<sup>1</sup> 'Jachin and Boaz:' the two brazen pillars in Solomon's Temple.

But if, with all his genius, he betray, 529  
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay,  
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,  
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;  
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred  
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread;  
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone  
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

Oh! 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,  
 By all whom sentiment has not abused;  
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace 540  
 Of those who never feel in the right place;  
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,  
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;  
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,  
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.

How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,  
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?  
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,  
 To take in childish plays a childish part;  
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy 550  
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;  
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand  
 A task as much within your own command—  
 That God and nature, and your interest too,  
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?

Why hire a lodging in a house unknown,  
 For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?  
 This second weaning, needless as it is,  
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his!  
 The indented stick, that loses day by day  
 Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away, 560  
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,  
 With what intense desire he wants his home.

But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof 563  
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,  
 Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,  
 A disappointment waits him even there :  
 Arrived, he feels an unexpected change ;  
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,  
 No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,  
 His favourite stand between his father's knees, 570  
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,  
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat ;  
 And, least familiar where he should be most,  
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost.  
 Alas ! poor boy !—the natural effect  
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.  
 Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,  
 Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired ?  
 Thou well deservest an alienated son,  
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none ; 580  
 None that, in thy domestic snug recess,  
 He had not made his own with more address ;  
 Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,  
 And better never learn'd, or left behind.  
 Add too, that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain  
 By no kind arts his confidence again ;  
 That here begins with most that long complaint  
 Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,  
 Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years  
 A parent pours into regardless ears. 590

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees  
 By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,  
 Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace  
 The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race—  
 While every worm industriously weaves  
 And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves ;

So numerous are the follies that annoy 597  
 The mind and heart of every sprightly boy ;  
 Imaginations noxious and perverse,  
 Which admonition can alone disperse.  
 The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,  
 Patient, affectionate, of high command,  
 To check the procreation of a breed,  
 Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.  
 'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,  
 At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;  
 Even in his pastimes he requires a friend,  
 To warn, and teach him safely to unbend ;  
 O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,  
 Watch his emotions, and control their tide ; 610  
 And, levying thus, and with an easy sway,  
 A tax of profit from his very play,  
 To impress a value, not to be erased,  
 On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.  
 And seems it nothing in a father's eye,  
 That unimproved those many moments fly ?  
 And is he well content his son should find  
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind,  
 But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined ?  
 For such is all the mental food purvey'd 620  
 By public hackneys in the schooling trade ;  
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store  
 Of syntax truly, but with little more ;  
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,  
 Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.  
 Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,  
 Would deem it no abuse or waste of pains,  
 To improve this diet, at no great expense,  
 With savoury truth and wholesome common sense ;

To lead his son, for prospects of delight, 630  
 To some not steep, though philosophic, height ;  
 Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes  
 Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,  
 The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,  
 And the harmonious order of them all ;  
 To show him, in an insect or a flower,  
 Such microscopic proof of skill and power,  
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays,  
 To combat atheists with in modern days ;  
 To spread the earth before him, and commend, 640  
 With designation of the finger's end,  
 Its various parts to his attentive note,  
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote ;  
 To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,  
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame ;  
 And, more than all, with commendation due,  
 To set some living worthy in his view,  
 Whose fair example may at once inspire  
 A wish to copy what he must admire.  
 Such knowledge, gain'd betimes, and which appears, 650  
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,  
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,  
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,  
 Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,  
 And more than one perhaps that I have seen—  
 An evidence and reprehension both,  
 Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.  
 Art thou a man professionally tied,  
 With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,  
 Too busy to intend a meaner care 660  
 Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir ?  
 Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)  
 But poor in knowledge, having none to impart ?—

Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad, 664  
 His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad ;  
 Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then  
 Heard to articulate like other men ;  
 No jester, and yet lively in discourse—  
 His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force ;  
 And his address, if not quite French in ease, 670  
 Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please ;  
 Low in the world, because he scorns its arts,  
 A man of letters, manners, morals, parts ;  
 Unpatronised, and therefore little known ;  
 Wise for himself and his few friends alone,—  
 In him thy well-appointed proxy see,  
 Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee ;  
 Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,  
 To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;  
 Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove 680  
 The force of discipline when back'd by love ;  
 To double all thy pleasure in thy child,  
 His mind inform'd, his morals undefiled.  
 Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show  
 No spots contracted among grooms below,  
 Nor taint his speech with meannesses, design'd  
 By footman Tom for witty and refined.  
 There, in his commerce with the liveried herd,  
 Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd ;  
 For since (so fashion dictates) all who claim 690  
 A higher than a mere plebeian fame,  
 Find it expedient, come what mischief may,  
 To entertain a thief or two in pay  
 (And they that can afford the expense of more,  
 Some half a dozen, and some half a score),  
 Great cause occurs to save him from a band  
 So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;



A point secured, if once he be supplied 698  
 With some such Mentor always at his side.  
 Are such men rare ? perhaps they would abound,  
 Were occupation easier to be found,  
 Were education, else so sure to fail,  
 Conducted on a manageable scale,  
 And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,  
 Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—  
 But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,  
 Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl ;  
 And, as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir  
 In all good faculties beneath his care,  
 Respect, as is but rational and just, 710  
 A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.  
 Despised by thee, what more can he expect  
 From youthful folly, than the same neglect ?  
 A flat and fatal negative obtains,  
 That instant, upon all his future pains ;  
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,  
 And all the instructions of thy son's best friend  
 Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.  
 Doom him not then to solitary meals,  
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels ; 720  
 And that, possessor of a soul refined,  
 An upright heart, and cultivated mind,  
 His post not mean, his talents not unknown,  
 He deems it hard to vegetate alone.  
 And, if admitted at thy board he sit,  
 Account him no just mark for idle wit ;  
 Offend not him, whom modesty restrains  
 From repartee, with jokes that he disdains ;  
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,  
 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.— 730

And, trust me, his utility may reach 731  
 To more than he is hired or bound to teach ;  
 Much trash unutter'd, and some ill<sup>s</sup> undone,  
 Through reverence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,  
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,  
 And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,  
 The world accounts an honourable man,  
 Because, forsooth, thy courage has been tried,  
 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side ; 740  
 Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
 That any thing but vice could win thy love ;—  
 Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,  
 Chain'd to the routs that she frequents, for life,  
 Who, just when industry begins to snore,  
 Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;  
 And thrice in every winter throngs thine own  
 With half the chariots and sedans in town—  
 Thyself meanwhile even shifting as thou may'st,  
 Not very sober, though, nor very chaste ;— 750  
 Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,  
 If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,  
 And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,  
 A trifler vain, and empty of all good ;—  
 Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,  
 Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son !  
 Saved from his home, where every day brings forth  
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,  
 Find him a better in a distant spot,  
 Within some pious pastor's humble cot, 760  
 Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,  
 The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)  
 May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,  
 Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.

Where early rest makes early rising sure, 765  
 Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,  
 Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;  
 Or, if it enter, soon starved out again :  
 Where all the attention of his faithful host,  
 Discreetly limited to two at most, 770  
 May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,  
 And not at last evaporate in air :  
 Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind  
 Serene, and to his duties much inclined,  
 Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,  
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come ;  
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last  
 In settled habit and decided taste.—  
 But whom do I advise ? the fashion-led,  
 The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead ! 780  
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit  
 Not better much than spectacles a brute ;  
 Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,  
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;  
 Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,  
 And much too gay to have any of their own.  
 But courage, man ! methought the Muse replied,  
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide :  
 The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,  
 And form'd of God without a parent's mind, 790  
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,  
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;  
 And, while on public nurseries they rely,  
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,  
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,  
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.  
 But all are not alike. Thy warning voice  
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;

And some, perhaps, who, busy as they are, 799  
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care,  
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach  
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,  
 Will need no stress of argument to enforce  
 The expedience of a less adventurous course :  
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn ;  
 But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,  
 Securely placed between the small and great,  
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains  
 Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains— 810  
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn  
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.  
 Look round you on a world perversely blind,—  
 See what contempt is fallen on humankind,—  
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,  
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,  
 Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,  
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold :  
 See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge  
 Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large ; 820  
 See great commanders making war a trade,  
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made ;  
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ  
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,  
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves  
 With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;  
 See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed  
 With infamy too nauseous to be named ;  
 Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,  
 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen ; 830  
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue  
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,

Now flush'd with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,  
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale ; 834  
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts,  
 Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,  
 Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools ;  
 All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.  
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,  
 That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still— 840  
 Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,  
 Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark :  
 As here and there a twinkling star descried  
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.  
 Now look on him, whose very voice in tone  
 Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,  
 And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,  
 And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,  
 And say, My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,  
 When thou, transplanted from thy genial home, 850  
 Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
 And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;  
 What character, what turn thou wilt assume  
 From constant converse with I know not whom ;  
 Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,  
 And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose ;  
 Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,—  
 Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.  
 Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,  
 And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids, 860  
 Free too, and under no constraining force,  
 Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,  
 Lay such a stake upon the losing side,  
 Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?  
 Thou canst not ! Nature, pulling at thine heart,  
 Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.

Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea, 867  
 Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,  
 Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay  
 A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way ;  
 Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule  
 Of natural pity, send him not to school.  
 No !—Guard him better : is he not thine own,  
 Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone ?  
 And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)  
 That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,  
 And thou wilt need some comfort, to assuage  
 Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,  
 That then, in recompence of all thy cares,  
 Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs, 880  
 Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,  
 And give thy life its only cordial left ?  
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,  
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.  
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command ;  
 Secure it thine : its key is in thine hand.  
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,  
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,  
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base  
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place. 890  
 But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure  
 From vicious inmates and delights impure,  
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,  
 And keep him warm and filial to the last ;  
 Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say  
 But, being man, and therefore frail, he may ?)  
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,  
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh, barbarous ! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand  
 Pull down the schools—what !—all the schools i' the land ;

Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms, 901  
 Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms ?  
 —A captious question, sir (and yours is one),  
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.  
 Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ  
 (Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,  
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,  
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray ?  
 Survey our schools and colleges, and see  
 A sight not much unlike my simile. 910  
 From education, as the leading cause,  
 The public character its colour draws,  
 Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
 Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.  
 And though I would not advertise them yet,  
 Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let*,  
 Unless the world were all prepared to embrace  
 A plan well worthy to supply their place ;  
 Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,  
 To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean, 920  
 (Forgive the crime !) I wish them, I confess,  
 Or better managed, or encouraged less.

## MINOR POEMS.

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### AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Five-and-twenty years ago—  
Alas! how time escapes!—'tis even so—  
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,  
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat  
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!  
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,  
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,  
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
Strange fluctuation of all human things!  
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part, 10  
But distance only cannot change the heart:  
And, were I call'd to prove the assertion true,  
One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that, in the wane of life,  
Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,  
We find the friends we fancied we had won,  
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?  
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?  
No: gold they seem'd, but they were never such.



Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,      20  
 Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,  
 Dreading a negative, and overawed  
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.  
 Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—  
 Nay—stay at home—you're always going out.  
 'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—  
 For what?—An' please you, sir, to see a friend.—  
 A friend! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—  
 Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.  
 And fetch my cloak; for though the night be raw,      30  
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
 And was his plaything often when a child;  
 But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,  
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose:  
 Perhaps, his confidence just then betray'd,  
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;  
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,  
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.  
 Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,      40  
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain  
 To prove an evil of which all complain,  
 (I hate long arguments, verbosely spun;)  
 One story more, dear Hill, and I have done:  
 Once on a time, an emperor, a wise man,  
 No matter where, in China or Japan,  
 Decreed that whosoever should offend  
 Against the well-known duties of a friend,  
 Convicted once, should ever after wear      50  
 But half a coat, and show his bosom bare;  
 The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
 That all was naught within, and all found out

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear 54  
 Such hard and arbitrary measure here ;  
 Else, could a law like that which I relate  
 Once have the sanction of our triple state,  
 Some few,<sup>1</sup> that I have known in days of old,  
 Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ;  
 While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow, 60  
 Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
 An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,  
 Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

- 1 UNWIN, I should but ill repay  
     The kindness of a friend,  
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay  
     As ever friendship penn'd,  
 Thy name omitted in a page  
 That would reclaim a vicious age.
- 2 A union form'd, as mine with thee,  
     Not rashly, or in sport,  
 May be as fervent in degree,  
     And faithful in its sort—  
 And may as rich in comfort prove  
 As that of true fraternal love.

<sup>1</sup> 'Some few :' Thurlow and Colman, who, after the success of his second volume, however, renewed their acquaintance with him—an acquaintance which, by and by, shall be their only title to fame.

- 3 The bud inserted in the rind,  
The bud of peach or rose,  
Adorns, though differing in its kind,  
The stock whereon it grows,  
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,  
As if produced by Nature there.
- 4 Not rich, I render what I may ;  
I seize thy name in haste,  
And place it in this first essay,  
Lest this should prove the last.  
'Tis where it should be—in a plan  
That holds in view the good of man.
- 5 The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,  
Should be the poet's heart ;  
Affection lights a brighter flame  
Than ever blazed by art.  
No Muses on these lines attend,  
I sink the poet in the friend.
- 

## THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN ;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED,  
AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

- 1 JOHN GILPIN was a citizen  
Of credit and renown,  
A train-band captain eke was he  
Of famous London town.

- 2 John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,  
    Though wedded we have been  
    These twice ten tedious years, yet we  
    No holiday have seen.
- 3 To-morrow is our wedding-day,  
    And we will then repair  
    Unto the Bell at Edmonton,  
    All in a chaise and pair.
- 4 My sister, and my sister's child,  
    Myself and children three,  
    Will fill the chaise ; so you must ride  
    On horseback after we.
- 5 He soon replied, I do admire  
    Of womankind but one,  
    And you are she, my dearest dear,  
    Therefore it shall be done.
- 6 I am a linen-draper bold,  
    As all the world doth know,  
    And my good friend the Callender  
    Will lend his horse to go.
- 7 Quoth Mistress Gilpin, That's well said ;  
    And for that wine is dear,  
    We will be furnish'd with our own,  
    Which is both bright and clear.
- 8 John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife ;  
    O'erjoy'd was he to find  
    That, though on pleasure she was bent,  
    She had a frugal mind.

- 9 The morning came, the chaise was brought,  
But yet was not allow'd  
To drive up to the door, lest all  
Should say that she was proud.
- 10 So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,  
Where they did all get in ;  
Six precious souls, and all agog  
To dash through thick and thin.
- 11 Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,  
Were never folk so glad ;  
The stones did rattle underneath,  
As if Cheapside were mad.
- 12 John Gilpin at his horse's side  
Seized fast the flowing mane,  
And up he got, in haste to ride,  
But soon came down again ;
- 13 For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,  
His journey to begin,  
When, turning round his head, he saw  
Three customers come in.
- 14 So down he came ; for loss of time,  
Although it grieved him sore,  
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,  
Would trouble him much more.
- 15 'Twas long before the customers  
Were suited to their mind,  
When Betty, screaming, came down stairs,  
"The wine is left behind !"

- 16 Good lack ! quoth he—yet bring it me,  
My leathern belt likewise,  
In which I bear my trusty sword,  
When I do exercise.
- 17 Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul !)  
Had two stone bottles found,  
To hold the liquor that she loved,  
And keep it safe and sound.
- 18 Each bottle had a curling ear,  
Through which the belt he drew,  
And hung a bottle on each side,  
To make his balance true.
- 19 Then over all, that he might be  
Equipp'd from top to toe,  
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,  
He manfully did throw.
- 20 Now see him mounted once again  
Upon his nimble steed,  
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones  
With caution and good heed !
- 21 But, finding soon a smoother road  
Beneath his well-shod feet,  
The snorting beast began to trot,  
Which gall'd him in his seat.
- 22 So, Fair and softly, John he cried,  
But John he cried in vain ;  
That trot became a gallop soon,  
In spite of curb and rein.

- 23 So stooping down, as needs he must  
Who cannot sit upright,  
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,  
And eke with all his might.
- 24 His horse, who never in that sort  
Had handled been before,  
What thing upon his back had got  
Did wonder more and more.
- 25 Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;  
Away went hat and wig ;  
He little dreamt, when he set out,  
Of running such a rig.
- 26 The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,  
Like streamer long and gay,  
Till, loop and button failing both,  
At last it flew away.
- 27 Then might all people well discern  
The bottles he had slung ;  
A bottle swinging at each side,  
As hath been said or sung.
- 28 The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,  
Up flew the windows all ;  
And every soul cried out, Well done !  
As loud as he could bawl.
- 29 Away went Gilpin—who but he ?  
His fame soon spread around—  
He carries weight ! he rides a race !  
'Tis for a thousand pound !

- 30 And still, as fast as he drew near,  
'Twas wonderful to view  
How in a trice the turnpike men  
Their gates wide open threw.
- 31 And now, as he went bowing down  
His reeking head full low,  
The bottles twain behind his back  
Were shatter'd at a blow.
- 32 Down ran the wine into the road,  
Most piteous to be seen,  
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke  
As they had basted been.
- 33 But still he seem'd to carry weight,  
With leathern girdle braced ;  
For all might see the bottle-necks  
Still dangling at his waist.
- 34 Thus all through merry Islington  
These gambols he did play,  
And till he came unto the Wash  
Of Edmonton so gay.
- 35 And there he threw the wash about  
On both sides of the way,  
Just like unto a trundling mop,  
Or a wild goose at play.
- 36 At Edmonton, his loving wife  
From the balcony spied  
Her tender husband, wondering much  
To see how he did ride.



- 37 Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!  
They all at once did cry;  
The dinner waits, and we are tired:  
Said Gilpin—So am I!
- 38 But yet his horse was not a whit  
Inclined to tarry there;  
For why?—his owner had a house  
Full ten miles off, at Ware.
- 39 So like an arrow swift he flew,  
Shot by an archer strong;  
So did he fly—which brings me to  
The middle of my song.
- 40 Away went Gilpin, out of breath,  
And sore against his will,  
Till at his friend the Callender's  
His horse at last stood still.
- 41 The Callender, amazed to see  
His neighbour in such trim,  
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,  
And thus accosted him:—
- 42 What news? what news? your tidings tell;  
Tell me you must and shall—  
Say why bareheaded you are come,  
Or why you come at all.
- 43 Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,  
And loved a timely joke;  
And thus unto the Callender  
In merry guise he spoke:

- 44 I came because your horse would come ;  
And, if I well forebode,  
My hat and wig will soon be here,  
They are upon the road.
- 45 The Callender, right glad to find  
His friend in merry pin,  
Return'd him not a single word,  
But to the house went in ;
- 46 Whence straight he came with hat and wig ;  
A wig that flow'd behind,  
A hat not much the worse for wear,  
Each comely in its kind.
- 47 He held them up, and, in his turn,  
Thus show'd his ready wit,—  
My head is twice as big as yours  
They therefore needs must fit.
- 48 But let me scrape the dirt away  
That hangs upon your face ;  
And stop and eat, for well you may  
Be in a hungry case.
- 49 Says John, It is my wedding-day,  
And all the world would stare,  
If wife should dine at Edmonton,  
And I should dine at Ware.
- 50 So turning to his horse, he said,  
I am in haste to dine ;  
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,  
You shall go back for mine.

- 51 Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast !  
For which he paid full dear ;  
For while he spake, a braying ass  
Did sing most loud and clear ;
- 52 Whereat his horse did snort as he  
Had heard a lion roar,  
And gallopp'd off with all his might,  
As he had done before.
- 53 Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went Gilpin's hat and wig ;  
He lost them sooner than at first,  
For why ?—they were too big.
- 54 Now, Mistress Gilpin, when she saw  
Her husband posting down  
Into the country far away,  
She pull'd out half-a-crown.
- 55 And thus unto the youth she said,  
That drove them to the Bell,  
This shall be yours when you bring back  
My husband safe and well.
- 56 The youth did ride, and soon did meet  
John coming back amain,  
Whom in a trice he tried to stop  
By catching at his rein ;
- 57 But, not performing what he meant,  
And gladly would have done,  
The frightened steed he frightened more,  
And made him faster run.

- 58 Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went postboy at his heels,  
The postboy's horse right glad to miss  
The lumbering of the wheels.
- 59 Six gentlemen upon the road  
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,  
With postboy scampering in the rear,  
They raised the hue and cry :
- 60 Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!  
Not one of them was mute ;  
And all and each that pass'd that way  
Did join in the pursuit.
- 61 And now the turnpike gates again  
Flew open in short space,  
The tollmen thinking, as before,  
That Gilpin rode a race.
- 62 And so he did, and won it too,  
For he got first to town ;  
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up  
He did again get down.
- 63 Now let us sing, Long live the king,  
And Gilpin, long live he ;  
And when he next doth ride abroad,  
May I be there to see !

## THE DOVES.

- 1 REASONING at every step he treads,  
Man yet mistakes his way ;  
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,  
Are rarely known to stray.
- 2 One silent eve I wander'd late,  
And heard the voice of love ;  
The turtle thus address'd her mate,  
And soothed the listening dove :
- 3 Our mutual bond of faith and truth  
No time shall disengage ;  
Those blessings of our early youth  
Shall cheer our latest age :
- 4 While innocence without disguise,  
And constancy sincere,  
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,  
And mine can read them there :
- 5 Those ills that wait on all below  
Shall ne'er be felt by me,  
Or gently felt, and only so,  
As being shared with thee.
- 6 When lightnings flash among the trees,  
Or kites are hovering near,  
I fear lest thee alone they seize,  
And know no other fear.

- 7 'Tis then I feel myself a wife,  
 And press thy wedded side,  
 Resolved a union form'd for life,  
 Death never shall divide.
- 8 But oh ! if, fickle and unchaste  
 (Forgive a transient thought),  
 Thou couldst become unkind at last,  
 And scorn thy present lot,
- 9 No need of lightnings from on high,  
 Or kites with cruel beak ;  
 Denied the endearments of thine eye,  
 This widow'd heart would break.
- 10 Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,  
 Soft as the passing wind ;  
 And I recorded what I heard,  
 A lesson for mankind.

---

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast  
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,  
 And on her wicker-work high mounted,  
 Her chickens prematurely counted,  
 (A fault philosophers might blame  
 If quite exempted from the same),  
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day ;  
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,  
 The legislature call'd it May.

But suddenly a wind as high 10  
 As ever swept a winter sky,  
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,  
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,  
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,  
 And spread her golden hopes below.  
 But just at eve the blowing weather  
 And all her fears were hush'd together :  
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,  
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe ;  
 (For ravens, though, as birds of omen, 20  
 They teach both conjurors and old women  
 To tell us what is to befall,  
 Can't prophesy themselves, at all.)  
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,  
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,  
 And destined all the treasure there  
 A gift to his expecting fair,  
 Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,  
 And bore the worthless prize away.

## MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures 30  
 In every change both mine and yours ;  
 Safety consists not in escape  
 From dangers of a frightful shape ;  
 An earthquake may be bid to spare  
 The man that's strangled by a hair ;  
 Fate steals along with silent tread,  
 Found oftenest in what least we dread,  
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,  
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

## A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,  
Both speed their journey with a restless stream ;  
The silent pace with which they steal away  
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay ;  
Alike irrevocable both when past,  
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.  
Though each resemble each in every part,  
A difference strikes at length the musing heart ;  
Streams never flow in vain ; where streams abound,  
How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd !  
But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,  
Neglected, leaves a dreary waste behind.

---

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream that winds through yonder glade,  
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—  
Silent and chaste she steals along,  
Far from the world's gay busy throng,  
With gentle yet prevailing force,  
Intent upon her destined course ;  
Graceful and useful all she does,  
Blessing and blest where'er she goes.  
Pure-bosom'd as that watery glass,  
And heaven reflected in her face.



## VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK,  
DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF JUAN  
FERNANDEZ.

- 1 I AM monarch of all I survey,  
    My right there is none to dispute ;  
From the centre all round to the sea,  
    I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  
O Solitude ! where are the charms  
    That sages have seen in thy face ?  
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
    Than reign in this horrible place.
  
- 2 I am out of humanity's reach,  
    I must finish my journey alone,  
Never hear the sweet music of speech—  
    I start at the sound of my own.  
The beasts that roam over the plain  
    My form with indifference see ;  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
    Their tameness is shocking to me.
  
- 3 Society, friendship, and love,  
    Divinely bestow'd upon man,  
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,  
    How soon would I taste you again !  
My sorrows I then might assuage  
    In the ways of religion and truth,  
Might learn from the wisdom of age,  
    And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

- 4 Religion ! what treasure untold  
    Resides in that heavenly word !  
More precious than silver and gold,  
    Or all that this earth can afford.  
But the sound of the church-going bell  
    These valleys and rocks never heard,  
Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,  
    Or smiled when a Sabbath appear'd.
- 5 Ye winds, that have made me your sport,  
    Convey to this desolate shore  
Some cordial endearing report  
    Of a land I shall visit no more !  
My friends, do they now and then send  
    A wish or a thought after me ?  
O tell me I yet have a friend,  
    Though a friend I am never to see !
- 6 How fleet is a glance of the mind  
    Compared with the speed of its flight !  
The tempest itself lags behind,  
    And the swift-winged arrows of light.  
When I think of my own native land,  
    In a moment I seem to be there ;  
But alas ! recollection at hand  
    Soon hurries me back to despair.
- 7 But the sea-fowl has gone to her nest,  
    The beast has laid down in his lair ;  
Even here is a season of rest,  
    And I to my cabin repair.  
There is mercy in every place,  
    And mercy, encouraging thought !  
Gives even affliction a grace,  
    And reconciles man to his lot.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE  
RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot  
To names ignoble, born to be forgot !  
In vain recorded in historic page,  
They court the notice of a future age :  
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land  
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand ;  
Lethean gulfs receive them as they fall,  
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,  
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,  
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—  
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire ;  
There goes the parson, oh ! illustrious spark,  
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk !

---

ON THE

PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.  
TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

1 ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,  
And in his sportive days,  
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,  
And Genius shed his rays.

2 See ! with united wonder, cried  
The experienced and the sage,  
Ambition in a boy supplied  
With all the skill of age !

- 3 Discernment, eloquence, and grace,  
Proclaim him born to sway  
The balance in the highest place,  
And bear the palm away.
- 4 The praise bestow'd was just and wise ;  
He sprang impetuous forth,  
Secure of conquest, where the prize  
Attends superior worth.
- 5 So the best courser on the plain,  
Ere yet he starts, is known,  
And does but at the goal obtain  
What all had deem'd his own.
- 

## ODE TO PEACE.

- 1 COME, Peace of mind, delightful guest !  
Return, and make thy downy nest  
Once more in this sad heart :  
Nor riches I nor power pursue,  
Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;  
We therefore need not part.
- 2 Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,  
From Avarice and Ambition free,  
And Pleasure's fatal wiles ?  
For whom, alas ! dost thou prepare  
The sweets that I was wont to share,  
The banquet of thy smiles ?

- 3 The great, the gay, shall they partake  
The heaven that thou alone canst make ?  
And wilt thou quit the stream  
That murmurs through the dewy mead,  
The grove and the sequester'd shed,  
To be a guest with them ?
- 4 For thee I panted, thee I prized,  
For thee I gladly sacrificed  
Whate'er I loved before ;  
And shall I see thee start away,  
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—  
Farewell ! we meet no more ?
- 

## HUMAN FRAILTY.

- 1 WEAK and irresolute is man ;  
The purpose of to-day,  
Woven with pains into his plan,  
To-morrow rends away.
- 2 The bow well bent, and smart the spring,  
Vice seems already slain ;  
But Passion rudely snaps the string,  
And it revives again.
- 3 Some foe to his upright intent  
Finds out his weaker part ;  
Virtue engages his assent,  
But Pleasure wins his heart.

- 4 'Tis here the folly of the wise  
Through all his art we view ;  
And, while his tongue the charge denies,  
His conscience owns it true.
- 5 Bound on a voyage of awful length  
And dangers little known,  
A stranger to superior strength,  
Man vainly trusts his own.
- 6 But oars alone can ne'er prevail  
To reach the distant coast ;  
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,  
Or all the toil is lost.
- 

## THE MODERN PATRIOT.

- 1 REBELLION is my theme all day ;  
I only wish 'twould come  
(As who knows but perhaps it may ?)  
A little nearer home.
- 2 Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight  
On t'other side the Atlantic,  
I always held them in the right,  
But most so when most frantic.
- 3 When lawless mobs insult the court,  
That man shall be my toast,  
If breaking windows be the sport,  
Who bravely breaks the most.

- 4 But oh! for him my fancy culls  
 The choicest flowers she bears,  
 Who constitutionally pulls  
 Your house about your ears.
- 5 Such civil broils are my delight,  
 Though some folks can't endure 'em,  
 Who say the mob are mad outright,  
 And that a rope must cure 'em.
- 6 A rope! I wish we patriots had  
 Such strings for all who need 'em—  
 What! hang a man for going mad?  
 Then farewell British freedom.

---

### REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

- 1 BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,  
 The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;  
 The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,  
 To which the said spectacles ought to belong.
- 2 So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause  
 With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;  
 While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,  
 So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.
- 3 In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,  
 And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,  
 That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,  
 Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

- 4 Then holding the spectacles up to the court—  
 Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,  
 As wide as the ridge of the Nose is ; in short,  
 Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.
- 5 Again, would your lordship a moment suppose  
 ('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)  
 That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,  
 Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then ?
- 6 On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,  
 With a reasoning the court will never condemn,  
 That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,  
 And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.
- 7 Then shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,  
 He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :  
 But what were his arguments few people know,  
 For the court did not think they were equally wise.
- 8 So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,  
 Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—  
 That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,  
 By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut !

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ON THE  
 BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,  
 TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS. BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH  
 OF JUNE 1780.

- 1 So then—the Vandals of our isle,  
 Sworn foes to sense and law,  
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile  
 Than ever Roman saw !



- 2 And MURRAY sighs o'er Pope and Swift,  
And many a treasure more,  
The well-judged purchase, and the gift  
That graced his letter'd store.
  - 3 Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,  
The loss was his alone ;  
But ages yet to come shall mourn  
The burning of his own.
- 

## ON THE SAME.

- 1 WHEN wit and genius meet their doom  
In all-devouring flame,  
They tell us of the fate of Rome,  
And bid us fear the same.
- 2 O'er MURRAY'S loss the Muses wept,  
They felt the rude alarm ;  
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept  
His sacred head from harm.
- 3 There Memory, like the bee that's fed  
From Flora's balmy store,  
The quintessence of all he read  
Had treasured up before.
- 4 The lawless herd, with fury blind,  
Have done him cruel wrong ;  
The flowers are gone—but still we find  
The honey on his tongue.

## THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED ;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.<sup>1</sup>

THUS says the Prophet of the Turk ;  
 Good Mussulman, abstain from pork ;  
 There is a part in every swine,  
 No friend or follower of mine  
 May taste, whate'er his inclination,  
 On pain of excommunication.  
 Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,  
 And thus he left the point at large.  
 Had he the sinful part express'd,  
 They might with safety eat the rest ;                   10  
 But for one piece they thought it hard  
 From the whole hog to be debarr'd ;  
 And set their wit at work to find  
 What joint the Prophet had in mind.  
 Much controversy straight arose,  
 These choose the back, the belly those ;  
 By some 'tis confidently said  
 He meant not to forbid the head ;  
 While others at that doctrine rail,  
 And piously prefer the tail.                               20  
 Thus, conscience freed from every clog,  
 Mahometans eat up the hog.  
 You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied  
 May make you laugh on t'other side.  
 Renounce the world—the preacher cries :  
 We do—a multitude replies.

<sup>1</sup> This ingenious little piece was versified from a prose story, by Cowper, during one of his fits of illness, and in an hour. Hence the common expression, 'Going the whole hog.'

While one as innocent regards  
 A snug and friendly game at cards ;  
 And one, whatever you may say,  
 Can see no evil in a play ;  
 Some love a concert, or a race ;  
 And others, shooting and the chase.  
 Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,  
 Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd ;  
 Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,  
 Yet likes a slice as well as he :  
 With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,  
 Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

27

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### THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long  
 Had cheer'd the village with his song,  
 Nor yet at eve his note suspended,  
 Nor yet when eventide was ended,  
 Began to feel, as well he might,  
 The keen demands of appetite ;  
 When, looking eagerly around,  
 He spied far off, upon the ground,  
 A something shining in the dark,  
 And knew the Glow-worm by his spark ;  
 So stooping down from hawthorn top,  
 He thought to put him in his crop.  
 The worm, aware of his intent,  
 Harangued him thus, right eloquent—  
 “ Did you admire my lamp,” quoth he,  
 “ As much as I your minstrelsy,

10



2 But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,  
 And form genteel were all in vain,  
     And of a transient date ;  
 For, caught and caged, and starved to death,  
 In dying sighs my little breath  
     Soon pass'd the wiry gate.

3 Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,  
 And thanks for this effectual close  
     And cure of every ill !  
 More cruelty could none express ;  
 And I, if you had shown me less,  
     Had been your prisoner still.

---

### THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

THE pine-apples, in triple row,  
 Were basking hot, and all in blow ;  
 A bee of most discerning taste  
 Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd ;  
 On eager wing the spoiler came,  
 And search'd for crannies in the frame,  
 Urged his attempt on every side,  
 To every pane his trunk applied ;  
 But still in vain, the frame was tight,  
 And only pervious to the light :  
 Thus having wasted half the day,  
 He trimm'd his flight another way.

10

    Methinks, I said, in thee I find  
 The sin and madness of mankind :  
 To joys forbidden man aspires,  
 Consumes his soul with vain desires ;

Folly the spring of his pursuit, 17  
 And disappointment all the fruit.  
 While Cynthia ogles, as she passes,  
 The nymph between two chariot glasses,  
 She is the pine-apple, and he  
 The silly unsuccessful bee.

The maid who views with pensive air  
 The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,  
 Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,  
 But sighs at thought of empty pockets ;  
 Like thine, her appetite is keen,  
 But ah, the cruel glass between !

Our dear delights are often such, 30  
 Exposed to view, but not to touch ;  
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,  
 We long for pine-apples in frames ;  
 With hopeless wish one looks and lingers ;  
 One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers ;  
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead  
 Can gather honey from a weed.

---

### THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

1 OH, happy shades ! to me unblest,  
 Friendly to peace, but not to me ;  
 How ill the scene that offers rest,  
 And heart that cannot rest, agree !

2 This glassy stream, that spreading pine,  
 Those alders quivering to the breeze,  
 Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,  
 And please, if anything could please,

- 3 But fix'd unalterable Care  
Foregoes not what she feels within,  
Shows the same sadness every where,  
And slights the season and the scene.
- 4 For all that pleased in wood or lawn,  
While Peace possess'd these silent bowers,  
Her animating smile withdrawn,  
Has lost its beauties and its powers.
- 5 The saint or moralist should tread  
This moss-grown alley, musing slow ;  
They seek like me the secret shade,  
But not like me to nourish woe !
- 6 Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste  
Alike admonish not to roam ;  
These tell me of enjoyments past,  
And those of sorrows yet to come.
- 

## THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

- 1 WHAT Nature, alas ! has denied  
To the delicate growth of our isle,  
Art has in a measure supplied,  
And Winter is deck'd with a smile.  
See, Mary, what beauties I bring  
From the shelter of that sunny shed,  
Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,  
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

- 2 'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,  
 Where Flora is still in her prime ;  
 A fortress to which she retreats,  
 From the cruel assaults of the clime.  
 While earth wears a mantle of snow,  
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay  
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow  
 On the beautiful bosom of May.
- 3 See how they have safely survived  
 The frowns of a sky so severe !  
 Such Mary's true love, that has lived  
 Through many a turbulent year.  
 The charms of the late-blowing rose  
 Seem graced with a livelier hue,  
 And the winter of sorrow best shows  
 The truth of a friend such as you.

---

### MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

THE lady thus address'd her spouse—  
 What a mere dungeon is this house !  
 By no means large enough ; and was it,  
 Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,  
 Those hangings with their worn-out graces,  
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,  
 Are such an antiquated scene,  
 They overwhelm me with the spleen.  
 —Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,  
 Makes answer quite beside the mark :



No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,                    11  
 Engaged myself to be at home,  
 And shall expect him at the door  
 Precisely as the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf, the lady cried  
 (And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)—  
 You are so sadly deaf, my dear,  
 What shall I do to make you hear?

Dismiss poor Harry! he replies;  
 Some people are more nice than wise;                    20  
 For one slight trespass all this stir?  
 What if he did ride whip and spur?  
 'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse  
 Will never look one hair the worse.

Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing!—  
 Child! I am rather hard of hearing—  
 Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl;  
 I tell you, you can't hear at all!  
 Then, with a voice exceeding low—  
 No matter if you hear or no.                    30

Alas! and is domestic strife,  
 That sorest ill of human life,  
 A plague so little to be fear'd,  
 As to be wantonly incurr'd,  
 To gratify a fretful passion,  
 On every trival provocation?  
 The kindest and the happiest pair  
 Will find occasion to forbear;  
 And something every day they live  
 To pity, and perhaps forgive.                    40  
 But if infirmities that fall  
 In common to the lot of all,  
 A blemish or a sense impair'd,  
 Are crimes so little to be spared—

Then farewell all that must create 45  
 The comfort of the wedded state :  
 Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,  
 And tumult, and intestine war.  
 The love that cheers life's latest stage,  
 Proof against sickness and old age, 50  
 Preserved by virtue from declension,  
 Becomes not weary of attention ;  
 But lives, when that exterior grace  
 Which first inspired the flame, decays.  
 'Tis gentle, delicate and kind,  
 To faults compassionate or blind,  
 And will with sympathy endure  
 Those evils it would gladly cure ;  
 But angry, coarse, and harsh expression 60  
 Shows love to be a mere profession ;  
 Proves that the heart is none of his,  
 Or soon expels him if it is.

---

TO THE REV. MR NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

- 1 THE swallows in their torpid state  
 Compose their useless wing,  
 And bees in hives as idly wait  
 The call of early Spring.
- 2 The keenest frost that binds the stream,  
 The wildest wind that blows,  
 Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,  
 Secure of their repose.

- 3 But man, all feeling and awake,  
The gloomy scene surveys ;  
With present ills his heart must ache,  
And pant for brighter days.
- 4 Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,  
Bids me and Mary mourn ;  
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,  
And whispers your return.
- 5 Then April, with her sister May,  
Shall chase him from the bowers,  
And weave fresh garlands every day,  
To crown the smiling hours.
- 6 And if a tear, that speaks regret  
Of happier times, appear,  
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,  
Shall shine, and dry the tear.
- 

## BOADICEA. AN ODE.

- 1 WHEN the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought, with an indignant mien,  
Counsel of her country's gods—
- 2 Sage beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief ;  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage, and full of grief.

- 3 Princess ! if our aged eyes  
    Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
    All the terrors of our tongues.
- 4 Rome shall perish—write that word  
    In the blood that she has spilt ;  
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,  
    Deep in ruin as in guilt.
- 5 Rome, for empire far renown'd,  
    Tramples on a thousand states ;  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground,—  
    Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !
- 6 Other Romans shall arise,  
    Heedless of a soldier's name ;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
    Harmony the path to fame.
- 7 Then the progeny that springs  
    From the forests of our land,  
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,  
    Shall a wider world command.
- 8 Regions Cæsar never knew  
    Thy posterity shall sway ;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
    None invincible as they.
- 9 Such the bard's prophetic words,  
    Pregnant with celestial fire,  
Bending, as he swept the chords  
    Of his sweet but awful lyre.

- 10 She, with all a monarch's pride,  
 Felt them in her bosom glow ;  
 Rush'd to battle, fought, and died ;  
 Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.
- 11 " Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
 Heaven awards the vengeance due ;  
 Empire is on us bestow'd,  
 Shame and ruin wait for you."

---

 HEROISM.

THERE was a time when *Ætna's* silent fire  
 Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire ;  
 When, conscious of no danger from below,  
 She tower'd a cloud-capp'd pyramid of snow.  
 No thunders shook with deep intestine sound  
 The blooming groves that girdled her around ;  
 Her unctuous olives and her purple vines  
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines,  
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,  
 In peace upon her sloping sides matured.  
 When on a day like that of the last doom,  
 A conflagration labouring in her womb,  
 She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth,  
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.  
 Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,  
 And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies ;  
 While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,  
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.

But oh ! what Muse, and in what powers of song, 19  
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?  
 Havoc and devastation in the van,  
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man ;  
 Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,  
 And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,  
 See it an uninform'd and idle mass ;  
 Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,  
 Or blade that might redeem it from despair.  
 Yet time at length (what will not time achieve ?)  
 Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live. 30

Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,  
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.  
 O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,  
 O charming Paradise of shortlived sweets !  
 The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round  
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :  
 Again the mountain feels the imprison'd foe,  
 Again pours ruin on the vale below ;  
 Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,  
 That only future ages can restore. 40

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,  
 Who write in blood the merits of your cause,  
 Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,  
 Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;  
 Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires  
 The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires !

Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,  
 And tells you where ye have a right to reign,  
 A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,  
 Studious of peace, their neighbour's and their own. 50  
 Ill-fated race ! how deeply must they rue  
 Their only crime, vicinity to you !

The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad ; 53  
 Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road ;  
 At every step beneath their feet they tread  
 The life of multitudes, a nation's bread ;  
 Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress  
 Before them, and behind a wilderness.

Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,  
 Attend to finish what the sword begun ; 60  
 And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,  
 And Folly pays, resound at your return.  
 A calm succeeds ;—but Plenty, with her train  
 Of heartfelt joys, succeeds not soon again ;  
 And years of pining indigence must show  
 What scourges are the the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees  
 (Such is his thirst of opulence and ease),  
 Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,  
 Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil, 70  
 Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,  
 And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art  
 Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part ;  
 And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,  
 That wealth within is ruin at the door.  
 What are ye, monarchs, laurell'd heroes, say,  
 But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway ?  
 Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,  
 Deplores the wasted regions of her globe, 80  
 And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,  
 To prove you there destroyers, as ye are.

O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,  
 Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile ;  
 Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,  
 No crested warrior dips his plume in blood ;

Where Power secures what Industry has won ; 87  
 Where to succeed is not to be undone ;  
 A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,  
 In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

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THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE  
 PLANT.

AN Oyster, cast upon the shore,  
 Was heard, though never heard before,  
 Complaining in a speech well worded,  
 And worthy thus to be recorded :—  
 Ah, hapless wretch ! condemn'd to dwell  
 For ever in my native shell ;  
 Ordain'd to move when others please,  
 Not for my own content or ease ;  
 But toss'd and buffeted about,  
 Now in the water, and now out. 10  
 'Twere better to be born a stone,  
 Of ruder shape, and feeling none,  
 Than with a tenderness like mine,  
 And sensibilities so fine !  
 I envy that unfeeling shrub,  
 Fast rooted against every rub.  
 The plant he meant grew not far off,  
 And felt the sneer with scorn enough,—  
 Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,  
 And with asperity replied :— 20  
 (When, cry the botanists, and stare,  
 Did plants call'd Sensitive grow there ?  
 No matter when—a poet's Muse is  
 To make them grow just where she chooses.)



You shapeless nothing in a dish, 25  
 You that are but almost a fish,  
 I scorn your coarse insinuation,  
 And have most plentiful occasion  
 To wish myself the rock I view,  
 Or such another dolt as you. 30

For many a grave and learned clerk,  
 And many a gay unletter'd spark,  
 With curious touch examines me,  
 If I can feel as well as he ;  
 And when I bend, retire, and shrink,  
 Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think.—  
 Thus life is spent—oh, fie upon't !—  
 In being touch'd, and crying—Don't !

A Poet, in his evening walk,  
 O'erheard and check'd this idle talk. 40  
 And your fine sense, he said, and yours,  
 Whatever evil it endures,  
 Deserves not, if so soon offended,  
 Much to be pitied or commended.  
 Disputes, though short, are far too long,  
 Where both alike are in the wrong ;  
 Your feelings in their full amount  
 Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,  
 Complain of being thus exposed ; 50  
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,  
 Save when the knife is at your throat,  
 Wherever driven by wind or tide,  
 Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,  
 Who reckon every touch a blemish,  
 If all the plants that can be found  
 Embellishing the scene around,

Should droop and wither where they grow,      59  
 You would not feel at all, not you.  
 The noblest minds their virtue prove  
 By pity, sympathy, and love :  
 These, these are feelings truly fine,  
 And prove their owner half divine.  
     His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,  
 And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

---

## THE YEARLY DISTRESS,

OR TITHING TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a Country Clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness  
 of the day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parsonage.

- 1 COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,  
     To laugh it would be wrong ;  
     The troubles of a worthy priest,  
     The burden of my song.
- 2 This priest he merry is and blithe  
     Three quarters of a year :  
     But oh ! it cuts him like a scythe,  
     When tithing time draws near.
- 3 He then is full of fright and fears,  
     As one at point to die,  
     And long before the day appears,  
     He heaves up many a sigh.

- 4 For then the farmers come jog, jog,  
    Along the miry road ;  
Each heart as heavy as a log,  
    To make their payments good.
- 5 In sooth the sorrow of such days  
    Is not to be express'd,  
When he that takes and he that pays  
    Are both alike distress'd.
- 6 Now all unwelcome at his gates  
    The clumsy swains alight,  
With rueful faces and bald pates—  
    He trembles at the sight.
- 7 And well he may, for well he knows  
    Each bumpkin of the clan,  
Instead of paying what he owes,  
    Will cheat him if he can.
- 8 So in they come—each makes his leg,  
    And flings his head before,  
And looks as if he came to beg,  
    And not to quit a score.
- 9 “ And how does miss and madam do,  
    The little boy and all ?”  
“ All tight and well. And how do you,  
    Good Mr What-d'ye-call ?”
- 10 The dinner comes, and down they sit ;  
    Were e'er such hungry folk ?  
There's little talking, and no wit ;  
    It is no time to joke.

- 11 One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,  
One spits upon the floor,  
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,  
Holds up the cloth before.
- 12 The punch goes round, and they are dull  
And lumpish still as ever ;  
Like barrels with their bellies full,  
They only weigh the heavier.
- 13 At length the busy time begins,  
“ Come, neighbours, we must wag.” —  
The money chinks, down drop their chins,  
Each lugging out his bag.
- 14 One talks of mildew and of frost,  
And one of storms of hail,  
And one of pigs that he has lost  
By maggots at the tail.
- 15 Quoth one, “ A rarer man than you  
In pulpit none shall hear :  
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,  
You sell it plaguy dear.”
- 16 O why are farmers made so coarse,  
Or clergy made so fine ?  
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,  
May kill a sound divine.
- 17 Then let the boobies stay at home ;  
’Twould cost him, I dare say,  
Less trouble taking twice the sum  
Without the clowns that pay.

## SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.

- 1 COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,  
Legends prolix delivers in the ears  
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,  
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.
- 2 Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,  
Expending late on all that length of plea  
Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,  
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.
- 3 Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside  
Both heart and head ; and couldst with music sweet  
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,  
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide  
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet  
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

<sup>1</sup> 'Henry Cowper, Esq.,' Clerk of the Lords. See Macaulay's 'Warren Hastings.'

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