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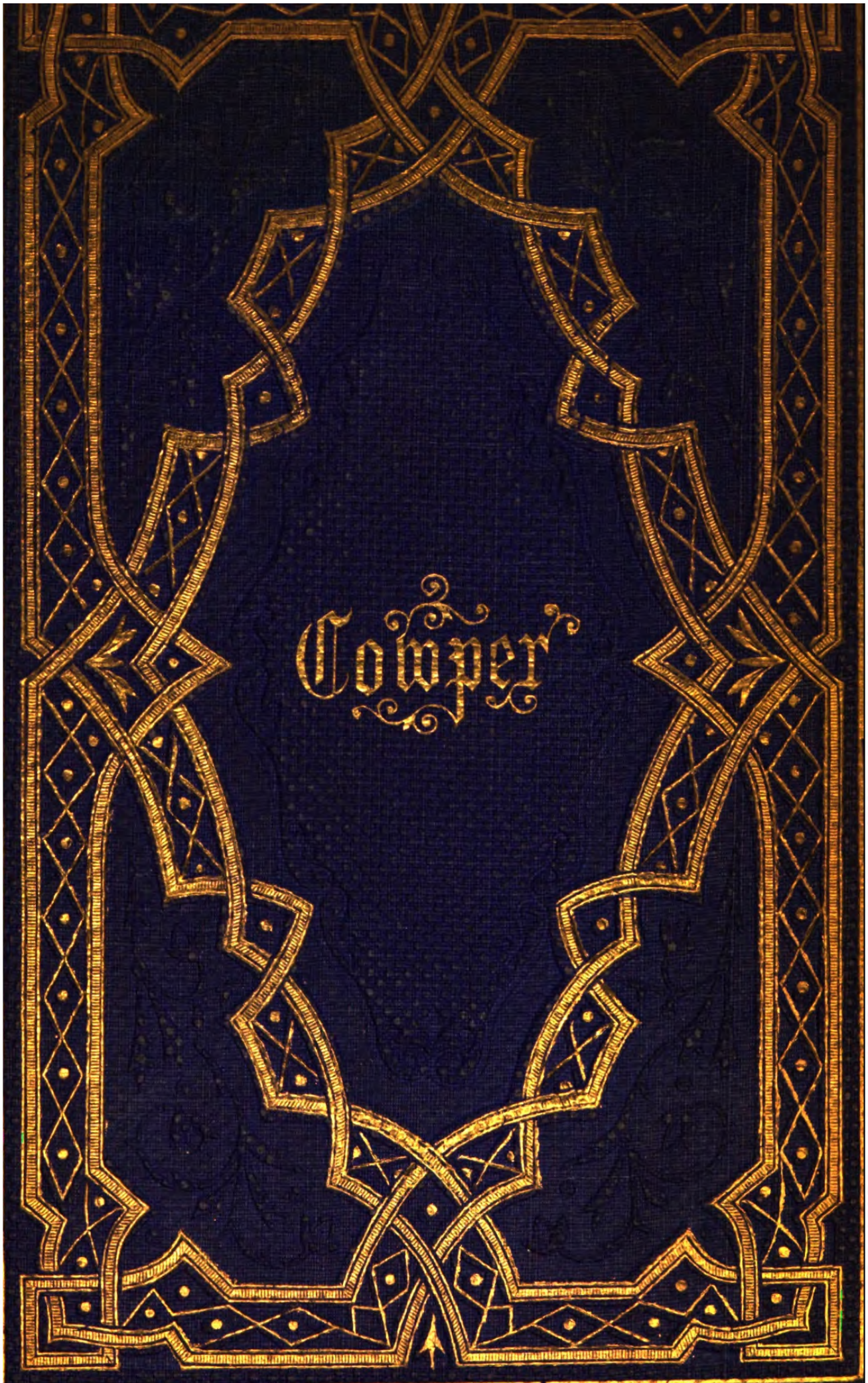
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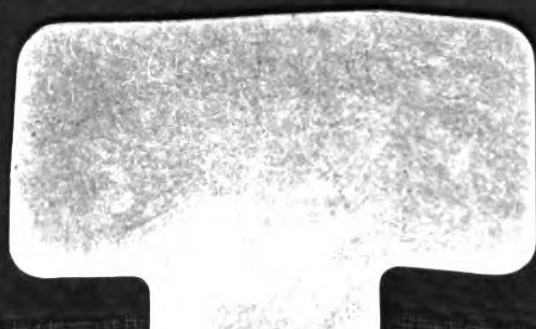


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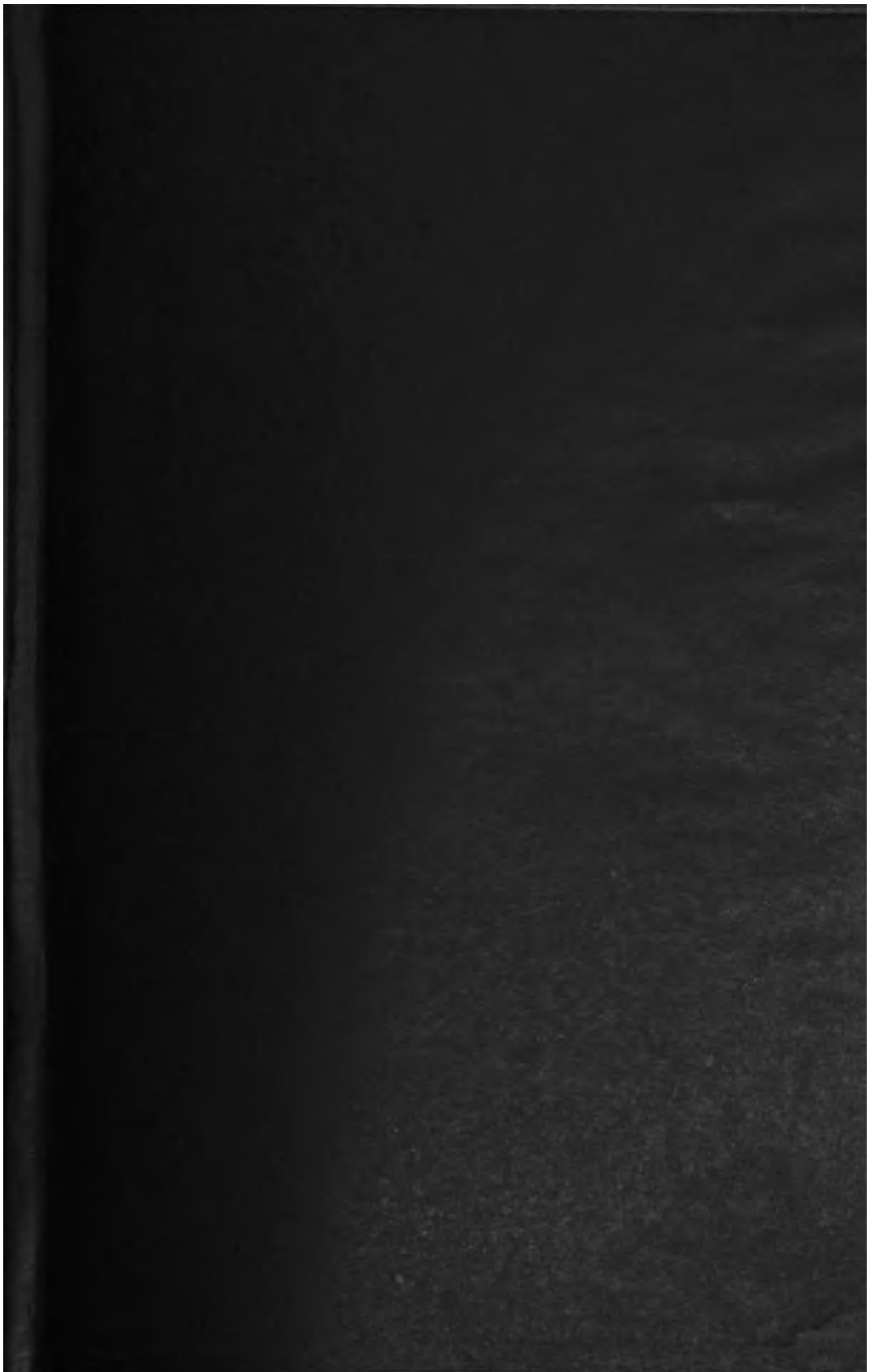




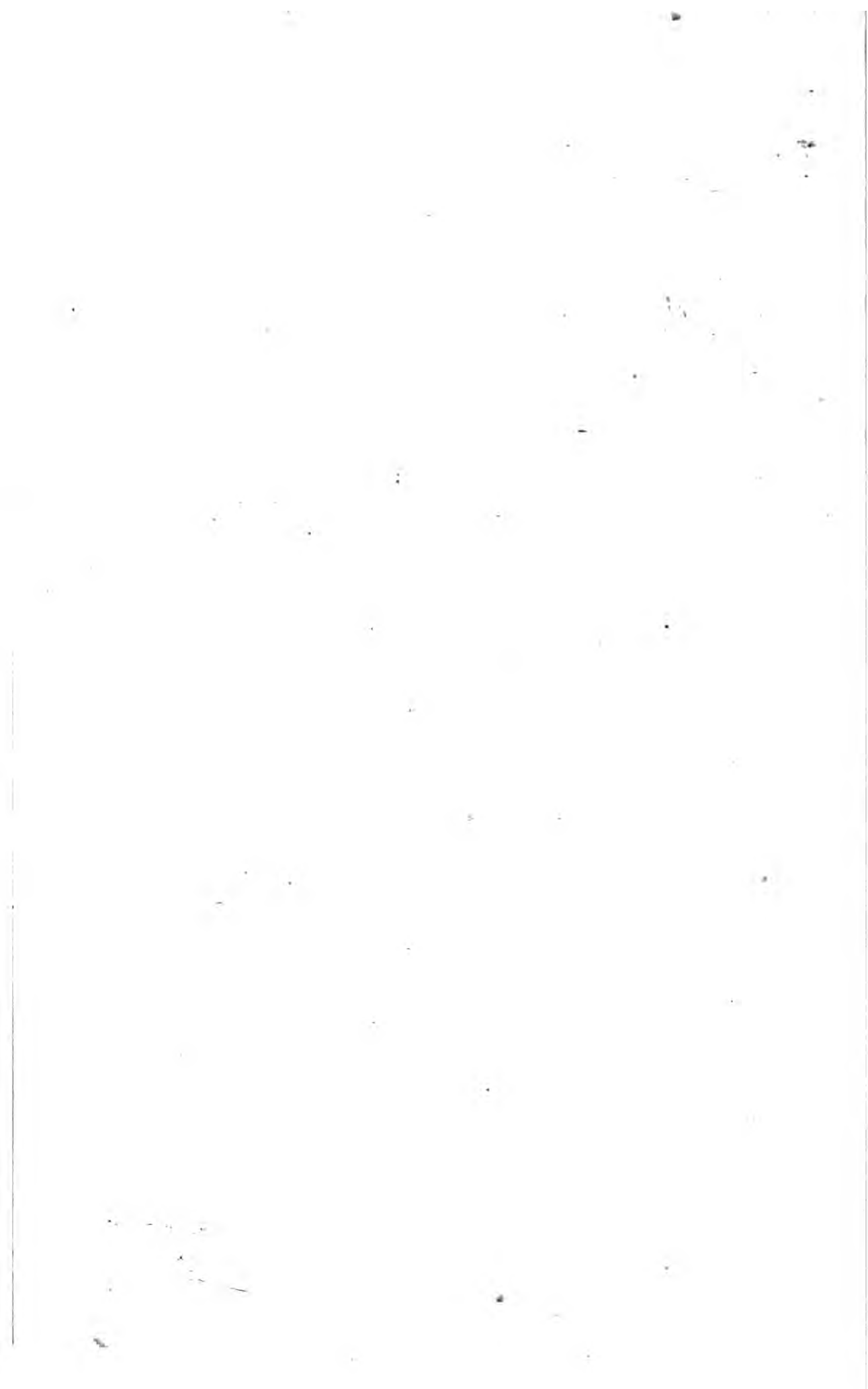
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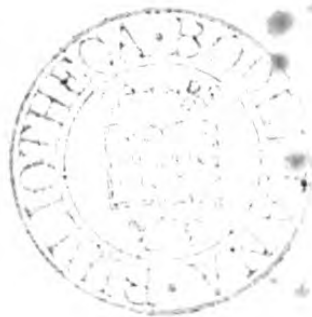
















*William Cowper*

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THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER



EDINBURGH :  
WILLIAM P. NIMMO, 250 PAUL STREET  
1803.

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280. h. 41.



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# LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER.

By J. M. ROSS.

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PROBABLY no English poet is more securely fixed in the affections of his countrymen than William Cowper, and there are few, if any, whose lives or writings are better known. Multitudes of excellent people, who positively pride themselves on their indifference to poetry in general, and consider the time devoted to its perusal in a great measure lost, make an exception in his case, and take a pleasure in reading his verse, as genuine as it is rare. The sources of this unusual popularity will be subsequently considered; in the meantime we proceed to briefly narrate the familiar and painful story of his life.

The family to which the poet belonged was one of very considerable antiquity and importance. In a letter to his friend Mrs Courtenay, [September 15, 1793,] he says that it was originally of Fifeshire in Scotland, but this statement appears, from the context, to be merely a whim of the moment, and rests on no evidence. The person who may be regarded as the poet's first historical ancestor, is a certain John Cowper, who, in the fifteenth century, possessed lands at Strode, in Sussex. Several of his descendants held the office of Sheriff of London, and one William Cowper of Ratling Court, Nonington, Kent, was made a baronet of Nova Scotia, by James I., and subsequently an English baronet. He was a thorough royalist, and suffered imprisonment in the stormy days of the Commonwealth, but lived to see the restoration of Charles II. His grandson, Sir William, had two sons, the elder of whom, also called William, became Lord Chancellor in 1707, and first Earl Cowper; and the younger, named Spencer, Chief-Justice of Chester and a Judge of the Common Pleas. Spencer's second son, John, was chaplain to George II., rector of Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, and father of the poet.



William Cowper was born at the rectory on the 26th of November 1731. He was a child of delicate constitution, and at a very early period shewed symptoms of that morbidly shy and melancholy disposition which was the root of the troubles that afflicted him in after life. In his sixth year he had the misfortune to lose his mother. The qualities for which this lady was distinguished—her piety, tenderness, and good sense—were precisely those that would have fitted her to exercise a healthy influence on her son, and one is inclined to believe, that, had she been spared to watch over, and nurture his budding childhood, his life might have been both a happier and manlier one. The impression she made on Cowper, who both in appearance and genius much resembled her, was ineffaceable. Nearly fifty years afterwards he writes, "I can truly say that not a week passes, perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day, in which I do not think of her." The exquisite lines, "*On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture out of Norfolk*," composed in 1790, bear witness to the strength and permanence of his filial affection. Immediately after her death he was sent to a public school at Market Street in Bedfordshire, kept by a Dr Pitman. It can hardly be doubted that this was a grave mistake. What the fragile, timid, affectionate boy needed, was a quiet home and some semblance of maternal solicitude. Instead of this, he was thrown, without the slightest preparation or natural fitness, into the organised anarchy of school-boy life. The thing happened that always will happen in such cases. He became the butt, the victim, of his rougher and more vigorous companions. One in particular treated him so savagely that Cowper says he was afraid to lift his eyes upon him higher than his knees, and knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress. After a residence of two years in the house of Dr Pitman, he was seized with an inflammation in his eyes. Specks appeared in both, and it was even feared that he might lose his sight altogether. He was consequently removed and placed under the care of an eminent oculist, of whose attempts to effect a cure he does not speak very favourably, yet it is certain that the progress of the disease, at least, must have been checked; for in his tenth year he was sent to Westminster School. Here he remained for seven or eight years, acquired a good knowledge of Latin and Greek, and became an excellent cricketer and player at football. Some of his companions

and contemporaries afterwards rose to eminence—for example, Impey and Warren Hastings, the famous Indian statesmen; Cumberland and Colman, the dramatists; Lloyd, the litterateur; and Churchill, the satirist,—“the great Churchill,” as Cowper reverently called him. His life at Westminster was undoubtedly happy. His biographer Southey considers it “probably the happiest in his life,” and in this opinion most persons capable of forming a sound judgment will coincide. By far the best lines in the poet’s *Tirocinium* are those commencing—

“Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
We love the play-place of our early days;”

in which he speaks fondly of the “innocent, sweet, simple years” of his school-boy life; and in one of his letters, written in a genial and wholesome mood, he has words to the same effect. But in a *Memoir*, which he drew up for the private perusal of his friend Mrs Unwin, and never intended for publication, he gives a quite different account of himself at this period. There he represents himself as extremely ready to admit the suggestions of the devil, an “adept in the infernal art of lying,” and “totally depraved” in his principles. He complains that religion was so overlooked in the school that he entirely lost what little he had brought with him. This *Memoir* is one of the saddest of Cowper’s productions. Composed under the influence of religious feelings, never of the healthiest nature, and at that particular time unusually gloomy and atrabiliar, it describes his boyish years not as they really were, guileless and glad, but as they appeared to be in the harsh judgment of a converted enthusiast, inclined to pronounce every thought and act of his former life sinful and wicked, through which there did not breathe a *conscious* piety—a piety that reflected upon, brooded over, and analysed its own religious peculiarities, and drew the lines of distinction between itself and all other spiritual conditions with pharisaic minuteness and—inaccuracy. The distortion of vision inevitable to one writing from such a point of view, deprives the *Memoir* of much biographical value on the points at issue, and forces us to regard it chiefly as a psychological curiosity. It is likely enough, with his peculiarly morbid temperament, that he had, even at this time, certain sallies and relapses of devotional feeling sufficient to account for the exaggerated reminiscences of his later years.

When nearly nineteen years of age he was apprenticed to a Mr

Chapman, an attorney in London. This was another serious mistake. No profession was less suited for such a youth, and he seems not to have made the slightest effort to overcome his aversion to it. In Mr Chapman's office he had as fellow-clerk, Thurlow, afterwards the celebrated Lord Chancellor, and both apparently spent much of their time at the house of Cowper's uncle, Mr Ashley Cowper of Southampton Row. The poet's own words, in a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, are:—"There was I and the future Lord Chancellor, constantly employed from morning to night in giggling and making giggle instead of studying the law." In his unfortunate Memoir, however, he does not forget to complain that Mr Chapman was neglectful of the duties of religion. It is, we may say in passing, one of the least amiable traits in Cowper's religious correspondence, (characteristic too of that particular class of religionists among whom he lived,) that he is perpetually finding fault with the worldliness of other people. In 1752 he left Mr Chapman's office and took chambers in the Middle Temple. It was here, when living alone, that that malady began to afflict him which subsequently produced such miserable and disastrous results. That his morbid dejection of spirits was occasionally terrible, is amply proved, but it was probably not so prolonged as he supposed. At this very time he formed an attachment to his cousin Miss Theodora Jane Cowper, (sister of Lady Hesketh,) a young lady of elegant figure and superior accomplishments; and the poems belonging to this period, especially the one written on himself, in which, describing the improved ease of his manners, he speaks of "eyeing the women," and of "making free to comment on their shapes," indicate that other thoughts and feelings at times possessed him besides those mentioned in his Memoir. Mr Ashley Cowper, however, was averse to a union between the cousins, mainly, it would appear, because his nephew had no means of keeping house. In the eyes of the vivacious Theodora, indeed, this was not a very strong objection, for when her father asked her what she would do if she married William Cowper, she gaily replied, "Do, sir? wash all day and ride out on the great dog at night." Afterwards, when the affair was growing serious, he formally refused his consent on the ground that marriage between cousins was improper. When the lovers found it impossible to overcome his opposition, they quietly submitted to their fate—parted, and never met again in life. Theodora remained



single, though she survived the poet twenty-four years; but the sincerity and depth of her affection may be imagined from the manner in which she treasured up the poems that Cowper had addressed to her, and from the constant, though secret, interest she manifested in his welfare.

In 1754 Cowper was called to the bar. It may be doubted if a more helpless creature ever went thither. Two years afterwards he lost his father, and in 1759 he removed from the Middle to the Inner Temple. When not idling (and Cowper was very fond of dreaming away his time) he spent his hours during his residence in the Temple in classical pursuits, especially in the study of Homer, and in the company of various literary associates. He was a member of the *Nonsense Club*, established for Westminster men, and limited to seven in number. Bonnell Thornton, and Colman, editors of the *Connoisseur*, belonged to it; so did Lloyd already mentioned, son of Dr Pierson Lloyd, one of the masters of Westminster School, and afterwards Chancellor of York; but the only genuine and lasting friendship which Cowper formed with any of the members, was that with Mr Joseph Hill, the solicitor. Besides assisting his brother, the Rev. John Cowper of Cambridge, in translating several of the books of Voltaire's *Henriade*, he occasionally contributed, both prose and verse, to the *Connoisseur* and to the *St James's Magazine*, edited by Lloyd, and appears also to have renewed, in some slight degree, his acquaintance with Churchill, then in the zenith of his reputation as a satirist. But, as has been justly remarked, intimacy between two men so radically different in character and conduct, was impossible. The vices of Churchill would have shocked even a less delicate and scrupulous conscience than Cowper's. The only thing they had in common was their political creed. Both were Whigs; and it is likely enough that the poet sympathised with the severity with which his old school-fellow lashed the "flagitious profligacy" of certain public personages. He speaks of him with great tenderness and immense respect.

But Cowper's slender finances were rapidly disappearing, and it soon became a matter for serious consideration what he should do to obtain a livelihood. The joint-offices of Reading Clerk and Clerk of Committees to the House of Commons becoming vacant in 1763, his kinsman, Major Cowper, the patentee of these appointments, offered them to the poet, who at once accepted them. Unhappily



for him, the House insisted on a public examination to test the fitness of the person appointed. The effect of this news upon Cowper was dreadful, and led to the most lamentable consequences. Admitting that his own account of what followed is exaggerated, and in some important particulars it has been proved to be erroneous, enough remains to convince us that it drove him headlong to insanity. After an ineffectual effort to recover his cheerfulness and sobriety of mind by a visit to Margate, he resolved to commit suicide. He has left us a painfully-minute description of his several attempts, in all of which, however, his courage fortunately failed. He was on the point of leaping into the Thames, and actually drove up to the Tower wharf for the purpose, twenty times he raised a phial of laudanum to his lips, twice he pointed a pen-knife against his heart, and thrice he tried to strangle himself with a rope—on the last occasion nearly succeeding. A sense of the enormity of his guilt at last broke in upon him. His brother hastened to his assistance. The first words of the wretched poet were, "O brother, I am damned!" It was felt necessary to remove him at once, and he was accordingly placed under the charge of Dr Cotton of St Albans, who kept an establishment there for patients of a disordered mind. The care which this good and wise physician bestowed upon Cowper had soon the most beneficial results. For a time, indeed, he became a prey to religious despair, and believed himself, as he says in some verses written during his insanity, "damned below Judas." Gradually, however, his reason returned and his health improved. At the same time his paroxysms of despair gave place to a mild and humble hope of forgiveness. He lifted his Bible again: the first verse he read was Romans iii. 25. "Immediately," he adds, "I received strength to believe." Comment upon this solemn conviction of Cowper's would be out of place, if not irreverent. *He* believed it to be the turning-point in his spiritual career—in a word, his conversion.

After a residence of eighteen months at St Albans, he went to live at Huntingdon, a quiet place at no great distance from Cambridge, where his brother resided. His relatives, who were now convinced that the poet would never be able to do anything for himself, agreed to provide him with a moderate income. Such a position is far from satisfactory; and though Cowper's case was undoubtedly very peculiar, we cannot help thinking that he exhibited a rather

unmanly facility in assenting to their kindness. It does not appear to have troubled him once in his whole life, though he occasionally refers to it in a tone of mild superficial self-upbraiding. Before leaving St Albans, he had commenced that extensive correspondence with his friends, which has resulted in our obtaining perhaps the most charming collection of letters in the English language. For ease, grace, naturalness, lively prattle, serious feeling, and good sense, they have never been surpassed. They chronicle, one may say, the daily life of Cowper, and confirm the impressions of his character and genius that we derive from his poetry.

At Huntingdon, Cowper accidentally made the acquaintance of the Unwins. This acquaintance soon ripened into the warmest friendship, and was productive of the most happy results. A more delightful family, or one better fitted for an invalid like Cowper, could not have been found. He is never weary of expatiating on their virtues. In a letter to Joseph Hill, [Oct. 25, 1765,] he thus describes them:—"He," (*i.e.*, Mr Unwin, who was clergyman of the place,) "is a man of learning and good sense and as simple as parson Adams. His wife" (the "Mary" of Cowper's poems) "has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son, who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man, and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family." One can scarcely conceive what Cowper would have been without them—probably a fractious monomaniac, or "moping owl." It was their society that sweetened his life, gave free play to his naturally amiable affections, and spread a silver lining over the sable cloud of his misfortunes. Mrs Unwin especially was the guardian angel of the troubled invalid. In November 1765 he went to board with them, a step which his inclination prompted him to adopt, but to which he was also compelled by his incapacity to manage his financial concerns. He could never keep his expenditure within his income, although his tastes were simple in the extreme. Somehow money slipped inexplicably through his fingers. In a letter [March 11, 1766] to another cousin, the wife of Major Cowper, he gives a pleasing account of the serene and pious way in which he spent his days. His mind gradually recovered its former tone, and he again displayed that mild cheerfulness and even playfulness of spirit that always marked him at his best, though it was now accompanied by a certain solem-

nity and devoutness of feeling, the result of his religious convictions.

The death of Mr Unwin, who was killed by a fall from his horse, in July 1767, produced a great, and, it must be admitted, unfortunate change in Cowper's mode of life. Along with Mrs Unwin he removed to Olney in Buckinghamshire. Their sole motive, we are informed, for selecting this spot as a residence, was their desire to be under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Newton. This intensely evangelical and energetic divine, who says himself in a letter to his friend Mr Thornton, that "he had a name in the country for preaching people mad," was unquestionably animated in all his conduct by the purest motives; but as Southey well observes, though Cowper could not have found a more sincere friend, he might have found a discreter one. He dragged "the man of trembling sensibilities" into a career of exciting parochial work, and even came to look upon him as his "curate," on account of the constancy of his attendance on the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and the zeal with which, in his visitations of such, he conducted prayer. One's indignation grows hot to see how callously the *Newtonites* (if we may so designate the "righteous overmuch" friends of the poet who have handled this point of his life) speak of his ruined peace and health; and how fervidly, on the other hand, they describe his transports of feverish devotion. In March 1770, Cowper lost his brother, an event that affected him greatly, and probably co-operated, with the unhealthy nature of the work in which he was now engaged, to bring about a repetition of his melancholy disease. A year or two afterwards Mr Newton induced him to take part in the composition of the well-known "Olney Hymns." Those which Cowper wrote—sixty-eight in number—are remarkably beautiful. Some of them, such as, "Oh, for a closer walk with God," "Hear what God the Lord hath spoken," "There is a fountain filled with blood," "The Spirit breathes upon the Word," "'Tis my happiness below," "Far from the world, O Lord, I flee," and his last, "God moves in a mysterious way," deservedly rank among the first in the English language; but it dashes our pleasure in reading them to reflect that their composition contributed materially to hasten the catastrophe alluded to. That noble hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way," was composed in June 1773, on the very eve of his renewed insanity. A



curious feature marked the approach of this second attack. He conceived a great dislike to his friend Mr Newton. It was as if some dim consciousness haunted him that the latter had something to do with his disorder. One day, however, in March, he was induced to visit him, and suddenly formed the resolution to remain. So capricious a *whirl* was, of course, only a symptom of the increase of his malady; yet, strange to say, five months were allowed to elapse before Dr Cotton was called in. By that time Cowper was quite deranged, and the old conviction had laid hold of him with all its horrible intensity, that God had doomed him to everlasting perdition. His protracted residence at Olney put Mr Newton very much about; but both he and Mrs Unwin were unremitting in their attention to the unhappy poet. In May 1774, he was sufficiently recovered to leave, but though no longer insane in the strict sense of the term, he continued for some years in a state of mental imbecility. To this clouded period of his history belongs the well-known incident of his domestication of the hares. He also "occupied himself in carpentry, and made cupboards, boxes, stools, and bird-cages; and found a healthy relaxation in gardening." Literature, too, mildly occupied his hours. He read, among other writings, those of Gray again, and expresses an opinion regarding that author which certainly proves the partial nature of his mental convalescence. "I think him," he says, "the only poet since Shakespere entitled to the character of the sublime." If John Milton is not entitled to this character, it would be difficult to say who is. In 1780, Mr Newton was translated to London, having published, shortly before his departure, the *Olney Hymns*, in the preface to which he introduced Cowper to the public, and this may be considered the poet's first literary appearance. From various causes, however, these Hymns did not attract much notice, and Cowper remained virtually unknown to the world of letters.

As his health improved, he began to addict himself still more to reading and writing. Some of his pleasant bagatelles were now composed, such as his *Report of an Adjudged Case, not to be found in any of the Books*, and in December 1780, on the suggestion of Mrs Unwin, he commenced the first of his longer poems—*The Progress of Error*. With what enthusiasm and constancy he pursued his new occupation, may be inferred from the fact that in less than four months, he had finished that and three other pieces,



*Truth, Table Talk, and Expostulation*, which together contain about 2500 lines. They are all conceived in a gravely religious and ethical spirit, but abound in couplets and passages of singular felicity, where something of the strength of Dryden is combined with more of the keenness of Pope. The social and moral abuses of the time are censured with a sharpness of wit and a sternness of invective hardly to be expected from a timid recluse like Cowper; and though the verses are occasionally marked by a kind of serious extravagance of sentiment, the good sense which they exhibit is on the whole equal to their piety. They were published along with some other poems in 1782, but were not very favourably received—the *Critical Review* pronouncing the volume “little better than a dull sermon,” and declaring that it displayed that mediocrity which neither gods nor men can tolerate! Cowper was considerably dejected, but he felt still more acutely when no notice was taken of the copy which he sent to such of his old literary friends as were still alive, Thurlow and Colman. It is characteristic of Cowper’s way of thinking at this time, that he accounted for Thurlow’s silence by the consideration that the Chancellor had “no religion.”

During the summer of 1781, Cowper made the acquaintance of Lady Austen, widow of Sir Robert Austen. Their intercourse for some time was of the most cordial and agreeable nature. The poet, (who had a great liking for the society of cultivated females,) was in point of fact quite fascinated; and in his letters praises her with unusual warmth. Lady Austen appears to have deserved his panegyrics, and it must be regarded as one of Cowper’s misfortunes that anything occurred to break off their friendship. It was she who suggested to him *The Task*, and the translation of Homer, and who told him the story of John Gilpin, which the poet turned to such admirable account. Sprightly, sensible, highly accomplished, and possessing the most generous sensibilities, she was perhaps even better suited than Mrs Unwin herself to exorcise that demon of madness, ever lurking about the brain of Cowper; but his morbid love of retirement, and his equally morbid antipathy to “worldly gaiety,” together with the absorbing interest he felt in his new literary labours, appear to have led him to entertain feelings that he could not altogether conceal; and the result was a complete rupture between the lady and himself. This event took place in 1784. It is said that Lady Austen had come to regard Cowper with feelings

of too great tenderness, that she expected, or at least hoped for, proposals of marriage, and that she was jealous of the influence of Mrs Unwin over him; but though the poet entered with great facility and zest into Platonic friendships, and constantly indulged himself in the luxury of very affectionate feelings, there is not evidence to shew that *his* attachment at least to "Sister Anne" was more than sisterly. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that Lady Austen thought otherwise.

*The Task* was published in 1785, and at once established the reputation of its author as the greatest and most original poet of his age. In some measure the way had been prepared for its favourable reception. During the previous year the ballad of *John Gilpin* had acquired an immense popularity. A celebrated actor of the time, named Henderson, had introduced it to the public of London in his recitations at Freemason's Hall. The room, we are told, was crowded upon every performance, and this success was attributed much more to John Gilpin, than to the serious part of the recitations. Mrs Siddons was present, and "lifting her unequalled, dramatic hands clapped as heartily as she herself used to be applauded." It became the common talk, was published separately, and sold everywhere in town and country, and pictures of the redoubtable horseman "were to be seen in all the print-shops." Cowper was highly delighted; all his correspondents congratulated him, even the grave Mr Newton condescended to be pleased. But the main causes of the success of *The Task* are to be sought for in itself, and in the condition of English poetry at the period. Never was the Muse so silent as in the last twenty or thirty years of the eighteenth century. Pope had been long dead, and he had left no genuine successors; Collins and Gray were also dead, and though both were possessed of an exquisitely pure genius, and may be pronounced the finest poetic artists of their age, the subjects of their verse were not calculated to awaken much interest in ordinary readers; Goldsmith had written too little, and even that little, however sweet and natural, was not decisively enough original to constitute him a reformer; Robert Burns indeed was alive, but his first volume did not appear until the following year, and even if it had been contemporary with *The Task*, the dialect in which he wrote was unintelligible to Englishmen; and south of the Border, in spite of his extraordinary powers, he would have been, at the time, as unin-

fluent for good or evil as the obscurest hack in Grub Street; the rest of Cowper's poetic contemporaries were utterly ignoble, and even their names have for the most part passed out of human remembrance. Thus he had the field entirely to himself. Of course this was not altogether an advantage. The absence of a supply in such a case argues the absence of a demand. Poets do not come to us by accident; they spring up in answer to the deep desires of a people, and if they are not found at a particular period it is because they are not then wanted. The temper of the age, so to speak, was not poetical. A singular dulness had crept over the national mind, or at least over the national sensibilities. The Church was dead asleep, and Wesley's vehement evangelisation was only a rough attempt to rouse her from her slumbers. In the country, it was the golden age of squirearchy. The peasantry were submissive and stupid; the country-gentlemen, kindly, homely, and honest, as they have always been, but immersed in rural pleasures, and in many instances nearly as illiterate as the swains themselves. The town (*i.e.*, London) was intolerably gay, and its dissipation unrelieved, as at present, by the counteracting influences of a wide-spread art and science. The French Revolution had to come before the hearts of men could be set on fire again and poetry deepen into a passion. Cowper had thus to encounter no small difficulties. His readers were not in a condition to vividly sympathise. But his peculiarity lay in this, that he did not make any powerful demand on their sympathies. His thoughts were neither mystical nor profound; they were not even subtle or warmly poetical. Seldom indeed has so genuine a poet possessed so poor an imagination. He was as far as possible from realising his own description of the poet:—

“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.”

Collins's *Ode to the Passions*, though small in compass, in point of imaginative genius far transcends everything that Cowper wrote. Nature (whether animate or inanimate) revealed nothing to him that it did not reveal to the humblest of his readers. The plainness, even the *hardness*, of his landscape and figure painting is per-



fectly astonishing. Let any one study, for instance, in the *Winter Morning Walk*, (Fifth Book of *The Task*,) the poet's description of his own appearance as he moves across "the dazzling deluge" of hardened snow, and the more minute and elaborate picture of the woodman,

"Leaving unconcern'd  
The cheerful haunts of men ; to wield the axe  
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear  
From morn to eve his solitary task,"—

and he will at once admit the truth of our observation. There is a total absence of those fine suggestive analogies between the outer world of appearances and the inner world of thought, the perception of which invests the former with a most mysterious beauty, and thrills the soul with an exquisite joy. "The light that never was on sea or shore" does not once play upon his page. Even the ordinary simile, with which every poet is wont at intervals to decorate his verse, is wanting. But, on the other hand, there was a quiet unaffected love of common English scenery, of green fields, and river banks, of woodlands and leafy lanes, of domestic peace and fireside joys, in Cowper's poem that everybody could appreciate and relish, without supposing himself sentimental ; and his diction was so clear, picturesque, and nervous, that it was impossible to deny its charm. It was the complete opposite of the tumid splendour of Thomson's style. The versification of *The Task* had also something very attractive about it. It was quite original, and possessed a wonderful flexibility, pitched for the most part in a kind of quick-changing conversational tone, but rising often into a noble energy, and at times condensing itself, especially at the close of an animated passage, in a line of sharp ringing strength, the sound of which lingers long on the ear. But it was not only the freshness and healthiness of Cowper's feeling for nature, his strong love of indoor comfort and happiness, and his power of facile rhythm, that gave *The Task* its remarkable popularity ; probably to a still greater extent this was due to the religious spirit that pervades it. Whatever English society itself may be, it has a decided bias in favour of religious literature, and heartily admires those authors who are serious, moral, and pious, or who even write as if they were. It does not demand or desire mystics or transcendentalists like France and Germany, but writers of clear biblical views, strong practical



convictions, and hearty in their hatred of ecclesiastical and social abuses. Such persons, if they happen to possess talent or genius, (often indeed when they have neither,) exercise a potent influence upon the middle classes of Englishmen. In this class Cowper stands pre-eminent. None has written more forcibly or pungently against the foibles, faults, and vices of his countrymen. He denounces the slave-trade, gin-drinking, fox-hunting, balls, theatres, card-playing, church-hirelings, the luxurious habits of the rich, the rude vices of the poor, the profligacy of cities, the swagger, the swearing, and the drunkenness of soldiers—quite in the style of an eloquent platform-lecturer, and one feels as if the proper conclusion to his poetic perorations on these topics was “loud applause.” There is, however, a common-sense gravity and seriousness in his animadversions calculated to command respect and win approval. He is thoroughly earnest, downright, and practical in what he says; and to this day such lines as those in which he describes with simple dignity the genuine preacher—

“In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,  
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,” &c.,

or lashes with satiric scorn

“The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;  
Cry—Hem! and reading what they never wrote,  
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,  
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene;”

are, not without reason, among the most admired and best-known in the language. The religious world found in Cowper a powerful ally, and prized him accordingly. He had just as much poetry, wit, humour and sentiment as fitted him to illustrate without veiling in doubtful haze the truths of Christianity. There is nothing fantastic, *outré*, or heretical about him; all is as orthodox as a sermon. Before his day England had produced no great poet whose piety was of a popular kind, for Milton—the only seeming instance to the contrary—was too grandly imaginative, too richly adorned with classic learning, and too scanty in his didactic precepts, to be sincerely appreciated by the mass. Cowper occupied a far lower level, but he was for that very reason much nearer to his readers, who could understand him as easily as they did their clergyman on Sundays. Another element of attractiveness closely allied to those we have

mentioned, in fact, the basis of the whole, was the intensely *English* character of his genius. It was no mere parade of patriotic feeling that made him exclaim—

“England! with all thy faults I love thee still!”

There have been many English poets who have entertained a deeper, more passionate, more tender sentiment for their native land than Cowper was capable of; but there is naturally something so broadly humane in the genius of poetry that, even where the themes are purely local, a cosmopolitan spirit breathes out, that makes the whole world kin, as in the songs of Robert Burns. Cowper, however, has nothing of this; he is exclusively national. Except in occasional political and philanthropical allusions, he does not seem conscious that there is a world of living beings, with other ideas and aims than his, beyond the English Channel. One is keenly conscious of a certain insularity of tone in his writings, and can readily comprehend why he is not, and never will be, much cared for on the Continent. Yet this very insularity is one of his charms for English readers, and in those moods when we are weary of speculation and subtle fancies, and seek for something more simple and clear, there are few finer pleasures than listening to the quiet stream-like murmur of his muse as it passes from object to object and from scene to scene.

One of the happiest results to Cowper personally of the publication of his new poem was the renewal of his intercourse with his relatives. This had been broken off years before by the change that had taken place in his views of life. The morbidly serious character of his correspondence, the habit of gloomy exhortation into which he had fallen; the perpetual undertone of insinuation that they were not good enough, had offended them, for it seemed under the circumstances wholly uncalled for; but *The Task*—revealing as it did so unmistakably the entire nature of the man, shewing him to be essentially a sound and vigorous thinker, playful as well as truthful, warm in his social no less than in his religious feelings, and as sarcastic as any city wit—reawakened affections that were dormant but not dead. Lady Hesketh—one of the kindest and best friends the poet ever had—was the first to write to him, and Cowper answered her in the most amiable spirit. Before this, and shortly after his rupture with Lady Austen, he had made the ac-

quaintance of a family living at Weston, near Olney—the Throckmortons. They were Roman Catholics, but that did not prevent Cowper from becoming strongly attached to them. In a letter to Mr Unwin, he says that “it is not possible to conceive a more engaging and agreeable character than the gentleman’s, or a more consummate assemblage of all that is called good-nature, complaisance, and innocent cheerfulness than is to be seen in the lady.” So far did he carry his regard that he even struck out some lines in the *Expostulation*, containing an attack on the Papacy, and substituted others in their place. In June 1786 Lady Hesketh came to Olney to pay him a visit. “I am fond of the sound of bells,” says Cowper, “but was never more pleased with those of Olney than when they rang her into her new habitation.” She quickly discovered that her cousin was weary of Olney, and sighed for a little of that lively intercourse with his fellow-creatures, which in his darker moods he was wont to denounce as worldly gaiety. A house was taken at Weston-Underwood, belonging to the Throckmortons, and Cowper soon became as cheerful as he had formerly been melancholy. This projected change in his mode of life, however, gave great umbrage to the Rev. Mr Newton, who, in a letter to Mrs Unwin, protested against their removal, in a way that can only be characterised as insolent in the extreme. He accused both of now leading a life unbecoming the gospel, inasmuch as they kept company with Roman Catholics, and rode occasionally in Lady Hesketh’s carriage, while Cowper himself was sometimes guilty of taking a walk on Sunday, either alone or accompanied with his cousin. He doubted whether the poet was really restored to Christian privileges, and concluded by warning him that there was still intercourse between London and Olney—a shabby threat that the poet was under a pious espionage! Cowper was justly indignant, and it speaks volumes for the generosity of his friendship that he replied to this outrage in the gentlest and most courteous terms.

Cowper had scarcely been installed in his new abode, when he received news of the death of the younger Mr Unwin. Mrs Unwin bore the loss of her son with Christian fortitude, and Cowper tried to do so, but his shattered system could not sustain the shock. His insanity returned, and once more the thought of suicide took possession of his brain. After six months he suddenly recovered—resumed his literary labours—the most important of which was his



translation of Homer—and entered cheerfully into the pleasures of social intercourse. The first letter he wrote after his recovery was to his friend Samuel Rose thanking him for a copy of Burns's poems. The kind of life led by the inmates of Weston-Underwood at this time is pleasantly sketched in a letter of Rose's to his sister Harriet, Oct. 25, 1788:—"We rise at whatever hour we choose; breakfast at half after nine, take about an hour to satisfy the *sentiment* not the *appetite*, for we talk—'good heavens, how we talk,' and enjoy ourselves most wonderfully. Then we separate, and dispose of ourselves as our different inclinations point. Mr Cowper to Homer; Mr R. to transcribing what is already translated; Lady Hesketh to work, and to books alternately; and Mrs Unwin, who in everything but her face is like a kind angel sent from heaven to guard the health of our poet, is busy in domestic affairs. At one our labours finished, the poet and I walk for two hours. . . . At three we return and dress, and the succeeding hour brings dinner upon the table, and collects again the smiling countenances of the family to partake of the neat and elegant meal. Conversation continues till tea-time, when an entertaining volume engrosses our thoughts till the last meal is announced. Conversation again, and then rest before twelve to enable us to rise again to the same round of innocent virtuous pleasure." The translation of *Homer* appeared in 1791, and was well received. Written in blank verse, it was, almost as a matter of course, far more literal than the glittering and sonorous paraphrase of Pope, yet it cannot be said to have superseded the latter; nor is it by any means clear that it deserves to do so. Cowper had, indeed, a truer appreciation than his predecessor of the noble simplicity and strength of the Greek, but his resolution to be strictly literal made it impossible for him to give anything like a proper conception of its swift melodious majesty; hence, though Pope's music is certainly not Homer's music, it probably conveys to the unclassical reader a better idea of the power and harmony of the original than the bald and rugged version of Cowper. The poet, however, received abundant praise. Among others, his old companion Thurlow, breaking the silence of many years, opened up a correspondence with him, and declared, greatly to his delight, that he was now clearly convinced that Homer could be best translated *without* rhyme. Cowper's publisher now proposed that he should undertake an edition of Milton, which the poet

consented to do, but soon grew weary of the labour of annotation, and the work was indefinitely postponed. It was, however, the means of introducing him to Hayley, (afterwards his biographer,) or rather of introducing Hayley to him. About the same time he fell into a curious delusion which one is inclined to consider a symptom of the return of his old malady. It was shared by his aged friend Mrs Unwin, now rapidly breaking down both in body and mind. Cowper began to have strange dreams, and heard voices in the night-time, whose words he noted down and sent to a belated schoolmaster named Samuel Teedon, who believed himself, and whom the poet and his Mrs Unwin also believed, to be gifted by Heaven with the power of interpreting them. At an earlier period, Cowper himself had seen through this silly oneiromantic personage, and describes himself as sweating under the grossness of his flattery, but now, when his faculties were about to enter upon their last decay, he consulted him with pitiable earnestness. In August 1792, the poet and Mrs Unwin, who had twice suffered a paralytic shock, were persuaded by Mr Hayley to visit him at Eartham in Sussex, and for some time both seemed the better of the change of air and scene. Cowper's literary activity revived, and he and Hayley worked together on the projected edition of *Milton* quite vigorously. He returned to Weston in September, after which Mrs Unwin rapidly grew worse. Cowper's devotion to his old friend is exquisitely touching. The more her reason became obscured, the more exacting she became, but the poet, who remembered the patient love with which she had tended him in his hours of agony, could only reply by increased solicitude. What deep and sorrow-laden affection swelled his bosom may be seen from his little poem *To Mary*, written while watching her life slowly settling down into night. It is a miracle of sweet, pathetic tenderness, but Cowper could only write so feelingly when his heart was strongly stirred. In the midst of his trying work his own intellect gave way. He believed it to be his duty to inflict upon himself severe penance for his sins, and for six days he refused to taste almost any food, or to utter a single word. While in this miserable condition a letter arrived from Lord Spencer announcing that his majesty had granted the poet a pension of £300 per annum, but it was not considered advisable to inform him of the news. \* In the summer of 1795 Mrs Unwin and he were removed to North Tuddenham in Norfolk, to be near Cowper's maternal relatives, the



Johnsons, to whom, though his intercourse with them was of comparatively late date, he had now become extremely attached. Afterwards they took up their residence at Dunham Lodge, and finally at East Dereham in the same county, where, on the 17th of December 1795, Mrs Unwin calmly expired. After one passionate burst of grief Cowper grew calm and never afterwards mentioned her name. He resumed in a feeble way his pen, devoting himself chiefly to a revisal of his *Homer*, which he completed about the close of 1798. The last original poem he wrote was the *Castaway*. His own works were now read to him by Mr Johnson. "He listened to them," we are told, "in silence, till they came to *John Gilpin*, which he begged not to hear." It breathed too happy a humour for poor Cowper, who was about to leave the world in that spiritual gloom which had so often shrouded his pure but morbid soul. In the beginning of 1800 symptoms of dropsy appeared, and the physician was called in, but his skill could avail nothing, and on the afternoon of April 25, the sorely tried and worn-out poet passed into the final rest.



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# COWPER'S POETICAL WORKS.

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## TABLE TALK.

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### ARGUMENT.

True and false glory—Kings made for man—Attributes of royalty in England—Quevedo's satire on kings—Kings objects of pity—Inquiry concerning the cause of Englishmen's scorn of arbitrary rule—Character of the Englishman and the Frenchman—Charms of freedom—Freedom sometimes needs the restraints of discipline—Reference to the riots in London—Tribute to Lord Chatham—Political state of England—The vices that debase her portend her downfall—Political events the instruments of Providence—The poet disclaims prophetic inspiration—The choice of a mean subject denotes a weak mind—Reference to Homer, Virgil, and Milton—Progress of poesy—The poet laments that religion is not more frequently united with poetry.

"Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,  
Abjicito." Hor. Lib 1. Ep. 18

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;  
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  
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;

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,  
 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!  
 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 shoulderknot 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;  
 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,  
 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;  
 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—  
 Blest country! where these kingly glories shine;  
 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 that hate his gentle reign,  
 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, 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 in full view."  
 "Indeed!" replied the Don, "there are but few."  
 His black interpreter the charge disdain'd;—  
 "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,  
 And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,  
 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,  
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  
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;  
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,  
Encompassing his throne a few short years;  
If the guilt 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 struck to stone,  
While condescending majesty looks on;  
If monarchy consist in such base things,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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  
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 stock-jobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme  
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.  
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 syren sung.  
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.  
Winter invades the spring, and often pours  
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;  
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,

\* James Brindley, the projector of the system of inland navigation and the engineer of the famous Bridgewater Canal. Mr Brindley died at Turnhurst, in Staffordshire, on the 27th September 1772.

Ungential 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,  
 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.  
 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.  
 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,  
 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 ilse.

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.

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 field 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 ;  
 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,  
 Guards well what arts and industry have won,  
 And Freedom claims him for her firstborn 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,  
 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.  
 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 curveting 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.  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 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.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;  
 Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;  
 May no foes ravage 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.

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  
 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.



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.  
'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.

The stream that feeds the well-spring of the heart  
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,  
Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine  
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.

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.  
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.

\* Dr John Brown, the author of *Essays on Shaftesbury's Characteristics*, and a great variety of other works, published his famous *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, exposing the selfish effeminacy of the higher ranks, in 1757. It ran through several editions in a very short time. Brown committed suicide in September 1766, in his fifty-first year.

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,  
 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,  
 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;  
 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!  
 Oh, learn from our example and our fate—  
 Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late!"

Not only vice disposes and prepares  
 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,  
 Are but His rods to scourge a guilty land,  
 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 a seal of wrath, press'd down,  
 Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,  
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:  
 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;  
 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?

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,  
 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,  
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,  
 The storm of music shakes th' 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.  
 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,\*  
 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.

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 tintinabulum of rhyme,  
 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,  
 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,

\* At Westminster School Cowper speaks of this custom in one of his letters ;—"I was a schoolboy in high favour with the master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form for the admiration of all who were able to understand it."



And every effort ends in push-pin play.  
 The man that means success, should soar above  
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ;  
 Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,  
 The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream.  
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—  
 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.  
 Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,  
 And shot a day-spring 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 shew far off their shining plumes again.

A. Is genius only found in epic lays ?  
 Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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.  
 '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.  
 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 ;  
 But when the second Charles assumed the sway,  
 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.  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 And every warbler has his tune by heart.  
 Nature imparting her satiric gift,  
 Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,  
 With droll sobriety they raise a smile  
 At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.  
 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, shews 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 And so disdain'd the rules he understood,  
 The laurel seem'd to wait on his command,  
 He snatch'd it rudely from the Muse's 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)  
 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  
 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.  
 Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.

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.

## ARGUMENT.

Origin of error—Man endowed with freedom of will—Motives for action—Attractions of music—The chase—Those amusements not suited to the clergy—Case of Occiduus—Force of example—Due observance of the Sabbath—Cards and dancing—The drunkard and the coxcomb—Folly and innocence—Hurtful pleasures—Virtuous pleasures—Effects of the inordinate indulgence of pleasure—Dangerous tendency of many works of imagination—Apostrophe to Lord Chesterfield—Our earliest years the most important—Fashionable education—The grand tour—Accomplishments have taken the place of virtue—Qualities requisite in a critic of the Bible—Power of the press—Solicitude of enthusiasm to make proselytes—Fondness of authors for their literary progeny—The blunderer impatient of contradiction—Moral faults and errors of the understanding reciprocally produce one another—The cup of pleasure to be tasted with caution—Force of habit—The wanderer from the right path directed to the Cross.

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

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.  
Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,  
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,  
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,  
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;  
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;  
 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;  
 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,  
 Those call him loudly to pursuit of more;  
 His unexhausted mine, the sordid vice  
 Avarice shews, 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;  
 Hourly allurements on his passions press,  
 Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!  
 Oh, 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, th' enchantment was begun,  
 And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,  
 Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

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,  
 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,  
 Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,  
 For persevering chase and headlong leaps,  
 True beagle as the staunchest 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;  
 '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,  
 Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.  
 What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down  
 With the same ease the 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,  
 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 way-mark in the road to bliss?  
 Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,  
 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  
 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 e'en Occiduus more,)  
 Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet  
 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 !  
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

O Italy ! Thy sabbaths will be soon  
 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,  
 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.*

Oh the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,

The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again.  
 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.  
 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,  
 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,  
 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-and-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.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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?  
 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,  
 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;  
 Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,  
 Need help, let honest industry provide.  
 Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart;  
 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?  
 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.  
'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 women, 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.

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.  
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.

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,  
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream  
With sentimental frippery and dream,  
Caught in a delicate soft silken net  
By some lewd earl, or rakehell 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,  
 Though all your engineering proves in vain  
 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.

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 ! \* 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,  
 Abhor'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.  
 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 ;  
 One sad epistle thence may cure mankind  
 Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,  
 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 ;  
 And without discipline the favourite child,  
 Like a neglected forester, runs wild.  
 But we, as if good qualities would grow

\* Lord Chesterfield.

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,  
 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,  
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,  
 And steeples towering high, much like our own ;  
 But shew 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  
 For men of their appearance and address,  
 With much compassion undertake the task  
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask ;  
 Points to inscriptions whereso'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 shews,  
 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.

Strange the recital ! from whatever cause  
 His great improvement and new light 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,  
 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.  
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,  
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.

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 be gone a cup too far,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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!—  
 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.

\* Anthony Leuwenhoeck, a Dutch philosopher, who acquired considerable celebrity by the discoveries he made in natural history through the use of the microscope. He died at Leyden in 1723, at the great age of ninety-one.



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

Ye ladies ! (for, indifferent in your cause,  
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,  
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.  
He views it with complacency supreme,  
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, whose story serves at least to shew  
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,  
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,  
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 ;  
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.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,

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,  
 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;  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
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.

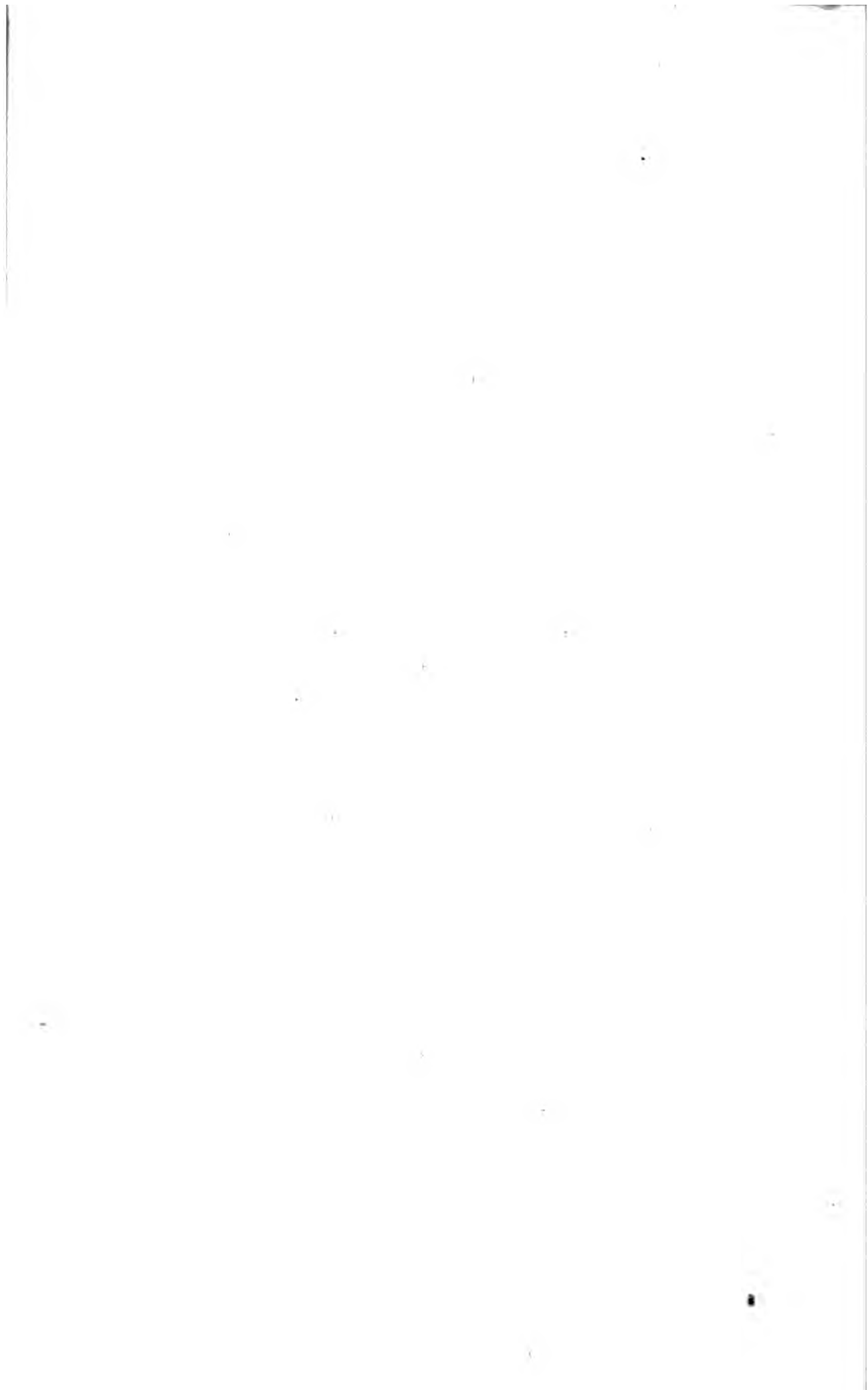
I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—  
The Cross once seen is death to every vice ;  
Else He that hung there suffer'd all His pain,  
Bled, groan'd, and agonised, and died in vain.





**THE TASK.**

**In Six Books,**



# THE TASK.

## BOOK I.—THE SOFA.

### ARGUMENT.

**Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the sofa—A schoolboy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commenced—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced—Gipsies—The blessings of civilised life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilised life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.**

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 an 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 slack breeches were not; satin smooth,  
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  
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,  
 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 piony spread wide,  
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,  
 Lap-dog 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  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
 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 ere our rugged sires  
 Complain'd, though incommoiously pent in,  
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first

\* A skein of yarn or worsted.



'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;  
 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  
 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,  
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk are sweet,  
 Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.

Oh 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,  
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm  
 Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk  
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' 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,  
 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,  
 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 .  
 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 of my walks,\*  
 Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive  
 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 knowest my praise of nature most sincere,  
 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  
 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,

\* Mrs Unwin.

That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;  
 While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
 That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,  
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;  
 Displaying on its varied side the grace  
 Of hedge-row 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 :  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 Devised the weather-house, that useful toy !  
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains  
 Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself,  
 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,  
 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  
 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 ;  
 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*.  
 If solitude makes 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,  
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.  
 Thanks to Benevolus—he spares me yet  
 These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,  
 And, though himself so polish'd, still relieves  
 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,  
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  
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd  
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  
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 sunburnt hay-field, 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,  
Diversified with trees of every growth,  
Alike, yet various. Here the grey, 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,  
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,

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.  
 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,  
 But that the lord 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.  
 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,  
 And darkening, and enlightening, as the leaves  
 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  
 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  
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.  
Its own revolency 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 fresh'ning 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,  
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm  
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes  
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,  
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,  
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 shews, 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  
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;  
 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 shews 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  
 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:  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
 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 cypher, while her proxy plays.  
 Others are dragg'd into the crowded room  
 Between supporters; and, once seated, sit  
 Through downright inability to rise,  
 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.  
 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.

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 noontide bed:  
 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,

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,  
 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,  
 Greeted with three cheers exulting. At his waist  
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shews,  
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.  
 The common, overgrown with fern, and rough  
 With prickly goss, 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  
 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  
 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  
 More tatter'd still ; and both but ill conceal  
 A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.  
 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  
 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 shews a tawny skin,  
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.  
 Great skill have they in palmistry, and more  
 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 brutalise 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,  
 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.  
 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;  
 Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,  
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs  
 (If e'er she spring 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;  
 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,  
 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,  
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.  
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,  
 Thee, gentle savage!\* whom no love of thee  
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,  
 Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw  
 Forth from thy native bowers, to shew 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,  
 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,)  
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart  
 And spiritless, as never to regret  
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.  
 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.

\* Omai.

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.  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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 so'er she will,  
 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  
 As London, opulent, enlarged, and still  
 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 shew 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  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
 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.

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 BOOK II.—THE TIME-PIECE.

## ARGUMENT.

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

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.  
 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;  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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. 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 from above,  
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,

Have kindled beacons in the skies, and the old  
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits  
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 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 heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.  
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,  
While God performs upon the trembling stage  
Of His own works His dreadful part alone.  
How doth 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.  
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,  
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.  
 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,  
 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—  
 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,  
 That even a judgment making way for thee,  
 Seems in their eyes, a mercy for thy sake.  
 Such evil 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  
 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.  
 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.

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,  
 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 wills it. God proclaims  
 His hot displeasure against foolish men  
 That live an atheist life : involves the heaven  
 In tempests, quits His grasp upon the winds,  
 And gives them all their fury ; bids a plague  
 Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,  
 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  
 And principles ; of causes, how they work  
 By necessary laws their sure effects ;  
 Of action and reaction. 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  
 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  
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  
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 effeminates, 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  
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 th' 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  
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,  
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.  
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,  
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.  
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 shew the shame ye might conceal at home,  
In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate,  
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  
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,—  
T' arrest the fleeting images that fill  
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,  
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.  
 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?  
 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,  
 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  
 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!  
 But hark,—the Doctor's voice!—fast wedged between  
 Two empirics he stands, and with swollen cheeks



Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far  
 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  
 The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.  
 He grinds divinity of other days  
 Down into modern use; transforms old print  
 To zigzag 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—  
 Grand caterer and drynurse 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,  
 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,  
 And start theatric, practised at the glass.  
 I seek divine simplicity in him  
 Who handles things divine ; and all beside,  
 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-bestrid.  
 Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,  
 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 straggl'g 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.

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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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 ta'en in charge. He would not stoop  
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,  
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

Oh, 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  
 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,  
 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.  
 In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth  
 And spring-time of the world; asked, 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  
 A Deity could solve. Their answers vague,  
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,  
 Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life  
 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.  
 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!  
 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 for 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,  
 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  
 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  
 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 ?  
 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. Plankshaven 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  
 A form not now gymnastic as of yore,  
 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,  
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  
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,  
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?  
A man of 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,  
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,  
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  
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  
 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.  
 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,  
 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 sire.  
 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  
 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 worse effects,  
 Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds,  
 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 ;

Since all alike are selfish—why not they?  
 This does Profusion, and th' accursèd cause  
 Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,  
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth  
 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  
 The head of modest and ingenuous worth  
 That blush'd at his 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;  
 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.  
 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  
 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  
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,  
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,  
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.  
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—  
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, 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  
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,  
And give the world their talents and themselves,  
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  
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  
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,  
Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,  
And the land stank, so numerous was the fry.

## BOOK III.—THE GARDEN.

## ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof—Address to domestic happiness—Some account of myself—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise—Justification of my censures—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions—Domestic happiness addressed again—Few lovers of the country—My tame hare—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden—Pruning—Framing—Greenhouse—Sowing of flower-seeds—The country preferable to the town even in the winter—Reasons why it is deserted at that season—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

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 finds a greensward smooth  
 And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
 He chirrup brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
 And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;  
 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,  
 Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,  
 If toil awaits 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,  
 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 apprised,  
 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 oftentimes proof of wisdom, when the fault  
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

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.  
 Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,  
 That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist  
 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  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 Desirous to return, and not received ;  
 But was a wholesome rigour in the main,  
 And taught th' 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. Then he that sharp'd,  
 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,  
 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, (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,  
 (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 burn'd 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  
 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.  
 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 chace 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,  
 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  
 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  
 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.  
 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.  
 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  
 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,  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
 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.  
 God never meant that man should scale the heavens  
 By strides of human wisdom. In His works,  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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



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,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
Domestic life in rural pleasure 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.  
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  
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  
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,  
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  
 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,  
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
 Yes,—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
 That feeds thee ; thou mayst 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,  
 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—  
 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  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph  
 Which neatly she prepares ; then to his book  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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.  
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,

And hence even Winter fills his wither'd hand  
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.  
 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  
 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,  
 And at this moment unessay'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,  
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,  
 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,  
 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  
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  
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,  
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass  
Diffused, attain the surface: when behold!  
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  
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 fermentation, and invite the seed.  
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,  
And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
Diminutive, well filled 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.  
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,  
 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 fertilising meal  
 From flower to flower, and even the breathing air  
 Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.  
 Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art  
 Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass  
 The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have  
 His dainties, and the world's more numerous half  
 Lives by contriving delicacies 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,  
 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  
 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 greenhouse 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  
 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  
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  
Caffraria: 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,  
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  
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,  
And covetous of Shakspeare'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,  
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,  
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  
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 shews,  
And most attractive, is the fair result  
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.  
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,  
Forecasts the future whole; that 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,  
For interest sake, the living to the dead.  
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far-diffused  
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,  
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.

Oh, 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  
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?  
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  
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  
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 Sushan, 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,  
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.  
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,  
She loses all her influence. Cities then  
Attract us, and neglected nature pines,  
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.  
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd  
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?  
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,  
That had survived the father, served the son.  
Now the legitimate and rightful lord  
Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd,  
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'ercharg'd  
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  
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,  
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,

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.  
 'Tis finish'd ! and yet, finish'd as it seems,  
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could shew,  
 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,  
 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 fragrant 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 an usurious loan,  
 To be refunded duly, when his vote,  
 Well managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.  
 Oh 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.  
 Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd  
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
 Of pleasure and variety, dispatch  
 As duly as the swallows disappear,  
 The world of wandering knights and squires to town.  
 London ingulfs 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,  
 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,  
 Unpeople all our counties, of such herds  
 Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose  
 And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
 And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

Oh thou, resort and mart of all the earth,  
 Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,  
 And spotted with all crimes; in which 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  
 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.

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#### BOOK IV.—THE WINTER EVENING.

##### ARGUMENT.

The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The waggoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Public-houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter: what she was; what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

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,  
 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  
 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 oh 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage ;  
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,  
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath

\* 'Your chamber windows look over the river, and over the meadows, to  
 a village called Emberton, and command the whole length of a long bridge,  
 described by a certain poet, together with a view of the road at a distance.'  
 —*Letter to Lady Hesketh*, April 17, 1786.

Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,  
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
 This folio of four pages, happy work !  
 Which not even critics criticise ; that holds  
 Inquisitive attention while I read,  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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,  
 Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,  
 And Katerfelto, with his hair on end  
 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  
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;  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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  
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,  
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  
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.  
Oh evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd  
The Sabine bard. Oh 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  
(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 of 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.  
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 shews  
His azure eyes, is tintured 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 hourglass once,  
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace  
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.  
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,  
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,  
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;  
 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  
 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.

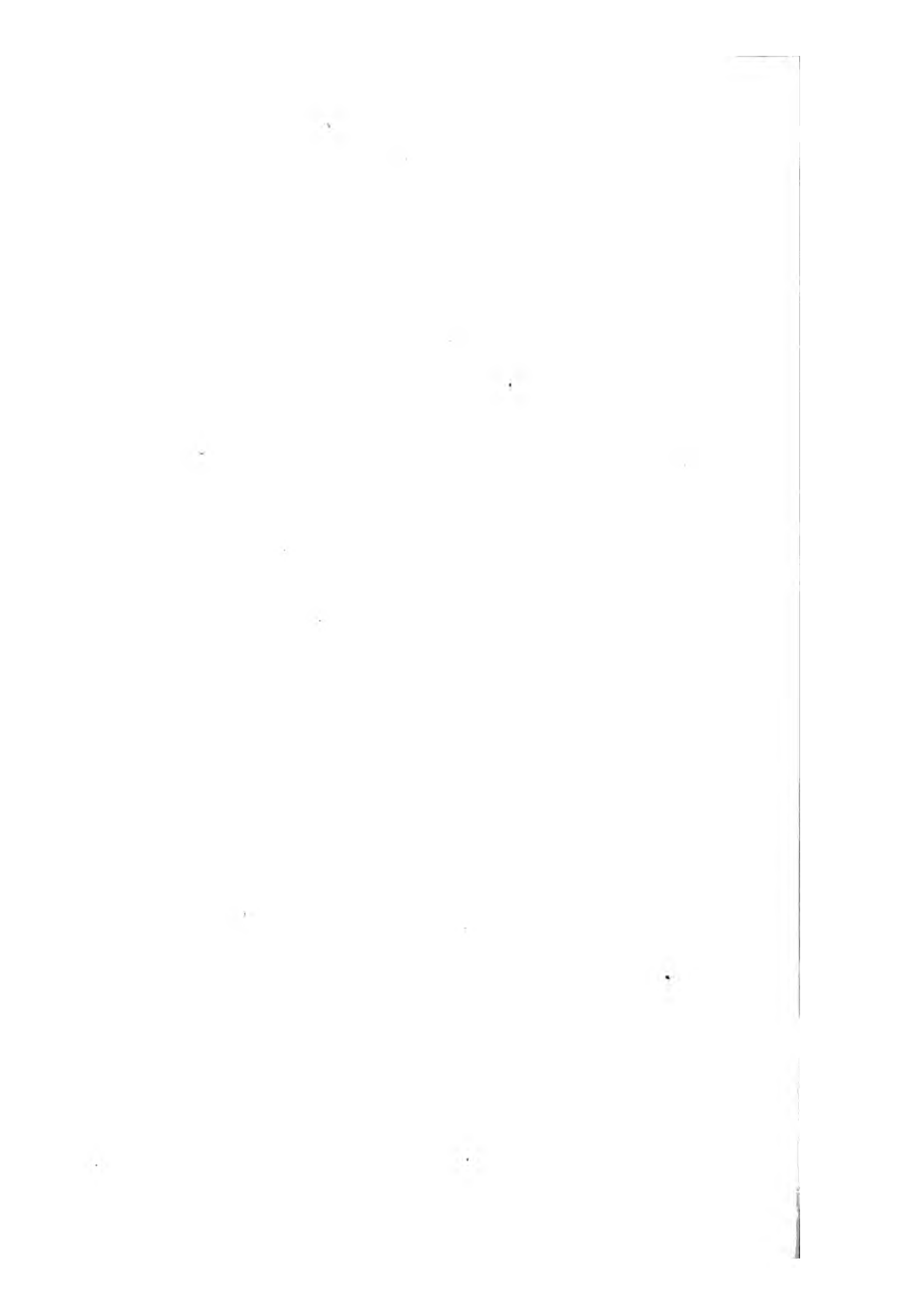
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
 With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
 From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,  
 Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk  
 Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,  
 My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps  
 The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile  
 With faint illumination, that uplifts  
 The shadows 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  
 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.  
 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  
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 toils, 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 !  
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,  
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  
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  
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 his 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 sympathise with others, suffering more.  
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  
 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  
 The sensibility of pain with which  
 Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.  
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.  
 The learnèd 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 then kindly! rude as thou appear'st,  
 Yet shew that thou hast mercy, which the great  
 With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,  
 Humane as they would seem, not always shew.  
 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  
 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 severer toil;  
 Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.







The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw  
Dangled along at the cold finger's end  
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  
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  
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  
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.  
I mean the man 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst  
 Of ruinous ebriety that prompts  
 His every action, and imbrutes the man.  
 Oh 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  
 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 learnèd, and all drunk. The fiddle screams  
 Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd  
 Its wasted tones and harmony unheard.  
 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,  
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.  
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,  
Once simple, are initiated in arts  
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  
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;  
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;  
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.  
Would I had fall'n 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  
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,  
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 manner, 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared  
 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  
 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;  
 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 license of the lowest in degree,  
Desert their office; and themselves, intent  
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus  
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  
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,  
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  
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
Wildfowl 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,  
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,  
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,  
 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  
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
 To swear, to game, to drink, to shew 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  
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
 Shine out; there only reach their proper use.  
 But man, associated and leagued with man  
 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.  
 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,  
 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



Misdeems 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.

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  
Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
My very dreams were rural, rural too  
The firstborn 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  
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  
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.  
'Tis born with all : the love of Nature's works  
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,  
Infused at the creation of the kind.

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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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 ? are they not all proofs  
 That man, immured in cities, still retains  
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst  
 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  
 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,  
 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, an 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  
 Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

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 BOOK V.—THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

## ARGUMENT.

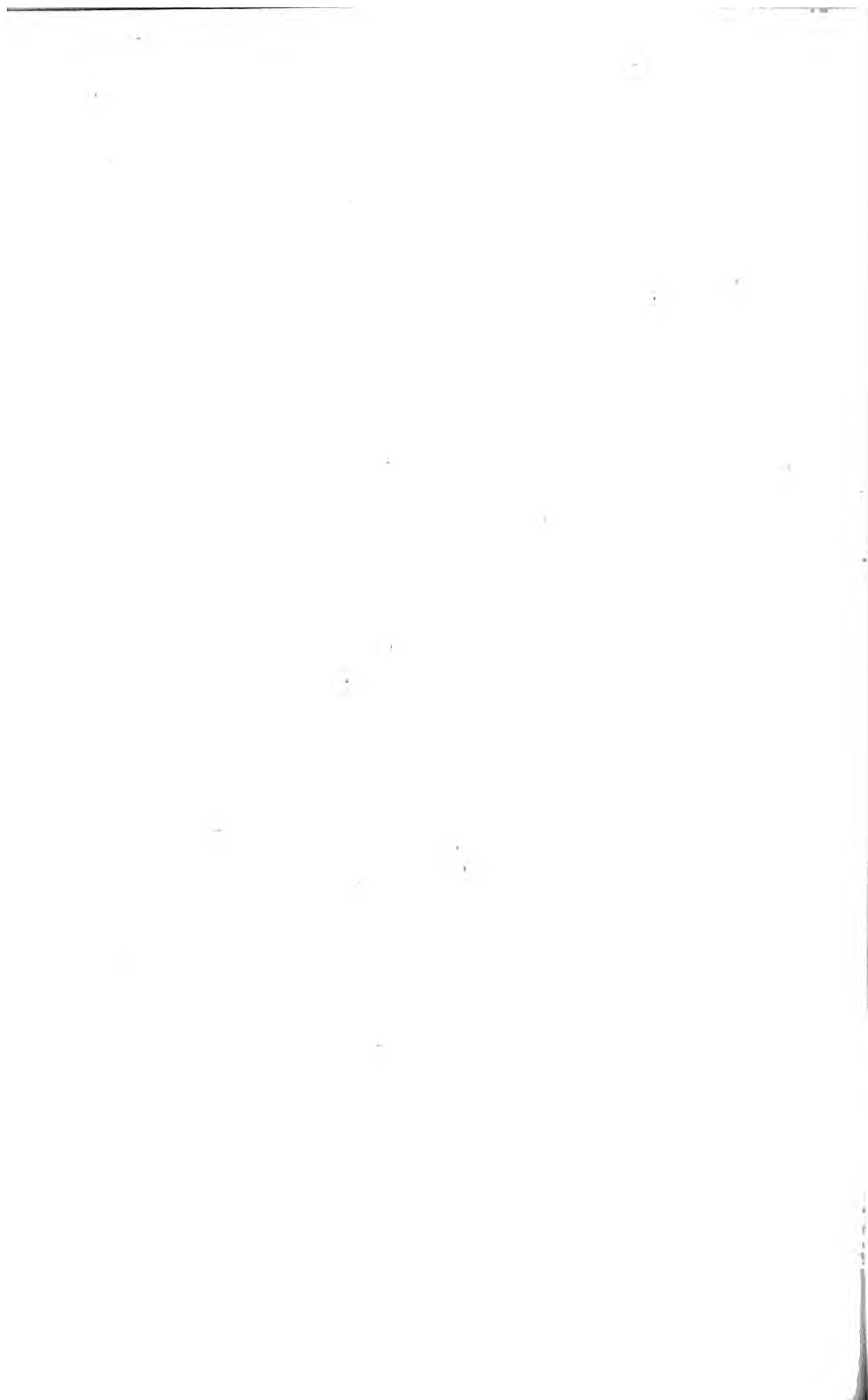
A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastille, and a prisoner there—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country—Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

'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 tinging all with his own rosy hue,  
 From every herb and every spiry blade  
 Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.  
 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  
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  
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.  
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;  
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.  
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 gossip'd side by side,  
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  
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  
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  
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  
Repays their labour more; and perch'd aloft  
By the way-side, 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.  
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

(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  
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,  
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,  
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  
Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd  
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen  
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.  
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth  
And slippery the materials, yet frostbound  
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  
 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  
 (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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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.  
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,  
When man was multiplied and spread abroad  
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  
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  
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  
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  
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,  
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  
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  
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, than when at length mankind  
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,  
And could discriminate and argue well  
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  
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,  
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?  
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees  
In politic convention) put your trust  
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?  
We too are friends to loyalty. We love  
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,  
And reigns content with 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:  
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;  
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,  
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  
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.

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
To France than all her losses and defeats,  
Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old  
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.  
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,  
The sighs and groans of miserable men!  
There's not an English heart that would not leap  
To hear that ye were fall'n 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 human kind,  
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,  
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.  
There, like the visionary emblem seen  
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,  
And filleted about with hoops of brass,  
Still lives, though all his 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;  
 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:—  
 To turn purveyor to an overgorged  
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest  
 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  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
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  
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
Or flushed 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  
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.  
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  
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  
 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,  
 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;  
 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.  
 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 indiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty unsung  
 By poets, and by senators unpraised,  
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers  
 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  
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,



And are august, but this transcends them all.  
His other works, the 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.  
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  
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 tyrannising lust,  
And full immunity from penal woe.

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,  
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes  
Tend downwards; his ambition is to sink,  
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

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 an hasty stroke,  
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,  
 But unrepealable enduring death.  
 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,  
 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.  
 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  
 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  
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  
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 fostered his disease;  
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.  
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.  
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.—  
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,  
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.  
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; humanising what is brute  
 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 recompense. 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  
 To guard them, and to immortalise 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 ensure 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,  
 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;  
 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.

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,  
 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 unpresumptuous 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,  
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,  
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,  
And has a richer use of yours, than you.  
He is indeed a freeman; free by birth  
Of no mean city, plann'd or ere 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:  
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,  
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,  
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread  
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
From inland regions to the distant main.  
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-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.  
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  
 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 she 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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 shew like beacons in the blue abyss,  
 Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home,  
 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,  
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.  
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain  
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,  
Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death  
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 :  
Thy providence forbids that fickle power  
(If power she be that works but to confound,)  
To mix the 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,  
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.  
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 oh, 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.

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BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT.

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

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,  
 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,  
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  
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  
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.  
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 its 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,  
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,  
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
The roof though movable 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 fitting light  
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes  
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,  
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.  
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
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,  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,  
Till smoothed 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.  
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,  
And sheepwalks 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  
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,  
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,  
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;  
The scentless and the scented rose, this red  
And of an humbler growth, the other tall,  
And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,  
Her silver globes, light as the foaming 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  
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; mezereon, too,  
 Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset  
 With blushing wreaths investing every spray;  
 Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,  
 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.

From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
 Is Nature's progress when she lectures man  
 In heavenly truth; evincing as she makes  
 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,  
 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  
 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 incumbrance 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.  
 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  
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.  
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  
But shews 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  
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
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  
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 countermarching, 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  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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  
 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 a while, 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,  
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,  
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;  
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.  
God set the diadem upon his head,  
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood  
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,  
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.

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  
Begot 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.  
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  
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,  
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.  
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  
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.  
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live  
Dependant 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  
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs  
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.  
So little mercy shews 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 in earth  
Is register'd in heaven, and these, no doubt,  
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,  
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  
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  
 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  
 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,  
 (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,  
 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,  
 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,  
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 ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,  
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.  
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd  
By medicine well applied, but without grace  
The heart's insanity admits no cure.  
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.  
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,  
And tamer far for so much fury shewn,  
(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,  
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,  
Rush'd to the cliff, and having reached 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  
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  
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.  
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  
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand  
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 shews it, is the rule  
And righteous limitation of its act,  
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man ;  
And he that shews none, being ripe in years,  
And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
Shall seek it and not find it in his turn.

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  
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 shew 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.  
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  
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  
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  
(Oh 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  
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  
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,  
 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  
 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 shew 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,  
 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 wreath;  
 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.  
 So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,  
 And mirth without offence. No few return'd,  
 Doubtless much edified, and all refresh'd.  
 —Man praises man. The rabble all alive,  
 From tippling 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;  
 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.  
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 poet's 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  
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,  
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  
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.  
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.

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 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,  
 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;  
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth



Flock to that light; the glory all lands  
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy.  
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there  
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar 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  
Kneels with the native of the furthest 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 Sion! 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  
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)  
A world that does not dread and hate His laws,  
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.  
Oh 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  
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  
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.  
 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,  
 "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.  
 They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,  
 Who constant only in rejecting Thee,  
 Deny 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  
 To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.  
 Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:  
 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,  
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  
Shews 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,  
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.  
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,  
And shews 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,  
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 even-tide,  
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.  
Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns  
Of little worth, an idler at the best,  
If, author of no mischief and some good,  
He seeks 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  
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  
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.  
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,  
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,  
Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flowers,  
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far  
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,  
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 a while, obedient to the fair,  
With that light task ; but soon, to please her more,  
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,  
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit ;  
Roved for, 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  
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.

# TRUTH.

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["WHEN I wrote the poem called *Truth*, by which is intended Religious Truth, it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I knew to be true, and that I should pass what I understood to be a just censure upon opinions and persuasions that differ from, or stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always pernicious, yet in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because, neglecting this, I should have betrayed my subject; either suppressing what, in my judgment, is of the last importance, or giving countenance, by a timid silence, to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin, that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover, upon scriptural ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man, by repentance and good works, may deserve the favour of his Maker; I call it a solecism, because mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice."—*Letter to Mr Unwin, June 24, 1781.*]

## ARGUMENT.

The pursuit of error leads to destruction—Grace leads the right way—Its direction despised—The self-sufficient Pharisee compared with the peacock—The pheasant compared with the Christian—Heaven abhors affected sanctity—The hermit and his penances—The self-torturing Brahmin—Pride the ruling principle of both—Picture of a sanctimonious Prude—Picture of a saint—Freedom of a Christian—Importance of motives, illustrated by the conduct of two servants—The traveller overtaken by a storm likened to the sinner dreading the vengeance of the Almighty—Dangerous state of those who are just in their own conceit—The last moments of the infidel—Content of the ignorant but believing cottager—The rich, the wise, and the great, neglect the means of winning heaven—Poverty the best soil for religion—What man really is, and what in his own esteem—Unbelief often terminates in suicide—Scripture the only cure of woe—Pride the passion most hostile to truth—Danger of slighting the mercy offered by the Gospel—Plea for the virtuous heathen—Commands given by God on Sinai—The judgment-day—Plea of the believer.

“Pensantur trutinâ.”—Hor., Lib. ii. Ep. 1.

MAN on the dubious waves of error toss'd,  
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 it, 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.

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,  
 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.

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,  
 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  
 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 ?  
 (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  
 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.  
 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 ;  
 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 preferred to saints that cannot aid ;  
 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.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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—  
 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.

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.  
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,  
 She yet allows herself that boy behind ;  
 The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,  
 With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,  
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,  
 Which future pages yet are 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,  
 Though not a grace appears on strictest search,  
 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,  
 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.

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?  
 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,  
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more?  
 The free-born 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.  
 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.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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 :  
 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,  
 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,  
 By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,

Offer him warmth, security, and rest;  
 Think with what pleasure, safe, and at his ease,  
 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;  
 The law grown clamorous, though silent long,  
 Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,  
 Asserts the right 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!—  
 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,  
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,  
 And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblamable 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 light gratuity atones for all.  
 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.



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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 to the quick ;  
 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,  
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
 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.

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 ?  
 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;  
 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,)  
 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.

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,  
 Shews them the shortest way to life and love:  
 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 orange-tree, they show  
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

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 chord 's 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,  
 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 reascend 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,  
 Then boast (but wait for that unhopèd-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!

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.  
 His books well trimm'd and in the gayest style,  
 Like regimental coxcombs rank and file,  
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,  
 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 humankind,  
 Whose happy skill and industry combinèd  
 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 the 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?  
 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;  
 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,  
 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,  
 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?  
 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.  
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime;  
 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.  
 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 :  
 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 !  
 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  
 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.  
 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,  
 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.  
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,  
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.

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;  
How'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,  
That they proceeded from a grateful heart;  
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, dependance 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.

## ARGUMENT.

Expostulation with the Muse weeping for England—Her apparently prosperous condition—State of Israel when the prophet wept over it—The Babylonian captivity—When nations decline, the evil commences in the Church—State of the Jews in the time of our Saviour—Evidences of their having been the most favoured of nations—Causes of their downfall—Lesson taught by it—Warning to Britain—The hand of Providence to be traced in adverse events—England's transgressions—Her vain-glory—Her conduct towards India—Abuse of the sacrament—Obduracy against repentance—Futility of fasts—Character of the Clergy—The poet adverts to the state of the ancient Britons—Beneficial influence of the Roman power—England under papal supremacy—Favours bestowed on her by Providence—Reasons for gratitude to God and for seeking to secure His favour—With that she may defy a world in arms—The poet anticipates little effect from his warning.

“Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli  
Donna sines?” VIRG.

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  
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;  
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 weaknsss 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.  
 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 biassed knaves, or fashion fools ;  
 Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door ;  
 Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor ;  
 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 was there.  
 Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,  
 By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,  
 Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart  
 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 ;  
 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 ;  
 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, a while  
 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.  
 But man is frail, and can but ill sustain  
 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 a fair outside,  
 The filth of rottenness and worm of pride,  
 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 ;  
 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 :  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 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.  
 He judged 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 ;  
 He stripp'd the impostors in the noontide sun,  
 Shew'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,  
 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.

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 ;  
 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 states 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 ;  
 For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,  
 The dews condensed into angelic food,  
 Their very garments sacred, old yet new,  
 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 ;  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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,  
 Who left them still a tributary state ;  
 Seized fast His hand, held out to set them free

\* *Vide* Joshua, v. 14.

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;  
 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.

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;  
 When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,  
 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, fall'n and razed,  
 And thou a worshipper e'en where thou may'st;  
 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 ;  
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  
With light derived from thee, would smother thine ;  
The very children watch for thy disgrace,  
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face ;  
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
 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  
 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 incurr'd  
 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,  
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,  
 That no success attends on spears and swords  
 Unbless'd, 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 combatants a woman's part ?  
 That He bids thousands fly when none pursue,  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 (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  
 Suggests the expedient of a 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;  
 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  
 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  
 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,  
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,  
 Their wisdom pure and given them from above,  
 Their usefulness ensured 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 Phinehas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
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  
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 graced thy figure with a soldier's pride;  
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,  
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 tolling chords rung out his dying breath.

Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams  
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,  
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,  
Babbler 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  
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, too keep it fresh in mind,  
 Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.\*  
 Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,  
 Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,  
 And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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!  
 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.—

\* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.—C.



Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,  
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  
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,  
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,  
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,  
The unfading laurel and the virgin too!\*

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 one hour to read a serious rhyme;  
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,

\* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede, near Windsor.—C.

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,  
 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,  
 Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,  
 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,  
 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 twinborn, 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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 e'en 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,  
 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  
 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.

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.

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 forbore, 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.

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,  
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament  
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;  
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.

## ARGUMENT.

Human life—The charms of Nature remain the same though they appear different in youth and age—Frivolity of fashionable life—Value of life—The works of the Creator evidences of His attributes—Nature the handmaid to the purposes of grace—Character of Hope—Man naturally stubborn and intractable—His conduct in different stations—Death's honours—Each man's belief right in his own eyes—Simile of Ethelred's hospitality—Mankind quarrel with the Giver of eternal life, on account of the terms on which it is offered—Opinions on this subject—Spread of the Gospel—The Greenland Missions—Contrast of the unconverted and converted heathen—Character of Leuconomus—The man of pleasure the blindest of bigots—Any hope preferred to that required by the Scripture—Human nature opposed to Truth—Apostrophe to Truth—Picture of one conscience-smitten—The pardoned sinner—Conclusion.

———'Doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.'

VIRG., *Æn.* 6.

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,  
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,  
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!"—  
 Oh, querulous and weak!—whose useless brain  
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;  
 Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,  
 Whose prospect shews 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;  
 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,  
 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,  
 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;  
 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:  
 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,  
 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;  
 In 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:  
 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 incumbrance ere half spent.  
 Oh! weariness beyond what asses feel,  
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel;  
 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.  
 That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,  
 Yet seldom sought where only to be found,  
 While passion turns aside from its due scope  
 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,

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.  
 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.  
 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,  
 And bliss not seen by blessings understood :  
 That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture, with a glow  
 Bright as the covenant-ensuring 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.  
 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 amarantine 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 ;  
 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 shines with all a cherub's artless charms,  
 Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,  
 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-gip state.  
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,  
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,  
 Dare 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.  
 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.  
 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,  
 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,  
 Shews 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;  
 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  
 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 sake;  
 Judging, in charity no doubt, the town  
 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.  
 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,  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
(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,  
E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.  
He sent a servant forth by every road,  
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,  
 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 ensures,  
 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,  
 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  
 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 stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound;  
 And beaux, adepts in everything 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,  
 Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,  
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;  
 The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,  
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,  
 And seem to warn him never to repeat  
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinosa 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.  
 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.  
 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.

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?  
 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.  
 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 thought whate'er he thinks;  
 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,  
 Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,  
 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,  
 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 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 ;  
 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,  
 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,  
 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\* to pour it on the farthest north :  
 Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy  
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,

\* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.—C.

And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose  
On icy plains and in eternal snows.

Oh, blest within the enclosure of your rocks,  
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks;  
No fertilising streams your fields divide,  
That shew reversed the villas on their side;  
No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,  
Or voice of turtle in your land is heard;  
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.

— 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.  
Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight  
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night;  
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer  
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here:  
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies  
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,  
That shoot into your darkest caves the day  
From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement Grace gives to vice,  
The dire effect of mercy without price!  
What were they? what some fools are made by art,  
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.  
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach  
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.  
Not even the glorious sun, though men revere  
The monarch most that seldom will appear,  
And though his beams that quicken where they shine,  
May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,—  
Not even the sun, desirable as rare,  
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;  
They were, what base credulity believes  
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.  
The full-gorged savage at his nauseous feast,  
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,—  
Was one whom justice, on an equal plan

Denouncing death upon the sins of man,  
Might almost have indulged with an escape,  
Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now?—Morality may spare  
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there.  
The wretch that once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,  
And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,  
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,  
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,  
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,  
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,  
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,  
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  
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 (beneath well-sounding Greek  
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



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  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 Like him he labour'd, and like him, content  
 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,  
 Than that 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 shews 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,  
 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,  
 And raise a laugh,) pass unmolested by ;  
 But if, unblamable 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,—  
 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,  
 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,  
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !  
 Hence all that is in man—pride, passion, art,  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 That while I trembling trace a word 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 thy eyelid stood a 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,  
 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,  
 Ensured 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,  
 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 ;  
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 mis-spent 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,  
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  
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 noon-day 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,  
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  
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  
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,  
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, recompense divine,  
Repays their work,—the gleaning only mine.

## TIROCINIUM; OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

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[COWPER wrote to Mr Unwin regarding this poem in May 1784. He says, "I am mistaken if *Tirocinium* do not make some of my friends angry, and procure me enemies not a few. There is a sting in verse that prose neither has nor can have; and I do not know that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are become a nuisance, a pest, an abomination; and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should, if possible, be opened to perceive it. The subject is fruitful, and will not be comprised in a smaller compass than seven or eight hundred verses: it turns on the question whether an education at school or at home be preferable, and I shall give the preference to the latter."]

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.—PLATO.  
Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.—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.

It is not from his form, in which we trace  
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity and 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 free-born will,  
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.  
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.  
 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  
 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?  
 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,  
 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;  
 Endued with reason only to descry  
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;

With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,  
 The force he spends against their fury vain;  
 And if, soon after having burn'd, 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,  
 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.  
 '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 human kind,  
 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.  
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
 Reflects 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  
 Fit for the power in which he stands array'd,  
 That first or last, hereafter if not hear,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 O thou,\* whom, borne on fancy's eager wing  
 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,  
 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,  
 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

\* Bunyan.

Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.  
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof \*  
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough :  
 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 !  
 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.  
 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.  
 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, †  
 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 ;

\* See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

† 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.—C.

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,  
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  
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.  
His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,  
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 shew the peeping down upon his chin,  
And, as maturity of years comes on,  
Made just the adept 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,  
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 ;  
The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,

With packhorse constancy we keep the road,  
 Crook'd 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  
 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,  
 A ubiquitous 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.  
 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,  
 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 surgeon's books.  
 Say, Muse, (for education made the song,  
 No muse can hesitate or linger long.)  
 What causes move us, knowing as we must  
 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,



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 dextrous pat ;  
 The pleasing spectacle at once excites  
 Such recollections 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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!  
 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.  
 A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
 Shall give him consequence, heal all defects,  
 His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—  
 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 ?  
 Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,  
 Who starve upon a dog-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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste,  
 And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,  
 Soon shews the strong similitude reversed.  
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.

\* Dr Lowth, Bishop of London.

† Dr Bagot, Bishop of St Asaph.

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,  
 Shews 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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  
 Done to the nobler part affects it long,  
 And you are stanch 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  
 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 of them all.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,  
 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,  
 Newfangled sentiment, the boasted grace  
 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  
 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 smoothed away,  
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,  
 With what intense desire he wants his home.  
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof,  
 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,  
 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;  
 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.  
 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  
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,  
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  
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,  
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 shew 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,  
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  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 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  
 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



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  
 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,  
 Shew 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,  
 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 ;  
 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.—  
 And, trust me, his utility may reach  
 To more than he is hired or bound to teach,  
 Much trash unutter'd, and some ills 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 ;  
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
That anything 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, winged 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 mayst,  
Not very sober though, nor very chaste ;—  
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, shew 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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
 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,  
 Not 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,  
 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,  
 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 human kind—  
 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;  
 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, lady-like in mien,  
 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,  
 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;  
 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,  
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 shew 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,  
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,  
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,  
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 recompense of all thy cares,  
Thy child shall shew respect to thy gray hairs,  
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.  
 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 in the land;  
 Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,  
 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.  
 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,  
 (Forgive the crime,) I wish them, I confess,  
 Or better managed, or encouraged less.

## CHARITY.

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[In the following humorous rhythmical letter, addressed to Mr Newton, the design of this poem is explained :—

July 12, 1781.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got be verse or not;—by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme, but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before?

I have writ *Charity*, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer should say, "To be sure, the gentleman's muse wears Methodist shoes, you may know by his pace and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoydening play, of the modern day: and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan to catch, if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction; she has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come with a sugar-plum." His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end, and, if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid for all I have said and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence to the end of my sense, and by hook or by crook write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing: and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and, as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penned, which that you may do, ere madam and you are quite worn out with jiggling about, I take my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me.—W. C.]

### ARGUMENT.

Invocation to Charity—Social ties—Tribute to the humanity of Captain Cook—His character contrasted with that of Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico—Degradation of Spain—Purpose of commerce—Gifts of art—The slave-trade and slavery—Slavery unnatural and unchristian—The duty of abating the woes of that state, and of enlightening the mind of the slave, enforced—Apostrophe to Liberty—Charity of Howard—Pursuits of Philosophy—Reason learns nothing aright without the lamp of Revelation—True charity the offspring of Divine truth—Supposed case of a blind nation and an optician—Portrait of Charity—Beauty of the Apostle's definition of it—Alms as the means of lulling conscience—Pride and ostentation motives of charity—Character of satire—True charity inculcated—Christian charity should be universal—Happy effects that would result from universal charity.

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

HOR. *Lib. iv. Ode 2.*

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,  
 Or 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,  
 Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,  
 And though disgraced and slighted, to redeem  
 A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,  
 By various ties attaches man to man :  
 He 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,  
 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 ;  
 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 !  
 Where wast thou then, sweet Charity, where then,  
 Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?  
 Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,

\* Captain Cook, the great navigator.

Or building hospitals on English ground?  
 No!—Mammon makes the world his legatee  
 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.  
 Their prince, as justly seated on his throne  
 As vain imperial Philip 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:  
 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,  
 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,  
 Shook principalities and kingdoms down,  
 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;  
 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 a 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 :  
 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,  
 And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,  
 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 ;  
 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 !  
 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 ?  
 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  
 Of her he loves and never can forget,  
 Losses 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 ?  
 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.

Oh, 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,  
 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 a while, 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 !  
 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 unincumber'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,  
 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,

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,  
 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.  
 That wretch that works and weeps without relief  
 Has one that notices his silent grief.  
 He, from whose hand alone all power proceeds,  
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,  
 Considers *all* injustice with a frown;  
 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  
 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,  
 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,  
 And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.  
 Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,  
 "While gratitude and love made service sweet,  
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,  
 My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,  
 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  
 From 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,  
 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 has 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  
 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  
 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  
 To bind the lawless and to punish guilt ;  
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,  
 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.

\* John Thornton, Esq., a rich merchant, who had placed some money in Cowper's hands to be given to the poor of the neighbourhood of Olney.



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,  
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,  
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,  
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  
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,  
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.  
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,

\* John Howard, the celebrated philanthropist.

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,  
 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,  
 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;  
 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 overflowing 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.  
 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?)  
 An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,  
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.  
 Let supposition lend her aid once more,

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 ;  
 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-quickening 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 '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 ;  
 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.  
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  
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 her 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 mantle-tree.  
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 :  
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.  
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,  
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.

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.  
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 swordmanship, however just,  
Can be secure against a madman's thrust ;  
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,  
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,

\* Dean Swift.

They meet with little pity, no redress;  
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;  
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,  
Guns, halberds, swords and pistols, great and small,  
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.  
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;  
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 on Him who form'd us, and redeem'd,  
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd ;  
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  
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,  
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,  
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 doting 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,  
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,  
Or scare the nation with its big contents :  
Disbanded legions freely might depart,  
And slaying man would cease to be an art.  
No learn'd 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.

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.



## CONVERSATION.

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[THIS poem was included in the same volume with *Table Talk*. "It is not dialogue," Cowper writes to Mr Newton, "as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to *Table Talk*, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when He endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the jocular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober."]

### ARGUMENT

In conversation much depends on culture—Its results frequently insignificant—Indecent language and oaths reprobated—The author's dislike of the clash of arguments—The noisy wrangler—Dubius an example of indecision—The positive pronounce without hesitation—The point of honour condemned—Duelling with fists instead of weapons proposed—Effect of long Tales—The retailer of prodigies and lies—Qualities of a judicious tale—Smoking condemned—The emphatic speaker—The perfumed beau—The grave coxcomb—Sickness made a topic of conversation—Picture of a fretful temper—The bashful speaker—An English company—The sportsman—Influence of fashion on conversation—Converse of the two disciples going to Emmaus—Delights of religious conversation—Age mellows the speech—True piety often branded as fanatic frenzy—Pleasure of communion with the good—Conversation should be unconstrained—Persons who make the Bible their companion, charged with hypocrisy by the world—The charge repelled—The poet sarcastically surmises that his censure of the world may proceed from ignorance of its reformed manners—An apology for digression—Religion purifies and enriches conversation.

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

VIRG., *Ecl.* v.

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.  
 As alphabets in ivory employ  
 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,  
 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.

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 !  
 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.  
 Not even the vigorous and headlong rage  
 Of adolescence or a firmer age,  
 Affords a plea allowable or just  
 For making speech the pamperer of lust ;  
 But when the breath of age commits the fault,  
 'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.  
 So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,  
 No longer fruitful and no longer green ;  
 The sapless wood, divested of the bark,  
 Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.  
 Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife ;  
 Some men have surely then a peaceful life !  
 Whatever subject occupy discourse,

The feats of Vestris,\* or the naval force,  
 Asseveration blustering in your face  
 Makes contradiction such a hopeless case :  
 In every tale they tell, or false or true,  
 Well known, or such as no man ever knew,  
 They fix attention, heedless of your pain,  
 With oaths like rivets forced into the brain ;  
 And even when sober truth prevails throughout,  
 They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.  
 A Persian, humble servant of the sun,  
 Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,  
 Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,  
 With adjurations every word impress,  
 Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,  
 God's name so much upon his lips, a priest,  
 Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,  
 And begg'd an interest in his frequent prayers.

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,  
 Henceforth associate in one common herd ;  
 Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,  
 Pronounce your human form a false pretence,—  
 A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,  
 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.

\* Vestris, the famous dancer. The following *jeu d'esprit* from one of Cowper's letters (February 1781) refers to him :—

## A CARD.

Poor Vestris, grieved beyond all measure,  
 To have incurr'd so much displeasure ;  
 Although a Frenchman, disconcerted,  
 And though light-heel'd, yet heavy-hearted,  
 Begg's humbly to inform his friends,  
 That first of April, he intends  
 To take a boat and row right down  
 To Cuckold's point, from Richmond town ;  
 And as he goes, alert and gay,  
 Leap all the bridges in his way ;  
 The boat borne downward with the tide,  
 Shall catch him safe on t'other side ;  
 He humbly hopes by this expedient,  
 To prove himself their most obedient,  
 (Which shall be always his endeavour,)  
 And jump into their former favour.

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.  
 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 ;  
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,  
 Will judge himself deceived,—and prove it too.  
 Vociferated logic kills me quite,—  
 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.  
 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 ;  
 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.  
 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  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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 de cease,  
 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,  
 The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear  
 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.  
 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 shew, to his admiring friends,  
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 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,  
 Can this be true? an arch observer cries;  
 Yes, (rather moved,) I saw it with these eye  
 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.  
 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,  
 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 civilises ours;  
 Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants  
 To poison vermin that infests his plants;  
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind  
 As to despise the glory of our kind,  
 And shew the softest minds and fairest forms  
 As little mercy as the grubs and worms?  
 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 sea-born 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,  
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,  
 Touch'd with the 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.  
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,  
 Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,  
 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.  
 '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,  
 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.

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,  
 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.  
 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.  
 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 your 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 undeserv'd disdain,  
 And bear the marks upon a blushing face  
 Of needless shame and self-impos'd disgrace.  
 Our sensibilities are so acute,  
 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 tried, 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,  
 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,  
 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 nurs'd.  
 The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,  
 Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate ;  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.  
 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,  
 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.  
 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,  
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 ?  
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,  
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;  
The melody that was at first design'd  
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,  
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,  
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 !  
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,  
 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 shewn, 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;  
 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:  
 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.  
 Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,  
 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.—  
 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.  
 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?  
 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,  
 Its head is 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.  
 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,  
 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,

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?  
 The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light?  
 Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour  
 That comes 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;  
 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, learnèd without pride,  
 Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed;  
 A man that would have foil'd at their own play  
 A dozen would-bes 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;  
 There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,  
 His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,  
 Ambitious not to shine or to excel,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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.

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)  
 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;  
 '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 ;  
 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 ;  
 Call legions up from hell to back the deed,  
 And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.  
 But souls that carry on a bless'd 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,  
 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,  
 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 Sion 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 !  
 Will they believe, though credulous enough  
 To swallow much upon much weaker proof,  
 That there are bless'd inhabitants of earth,  
 Partakers of a new ethereal birth,  
 Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged  
 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,  
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.  
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 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,)  
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,  
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:  
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;  
 The truth itself is in her head as dull  
 And useless as a candle in a skull,  
 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;  
 At least we moderns, our attention less,  
 Beyond the example of our sires digress,  
 And claim a right to scamper and run wide,  
 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,  
 And I have lived recluse in rural shades,  
 Which seldom a distinct report pervades,  
 Great changes and new manners have occur'd,  
 And bless'd 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;  
 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,  
 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  
 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,  
 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 ought,  
 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,  
 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.  
 Though such continual zigzags in a book,  
 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.  
 And first let no man charge me that I mean  
 To clothe in sables 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.  
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 shews 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,  
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,  
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,  
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.

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[The two following extracts from letters to his friends Unwin and Newton, in August 1781, explain the design and purpose of this poem :—"I have a subject in hand which promises me a great abundance of poetical matter, but which, for want of a something I am not able to describe, I cannot at present proceed with. The name of it is *Retirement*; and my purpose, to recommend the proper improvement of it, to set forth the requisites for that end, and to enlarge upon the happiness of that state of life, when managed as it ought to be. In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiencies, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as have no tendency to promote either their own happiness, or that of others."

"I have already begun and proceeded a little way with a poem called *Retirement*. My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves by a life of pleasure for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is at present in embryo."

### ARGUMENT.

The busy universally desirous of retirement—Important purpose for which this desire was given to man—Musing on the works of the creation, a happy employment—The service of God not incompatible, however, with a life of business—Human life; its pursuits—Various motives for seeking retirement—The poet's delight in the study of nature—The lover's fondness for retirement—The hypochondriac—Melancholy, a malady that claims most compassion, receives the least—Sufferings of the melancholy man—The statesman's retirement—His new mode of life and company—Soon weary of retirement, he returns to his former pursuits—Citizens' villas—Fashion of frequenting watering-places—The ocean—The spendthrift in forced retirement—The sportsman ostler—The management of leisure a difficult task—Man will be summoned to account for the employment of life—Books and friends requisite for the man of leisure; and divine communion to fill the remaining void—Religion not adverse to innocent pleasures—The poet concludes with a reference to his own pursuits.

. . . . . studiis florens ignobilis oti.—VIRG. *Geor.*, lib. 4.

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,  
 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,  
 And, having lived a trifle, 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,  
 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.  
 '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.  
 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  
 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,  
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,  
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;  
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light;  
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;  
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,  
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,  
 Whatever *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 ;  
 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,  
 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  
 And fills the world of traffic and the shades,  
 And may be feared amidst 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 ;  
 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,  
 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  
 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.  
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;  
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.  
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,  
Or forest where the deer securely roves,  
The fall of waters and the song of birds,  
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,  
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,

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.  
 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,  
 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 plant within her reach,  
 Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,  
 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;  
 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,  
 And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 Could give advice, could censure or commend,  
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.  
 Denounced alike its office and its sport,  
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;  
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway.

\* Dr William Heberden, a distinguished scholar and physician. He died at the great age of 91, in 1801.

† Cowper is supposed to have drawn his own portrait in this affecting passage.

And like a summer brook are pass'd away.  
This is a sight for pity to peruse  
Till she resembles faintly what she views,  
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,  
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.  
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 barbed arrows of a frowning God ;  
And such emollients as his friends could spare,  
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.  
Bless'd, rather cursed, 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,  
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  
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,  
To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,  
And staunch 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.  
Then neither healthy 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 unheed'd by ;  
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,

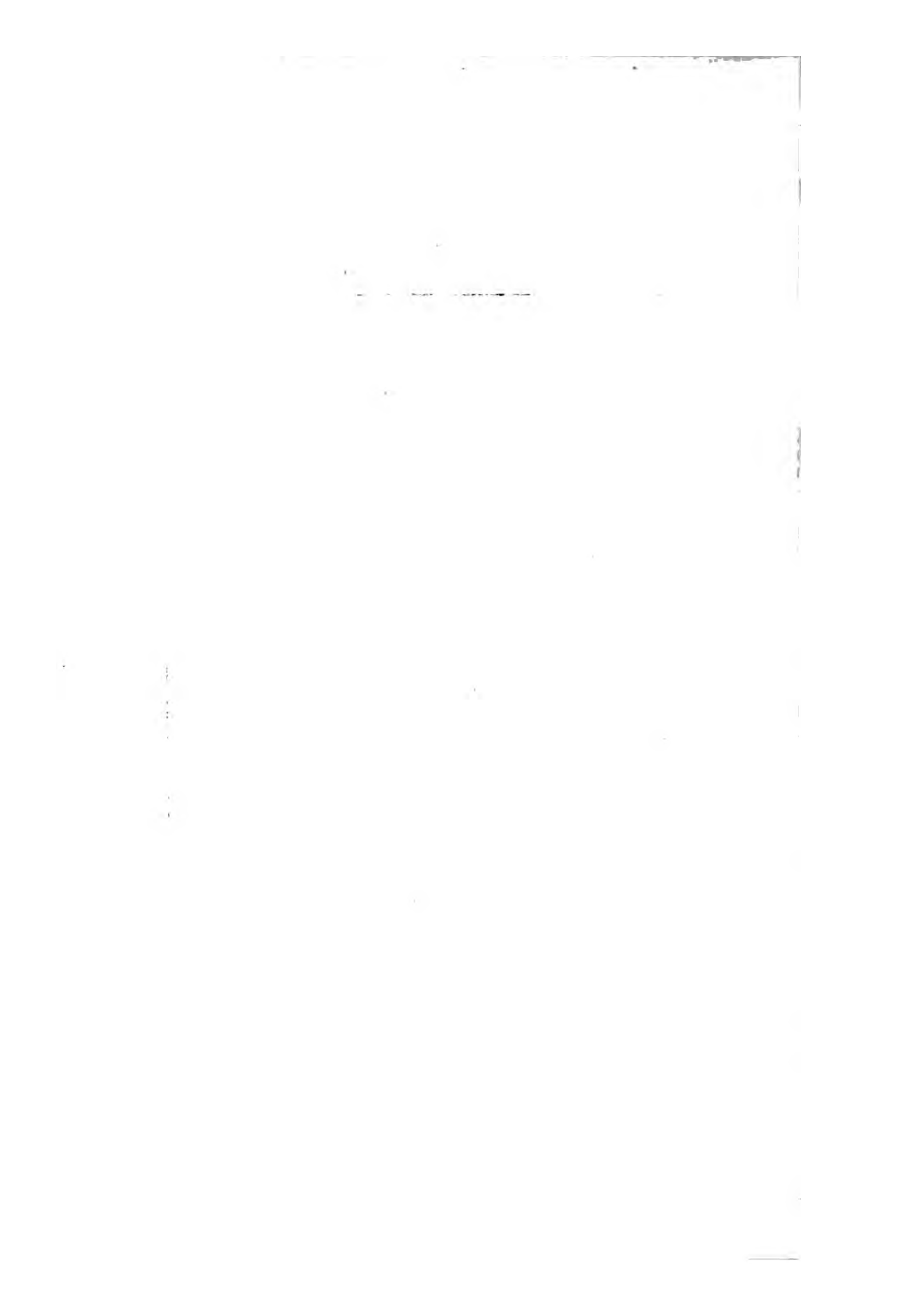


Improve the kind occasion, understand  
 A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand :  
 To thee the dayspring and the blaze of noon,  
 The purple evening and resplendent moon,  
 The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,  
 Seem drops descending in a shower of light,  
 Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,  
 Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :  
 Yet seek Him, in His favour life is found,  
 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 dispised and overlook'd no more,  
 Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,  
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,  
 And bid her mountains 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.  
 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 ;  
 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,  
 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,  
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 ;  
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 hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,  
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,  
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that spreads  
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,  
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 ;  
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 ;  
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,  
 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,  
 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 ;  
 No happiness is felt, except the true,  
 That does not charm thee 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 ;  
 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 employ.  
 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.  
 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,  
 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 shew more?  
 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 bestowed  
 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.  
 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,  
 In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,  
 Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,  
 And all, impatient of dry land, agree  
 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;  
 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,

Oh 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,  
 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 !  
 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 ;  
 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.  
 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.  
 Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,  
 '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 ;—confessed 'twas strange,  
 That so retired he should not wish a change,  
 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.

Lucrative offices are seldom lost  
 For want of powers proportion'd to the post :  
 Give e'en 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.  
 '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,  
 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 :  
 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 :  
 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?  
 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 shew the august tribunal of the skies,  
 Where no prevarication shall avail,  
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,  
 The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,  
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all?  
 Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil  
 To learnèd 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,  
 And after poising 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.  
 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 banners shew;)   
 Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,

Built 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;  
 Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase  
 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;  
 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,  
 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,  
 -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,  
 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!  
 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,

\* Voltaire.

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 ; \* his remark was shrewd,—  
How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude !  
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,  
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.  
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,  
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.  
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 a lion's roar,  
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before.  
'Tis love like his that can alone defeat  
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude

\* Bruyère.

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 ;  
To mark the matchless workings of the power  
That shuts within its seed the future flower,  
Bids 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.

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.



# ANTI-THELYPHTHORA.

## A TALE, IN VERSE.

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[THIS poem was printed anonymously. Cowper's cousin, the Rev. Martin Madan, published a work called *Thelyphtora*, vindicating polygamy on the authority of Scripture. Cowper wrote his friend Unwin about it:—"Have you not heard—who has not? for a recommendatory advertisement of it is published—that a certain kinsman of your humble servant has written a tract, now in the press, to prove polygamy a divine institution? A plurality of wives is intended, but not of husbands. The end proposed by the author is to remedy the prevailing practice of adultery, by making the female delinquent *ipso facto* the lawful wife of the male." When Madan's book appeared, it was very severely handled in the *Monthly Review*, by the Rev. Mr Badcock. Mr Madan replied, and was re-reviewed. In the poem Cowper sings the literary joust, designating Madan as the Knight of Airy Castle, and Mr Badcock Sir Marmadan, the Knight of the Silver Moon.]

Ah miser  
Quantâ laboras in Charybdi!  
HORACE, *lib. i., Ode 27.*

AIRY DEL CASTRO was as bold a knight  
As ever earn'd a lady's love in fight.  
Many he sought, but one above the rest  
His tender heart victoriously impress'd :  
In fairy land was born the matchless dame,  
The land of dreams, Hypothesis her name.  
There Fancy nursed her in ideal bowers,  
And laid her soft in amaranthine flowers ;  
Delighted with her babe, the enchantress smiled,  
And graced with all her gifts the favourite child.  
Her wooed Sir Airy, by meandering streams,  
In daily musings and in nightly dreams ;  
With all the flowers he found, he wove in haste  
Wreaths for her brow, and girdles for her waist ;  
His time, his talents, and his ceaseless care  
All consecrated to adorn the fair ;  
No pastime but with her he deign'd to take,  
And,—if he studied, studied for her sake.  
And, for Hypothesis was somewhat long,  
Nor soft enough to suit a lover's tongue,

He call'd her Posy, with an amorous art,  
And grav'd it on a gem, and wore it next his heart.

But she, inconstant as the beams that play  
On rippling waters in an April day,  
With many a freakish trick deceived his pains,  
To pathless wilds and unfrequented plains  
Enticed him from his oaths of knighthood far,  
Forgetful of the glorious toils of war.  
'Tis thus the tenderness that love inspires  
Too oft betrays the votaries of his fires ;  
Borne far away on elevated wings,  
They sport like wanton doves in airy rings,  
And laws and duties are neglected things.

Nor he alone address'd the wayward fair ;  
Full many a knight had been entangled there.  
But still, whoever wooed her or embraced,  
On every mind some mighty spell she cast,  
Some she would teach (for she was wondrous wise,  
And made her dupes see all things with her eyes,)  
That forms material, whatsoe'er we dream,  
Are not at all, or are not what they seem ;  
That substances and modes of every kind  
Are mere impressions on the passive mind ;  
And he that splits his cranium, breaks at most  
A fancied head against a fancied post :  
Others, that earth, ere sin had drown'd it all,  
Was smooth and even as an ivory ball ;  
That all the various beauties we survey,  
Hills, valleys, rivers, and the boundless sea,  
Are but departures from the first design,  
Effects of punishment and wrath divine.  
She tutor'd some in Dædalus's art,  
And promised they should act his wildgoose part,  
On waxen pinions soar without a fall,  
Swift as the proudest gander of them all.

But fate reserved Sir Airy to maintain  
The wildest project of her teeming brain ;  
That wedlock is not rigorous as supposed,  
But man, within a wider pale enclosed,  
May rove at will, where appetite shall lead,  
Free as the lordly bull that ranges o'er the mead ;  
That forms and rites are tricks of human law,  
As idle as the chattering of a daw ;  
That lewd incontinence, and lawless rape,  
Are marriage in its true and proper shape ;  
That man by faith and truth is made a slave,  
The ring a bauble, and the priest a knave.

"Fair fall the deed !" the night exulting cried,  
"Now is the time to make the maid a bride !"

'Twas on the noon of an autumnal day,  
 October hight, but mild and fair as May;  
 When scarlet fruits the russet hedge adorn,  
 And floating films envelop every thorn;  
 When gently as in June, the rivers glide,  
 And only miss the flowers that graced their side;  
 The linnet twitter'd out his parting song,  
 With many a chorister the woods among;  
 On southern banks the ruminating sheep  
 Lay snug and warn;—'twas summer's farewell peep,  
 Propitious to his fond intent there grew,  
 An harbour near at hand of thickest yew,  
 With many a boxen bush, close clipt between,  
 And philyrea of a gild'd green.

But what old Chaucer's merry page befits,  
 The chaster muse of modern days omits.  
 Suffice it then in decent terms to say,  
 She saw,—and turn'd her rosy cheek away.  
 Small need of prayer-book or of priest, I ween,  
 Where parties are agreed, retired the scene,  
 Occasion prompt, and appetite so keen.  
 Hypothesis (for with such magic power  
 Fancy endued her in her natal hour,  
 From many a steaming lake and reeking bog,  
 Bade rise in haste a dank and drizzling fog,  
 That curtain'd round the scene where they reposed,  
 And wood and lawn in dusky folds enclosed.

Fear seiz'd the trembling sex; in every grove  
 They wept the wrongs of honourable love,  
 In vain, they cried, are hymeneal rites,  
 Vain our delusive hope of constant knights;  
 The marriage bond has lost its powers to bind,  
 And flutters loose, the sport of every wind.  
 The bride, while yet her bride's attire is on,  
 Shall mourn her absent lord, for he is gone,  
 Satiated of her, and weary of the same,  
 To distant wilds in quest of other game.  
 Ye fair Circassians! all your lutes employ,  
 Seraglios sing, and harems dance for joy!  
 For British nymphs whose lords were lately true,  
 Nymphs quite as fair, and happier once than you,  
 Honour, esteem, and confidence forgot,  
 Feel all the meanness of your slavish lot.  
 O curst Hypothesis! your hellish arts  
 Seduce our husbands, and estrange their hearts.—  
 Will none arise? no knight who still retains  
 The blood of ancient worthies in his veins,  
 To assert the charter of the chaste and fair,  
 Find out her treacherous heart, and plant a dagger there!

A knight—(can he that serves the fair do less?)  
Starts at the call of beauty in distress;  
And he that does not, whatsoever occurs,  
Is recreant, and unworthy of his spurs.\*

Full many a champion, bent on hardy deed,  
Call'd for his arms and for his princely steed.  
So swarm'd the Sabine youth, and grasp'd the shield,  
When Roman rapine, by no laws withheld,  
Lest Rome should end with her first founders' lives,  
Made half their maids, *sans* ceremony, wives.  
But not the mitred few, the souls their charge,  
They left these bodily concerns at large;  
Forms or no forms, pluralities or pairs,  
Right reverend sirs! was no concern of theirs.  
The rest, alert and active as became  
A courteous knighthood, caught the generous flame:  
One was accoutred when the cry began,  
Knight of the Silver Moon, Sir Marmadan.†

Oft as his patroness, who rules the night,  
Hangs out her lamp in yon cerulean height,  
His vow was, (and he well perform'd his vow,)  
Arm'd at all points, with terror on his brow,  
To judge the land, to purge atrocious crimes,  
And quell the shapeless monsters of the times.  
For cedars famed, fair Lebanon supplied  
The well-poised lance that quiver'd at his side;  
Truth arm'd it with a point so keen, so just,  
No spell or charm was proof against the thrust.  
He couch'd it firm upon his puissant thigh,  
And darting through his helm an eagle's eye,  
On all the wings of chivalry advanced  
To where the fond Sir Airy lay entranced.

He dreamt not of a foe, or if his fear  
Foretold one, dreamt not of a foe so near.  
Far other dreams his feverish mind employ'd,  
Of rights restored, variety enjoy'd:  
Of virtue too well fenced to fear a flaw;  
Vice passing current by the stamp of law;  
Large population on a liberal plan,  
And woman trembling at the foot of man;  
How simple wedlock fornication works,  
And Christians marrying may convert the Turks.

The trumpet now spoke Marmadan at hand,  
A trumpet that was heard through all the land.  
His high-bred steed expands his nostrils wide,  
And snorts aloud to cast the mist aside;  
But he, the virtues of his lance to show,

\* When a knight was degraded, his spurs were chopped off.—C.

† *Monthly Review* for October.—C.



Struck thrice the point upon his saddle-bow ;  
Three sparks ensued that chased it all away,  
And set the unseemly pair in open day.  
"To horse !" he cried, "or, by this good right hand  
And better spear, I smite you where you stand."

Sir Airy, not a whit dismay'd or scared,  
Buckled his helm, and to his steed repair'd ;  
Whose bridle, while he cropp'd the grass below,  
Hung not far off upon a myrtle bough.  
He mounts at once,—such confidence infused  
The insidious witch that had his wits abused ;  
And she, regardless of her softer kind,  
Seized fast the saddle and sprang up behind.  
"Oh shame to knighthood !" his assailant cried ;  
"Oh shame !" ten thousand echoing nymphs replied.  
Placed with advantage at his listening ear,  
She whisper'd still that he had nought to fear ;  
That he was cased in such enchanted steel,  
So polish'd and compact from head to heel,  
"Come ten, come twenty, should an army call  
Thee to the field, thou shouldst withstand them all."

"By Dian's beams," Sir Marmadan exclaim'd,  
"The guiltless still are ever least ashamed !  
But guard thee well, expect no feign'd attack ;  
And guard beside the sorceress at thy back !"

He spoke indignant, and his spurs applied,  
Though little need, to his good palfrey's side :  
The barb sprang forward, and his lord, whose force  
Was equal to the swiftness of his horse,  
Rush'd with a whirlwind's fury on the foe,  
And, Phineas like, transfix'd them at a blow.

Then sang the married and the maiden throng,  
Love graced the theme, and harmony the song ;  
The Fauns and Satyrs, a lascivious race,  
Shriek'd at the sight, and, conscious, fled the place :  
And Hymen, trimming his dim torch anew,  
His snowy mantle o'er his shoulders threw ;  
He turn'd, and view'd it oft on every side,  
And reddening with a just and generous pride,  
Bless'd the glad beams of that propitious day,  
The spot he loathed so much for ever cleansed away.

## OLNEY HYMNS.

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[THE publication of the *Olney Hymns* brought Cowper for the first time before the public as an author. They were suggested by Mr Newton, who contributed about the half of the original publication. Their composition had a very depressing effect on Cowper's mind; his malady returned, and he was for a long period withdrawn from his usual employment.]

### L. WALKING WITH GOD. *Gen. v. 24.*

OH! for a closer walk with God;  
A calm and heavenly frame;  
A light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But they have left an aching void,  
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return  
Sweet Messenger of rest!  
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,  
And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,  
Calm and serene my frame;  
So purer light shall mark the road  
That leads me to the Lamb.

II. JEHOVAH-JIREH. THE LORD WILL PROVIDE. *Gen. xxii. 14.*

THE saints should never be dismay'd,  
Nor sink in hopeless fear;  
For when they least expect His aid,  
The Saviour will appear.

This Abraham found: he raised the knife;  
God saw, and said, "Forbear!  
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;  
Behold the victim there."

Once David seem'd Saul's certain prey;  
But hark! the foe's at hand;\*  
Saul turns his arms another way,  
To save the invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,  
He thought to rise no more; †  
But God prepared a fish to save,  
And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine,  
That meet us in His Word!  
May every deep-felt care of mine  
Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for His seasonable aid,  
And though it tarry, wait:  
The promise may be long delay'd,  
But cannot come too late.

III. JEHOVAH-ROPHI. I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE.  
*Exod. xv. 26.*

HEAL us, Emmanuel! here we are,  
Waiting to feel Thy touch:  
Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair,  
And, Saviour, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess,  
We faintly trust Thy word;  
But wilt Thou pity us the less?  
Be that far from Thee, Lord!

Remember him who once applied,  
With trembling, for relief;  
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried, ‡  
"Oh, help my unbelief!"

\* 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.

† Jonah i. 17.

‡ Mark ix. 24

She too, who touch'd Thee in the press,  
 And healing virtue stole,  
 Was answer'd, " Daughter, go in peace,\*  
 Thy faith hath made thee whole."  
 Conceal'd amid the gathering throng,  
 She would have shunn'd Thy view;  
 And if her faith was firm and strong,  
 Had strong misgivings too.  
 Like her, with hopes and fears we come,  
 To touch Thee, if we may;  
 Oh! send us not despairing home!  
 Send none unheal'd away!

IV. JEHOVAH-NISSI. THE LORD MY BANNER.

*Exod. xvii. 15.*

By whom was David taught  
 To aim the deadly blow,  
 When he Goliath fought,  
 And laid the Gittite low?  
 Nor sword nor spear the stripling took,  
 But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and king  
 Who sent him to the fight;  
 Who gave him strength to sling,  
 And skill to aim aright.  
 Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,  
 Because young David's God is yours.

Who order'd Gideon forth,  
 To storm the invaders' camp,  
 With arms of little worth,  
 A pitcher and a lamp? †  
 The trumpets made his coming known,  
 And all the host was overthrown.

Oh! I have seen the day,  
 When with a single word,  
 God helping me to say,  
 " My trust is in the Lord,"  
 My soul hath quell'd a thousand foes,  
 Fearless of all that could oppose.

But unbelief, self-will,  
 Self-righteousness, and pride,  
 How often do they steal  
 My weapon from my side!  
 Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's friend,  
 Will help his servant to the end.

\* Mark v. 34.

† Judges vii. 9 and 20.



V. JEHOVAH-SHALOM. THE LORD SEND PEACE.  
*Judges vi. 24.*

JESUS ! whose blood so freely stream'd  
To satisfy the law's demand ;  
By Thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,  
Before the Father's face I stand.

To reconcile offending man,  
Make Justice drop her angry rod ;  
What creature could have form'd the plan,  
Or who fulfil it but a God ?

No drop remains of all the curse,  
For wretches who deserved the whole ;  
No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce  
The guilty, but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought,  
What rebel could have hoped to see ?  
Peace, by his injured Sovereign wrought,  
His Sovereign fasten'd to a tree.

Now, Lord, Thy feeble worm prepare !  
For strife with earth and hell begins ;  
Confirm and gird me for the war ;  
They hate the soul that hates his sins.

Let them in horrid league agree !  
They may assault, they may distress ;  
But cannot quench Thy love to me,  
Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

VI. WISDOM. *Prov. viii. 22-31.*

ERE God had built the mountains,  
Or raised the fruitful hills ;  
Before He fill'd the fountains  
That feed the running rills ;  
In me, from everlasting,  
The wonderful I AM,  
Found pleasures never wasting,  
And WISDOM is my name.

When, like a tent to dwell in,  
He spread the skies abroad,  
And swathed about the swelling  
Of Ocean's mighty flood ;  
He wrought by weight and measure,  
And I was with Him then :  
Myself the Father's pleasure,  
And mine, the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover  
 Thy glory and Thy grace,  
 Thou everlasting lover  
 Of our unworthy race !  
 Thy gracious eye survey'd us  
 Ere stars were seen above ;  
 In wisdom Thou hast made us,  
 And died for us in love.

And couldst Thou be delighted  
 With creatures such as we,  
 Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,  
 And nail'd Thee to a tree ?  
 Unfathomable wonder,  
 And mystery divine !  
 The voice that speaks in thunder,  
 Says, " Sinner, I am thine ! "

#### VII. VANITY OF THE WORLD.

God gives His mercies to be spent ;  
 Your hoard will do your soul no good ;  
 Gold is a blessing only lent,  
 Repaid by giving others food.

The world's esteem is but a bribe,  
 To buy their peace you sell your own ;  
 The slave of a vainglorious tribe,  
 Who hate you while they make you known.

The joy that vain amusements give,  
 Oh ! sad conclusion that it brings !  
 The honey of a crowded hive,  
 Defended by a thousand stings.

'Tis thus the world rewards the fools  
 That live upon her treacherous smiles :  
 She leads them blindfold by her rules,  
 And ruins all whom she beguiles.

God knows the thousands who go down  
 From pleasure into endless woe ;  
 And with a long despairing groan  
 Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

Oh fearful thought ! be timely wise ;  
 Delight but in a Saviour's charms,  
 And God shall take you to the skies,  
 Embraced in everlasting arms.

VIII. O LORD, I WILL PRAISE THEE. *Isaiah xii. 1.*

I WILL praise Thee every day,  
 Now Thine anger 's turn'd away;  
 Comfortable thoughts arise  
 From the bleeding sacrifice.

Here, in the fair gospel-field,  
 Wells of free salvation yield  
 Streams of life, a plenteous store,  
 And my soul shall thirst no more.

Jesus is become at length  
 My salvation and my strength;  
 And His praises shall prolong,  
 While I live, my pleasant song.

Praise ye, then, His glorious name,  
 Publish His exalted fame!  
 Still His worth your praise exceeds;  
 Excellent are all His deeds.

Raise again the joyful sound,  
 Let the nations roll it round!  
 Zion, shout! for this is He;  
 God the Saviour dwells in thee.

IX. THE CONTRITE HEART. *Isaiah lvii. 15.*

THE Lord will happiness divine  
 On contrite hearts bestow;  
 Then tell me, gracious God, is mine  
 A contrite heart, or no?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,  
 Insensible as steel;  
 If ought is felt, 'tis only pain,  
 To find I cannot feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined  
 To love Thee, if I could;  
 But often feel another mind,  
 Averse to all that 's good.

My best desires are faint and few,  
 I fain would strive for more;  
 But when I cry, "My strength renew!"  
 Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,  
 And love Thy house of prayer;  
 I therefore go where others go,  
 But find no comfort there.

Oh make this heart rejoice or ache ;  
 Decide this doubt for me ;  
 And if it be not broken, break—  
 And heal it, if it be !

X. THE FUTURE PEACE AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

*Isaiah ix. 15-20.*

HEAR what God the Lord hath spoken,  
 " O my people, faint and few,  
 Comfortless, afflicted, broken,  
 Fair abodes I build for you.  
 Thorns of heartfelt tribulation  
 Shall no more perplex your ways :  
 You shall name your walls, Salvation,  
 And your gates shall all be Praise.

" There, like streams that feed the garden,  
 Pleasures without end shall flow  
 For the Lord, your faith rewarding,  
 All His bounty shall bestow ;  
 Still in undisturb'd possession  
 Peace and righteousness shall reign ;  
 Never shall you feel oppression,  
 Hear the voice of war again.

" Ye no more your suns descending,  
 Waning moons no more shall see ;  
 But, your griefs for ever ending,  
 Find eternal moon in me :  
 God shall rise, and shining o'er ye,  
 Change to day the gloom of night ;  
 He, the Lord, shall be your glory,  
 God your everlasting light."

XI. JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Jer. xxiii. 6.*

My God, how perfect are Thy ways !  
 But mine polluted are ;  
 Sin twines itself about my praise,  
 And slides into my prayer.

When I would speak what Thou hast done  
 To save me from my sin,  
 I cannot make Thy mercies known,  
 But self-applause creeps in.

Divine desire, that holy flame  
 Thy grace creates in me ;  
 Alas ! impatience is its name,  
 When it returns to Thee.



This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,  
 How does it overflow,  
 While self upon the surface floats,  
 Still bubbling from below.  
 Let others in the gaudy dress  
 Of fancied merit shine;  
 The Lord shall be my righteousness,  
 The Lord for ever mine.

XII. EPHRAIM REPENTING. *Jer. xxxi. 18-20.*

My God, till I receive Thy stroke,  
 How like a beast was I!  
 So unaccustom'd to the yoke,  
 So backward to comply.  
 With grief my just reproach I bear;  
 Shame fills me at the thought,  
 How frequent my rebellions were,  
 What wickedness I wrought.  
 Thy merciful restraint I scorn'd,  
 And left the pleasant road;  
 Yet turn me, and I shall be turn'd;  
 Thou art the Lord my God.  
 "Is Ephraim banish'd from my thoughts,  
 Or vile in my esteem?  
 No," saith the Lord, "with all his faults,  
 I still remember him.  
 "Is he a dear and pleasant child?  
 Yes, dear and pleasant still;  
 Though sin his foolish heart beguiled,  
 And he withstood my will.  
 "My sharp rebuke has laid him low  
 He seeks my face again;  
 My pity kindles at his woe,  
 He shall not seek in vain."

XIII. THE COVENANT. *Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28.*

THE Lord proclaims His grace abroad!  
 "Behold, I change your hearts of stone;  
 Each shall renounce his idol-god,  
 And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.  
 "My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds  
 To wash your filthiness away;  
 Ye shall abhor your former deeds,  
 And learn my statutes to obey.

“ My truth the great design ensures,  
I give myself away to you;  
You shall be mine, I will be yours,  
Your God unalterably true.

“ Yet not unsought, or unimplored,  
The plenteous grace I shall confer; \*  
No—your whole hearts shall seek the Lord,  
I'll put a praying spirit there.

“ From the first breath of life divine  
Down to the last expiring hour,  
The gracious work shall all be mine,  
Begun and ended in my power.”

XIV. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH. *Ezek.* xlvi. 35.

As birds their infant brood protect,†  
And spread their wings to shelter them,  
Thus saith the Lord to His elect,  
“ So will I guard Jerusalem.”

And what then is Jerusalem,  
This darling object of His care?  
Where is its worth in God's esteem?  
Who built it? who inhabits there?

Jehovah founded it in blood,  
The blood of His incarnate Son;  
There dwell the saints, once foes to God,  
The sinners whom He calls His own.

There, though besieged on every side,  
Yet much beloved, and guarded well,  
From age to age they have defied  
The utmost force of earth and hell.

Let earth repent, and hell despair,  
This city has a sure defence;  
Her name is call'd, “ The Lord is there,”  
And who has power to drive Him thence?

XV. PRAISE FOR THE FOUNTAIN OPENED. *Zech.* xiii. 1.

THERE is a fountain fill'd with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;

\* Verse 37.

† Isaiah xxxi. 5.

And there have I, as vile as he,  
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransom'd church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save;  
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared  
(Unworthy though I be)  
For me a blood-bought free reward,  
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,  
And form'd by power divine,  
To sound in God the Father's ears  
No other name but Thine.

XVI. THE SOWER. *Matt. xiii. 3.*

YE sons of earth prepare the plough,  
Break up your fallow ground;  
The sower is gone forth to sow,  
And scatter blessings round.

The seed that finds a stony soil  
Shoots forth a hasty blade;  
But ill repays the sower's toil,  
Soon wither'd, scorch'd, and dead.

The thorny ground is sure to balk  
All hopes of harvest there;  
We find a tall and sickly stalk,  
But not the fruitful ear.

The beaten path and highway side,  
Receive the trust in vain;  
The watchful birds the spoil divide,  
And pick up all the grain.

But where the Lord of grace and power  
Has bless'd the happy field,  
How plentous is the golden store  
The deep-wrought furrows yield!

Father of mercies, we have need  
 Of Thy preparing grace ;  
 Let the same Hand that gives the seed  
 Provide a fruitful place !

XVII. THE HOUSE OF PRAYER. *Mark xi. 17.*

THY mansion is the Christian's heart,  
 O Lord, Thy dwelling-place secure !  
 Bid the unruly throng depart,  
 And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to Thee,  
 A thievish swarm frequents the place ;  
 They steal away my joys from me,  
 And rob my Saviour of His praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade  
 Sin, Satan, and the World maintain ;  
 Nor cease to press me, and persuade  
 To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din ;  
 Am weary of the bustling crowd ;  
 But while their voice is heard within,  
 I cannot serve Thee as I would.

Oh ! for the joy Thy presence gives,  
 What peace shall reign when Thou art there ;  
 Thy presence makes this den of thieves  
 A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if Thou make Thy temple shine,  
 Yet, self-abased, will I adore .  
 The gold and silver are not mine ;  
 I give Thee what was Thine before.

XVIII. LOVEST THOU ME ? *John xxi. 16*

HARK, my soul ! it is the Lord ;  
 'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word ;  
 Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,  
 " Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me ?

" I deliver'd thee when bound,  
 And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound ;  
 Sought thee wandering, set thee right,  
 Turn'd thy darkness into light.

" Can a woman's tender care  
 Cease towards the child she bare ?  
 Yes, she may forgetful be,  
 Yet will I remember thee.



"Mine is an unchanging love,  
Higher than the heights above.  
Deeper than the depths beneath,  
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done ;  
Partner of my throne shalt be ;—  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me ?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint,  
That my love is weak and faint ;  
Yet I love Thee and adore,—  
Oh ! for grace to love Thee more !

XIX. CONTENTMENT. *Phil. iv. 11.*

FIERCE passions discompose the mind,  
As tempests vex the sea ;  
But calm content and peace we find,  
When, Lord, we turn to Thee.

In vain by reason and by rule  
We try to bend the will ;  
For none but in the Saviour's school  
Can learn the heavenly skill.

Since at His feet my soul has sate,  
His gracious words to hear,  
Contented with my present state,  
I cast on Him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul ?" He said,  
"Then how canst thou complain ?  
How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd  
With everlasting pain !

"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,  
Compare thy griefs with mine ;  
Think what my love for thee endured,  
And thou wilt not repine.

"'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,  
And I do all things well ;  
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,  
And rise with me to dwell.

"In life my grace shall strength supply,  
Proportion'd to thy day ;  
At death thou [still] shalt find me nigh,  
To wipe thy tears away."

Thus I, who once my wretched days  
 In vain repinings spent,  
 Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,  
 Have learnt to be content.

**XX. OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL. *Heb. iv. 2.***

ISRAEL in ancient days  
 Not only had a view  
 Of Sinai in a blaze,  
 But learn'd the Gospel too;  
 The types and figures were a glass,  
 In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice  
 And blood-besprinkled door,\*  
 Seen with enlighten'd eyes,  
 And once applied with power,  
 Would teach the need of other blood,  
 To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth  
 His perfect innocence,†  
 Whose blood of matchless worth  
 Should be the soul's defence;  
 For He who can for sin atone,  
 Must have no failings of His own.

The scape-goat on his head ‡  
 The people's trespass bore,  
 And to the desert led,  
 Was to be seen no more:  
 In him our Surety seem'd to say,  
 "Behold, I bear your sins away."

Dipt in his fellow's blood,  
 The living bird went free; §  
 The type, well understood,  
 Express'd the sinner's plea;  
 Described a guilty soul enlarged,  
 And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,  
 Throughout the sacred page,  
 The footsteps of Thy grace,  
 The same in every age!  
 Oh grant that I may faithful be  
 To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

\* Exod. xii. 13.

‡ Lev. xvi. 21.

† Lev. xii. 6.

§ Lev. xiv. 51-53.

XXI. SARDIS. *Rev. iii. 1-6.*

“WRITE to Sardis,” saith the Lord,  
 “And write what He declares,  
 He whose Spirit, and whose word,  
 Upholds the seven stars :  
 All thy works and ways I search,  
 Find thy zeal and love decay’d ;  
 Thou art call’d a living church,  
 But thou art cold and dead.

“Watch, remember, seek, and strive,  
 Exert thy former pains ;  
 Let thy timely care revive,  
 And strengthen what remains ;  
 Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,  
 Former times to mind recall,  
 Lest my sudden stroke descend,  
 And smite thee once for all.

“Yet I number now in thee  
 A few that are upright ;  
 These my Father’s face shall see,  
 And walk with me in white.  
 When in judgment I appear,  
 They for mine shall be confess’d ;  
 Let my faithful servants hear,—  
 And woe be to the rest !”

## XXII. PRAYER FOR A BLESSING.

BESTOW, dear Lord, upon our youth,  
 The gift of saving grace ;  
 And let the seed of sacred truth  
 Fall in a fruitful place.

Grace is a plant, where’er it grows,  
 Of pure and heavenly root ;  
 But fairest in the youngest shows,  
 And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, O hear betimes  
 The voice of sovereign love !  
 Your youth is stain’d with many crimes,  
 But mercy reigns above.

True, you are young, but there’s a stone  
 Within the youngest breast ;  
 Or half the crimes which you have done  
 Would rob you of your rest.

For you the public prayer is made :  
 Oh ! join the public prayer !  
 For you the secret tear is shed :  
 Oh shed yourselves a tear !

We pray that you may early prove  
 The Spirit's power to teach ;  
 You cannot be too young to love  
 That Jesus whom we preach.

## XXIII. PLEADING FOR AND WITH YOUTH.

SIN has undone our wretched race ;  
 But Jesus has restored,  
 And brought the sinner face to face  
 With his forgiving Lord.

This we repeat from year to year,  
 And press upon our youth ;  
 Lord, give them an attentive ear,  
 Lord, save them by Thy truth !

Blessings upon the rising race !  
 Make this a happy hour,  
 According to Thy richest grace,  
 And Thine Almighty power.

We feel for your unhappy state,  
 (May you regard it too,)  
 And would a while ourselves forget  
 To pour out prayer for you.

We see, though you perceive it not,  
 The approaching awful doom ;  
 Oh tremble at the solemn thought,  
 And flee the wrath to come !

Dear Saviour, let this new-born year  
 Spread an alarm abroad ;  
 And cry in every careless ear,  
 " Prepare to meet thy God ! "

## XXIV. PRAYER FOR CHILDREN.

GRACIOUS Lord, our children see,  
 By Thy mercy we are free ;  
 But shall these, alas ! remain  
 Subjects still of Satan's reign ?  
 Israel's young ones, when of old  
 Pharaoh threaten'd to withhold,\*

\* Exod. x. 9.



Then Thy messenger said, "No ;  
Let the children also go !"

When the angel of the Lord,  
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,  
Slew with an avenging hand,  
All the first-born of the land ; \*  
When Thy people's doors he pass'd,  
Where the bloody sign was placed :  
Hear us, now, upon our knees,  
Plead the blood of Christ for these !

Lord, we tremble, for we know  
How the fierce malicious foe,  
Wheeling round his watchful flight,  
Keeps them ever in his sight :  
Spread Thy pinions, King of kings !  
Hide them safe beneath Thy wings ;  
Lest the ravenous bird of prey  
Stoop and bear the brood away.

#### XXV. JEHOVAH JESUS.

MY song shall bless the Lord of all,  
My praise shall climb to His abode ;  
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,  
The great Supreme, the mighty God.

Without beginning or decline,  
Object of faith and not of sense ;  
Eternal ages saw Him shine,  
He shines eternal ages hence.

As much, when in the manger laid,  
Almighty Ruler of the sky,  
As when the six days' work He made  
Fill'd all the morning stars with joy.

Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,  
Salvation is His dearest claim ;  
That gracious sound well pleased He hears,  
And owns Emmanuel for His name.

A cheerful confidence I feel,  
My well placed hopes with joy I see ;  
My bosom glows with heavenly zeal,  
To worship Him who died for me.

As man, He pities my complaint,  
His power and truth are all divine ;  
He will not fail, He cannot faint ;  
Salvation's sure, and must be mine.

\* Exod. xii. 12.

## XXVI. ON OPENING A PLACE FOR SOCIAL PRAYER.

JESUS! where'er Thy people meet,  
 There they behold Thy mercy seat;  
 Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,  
 And every place is hallow'd ground.

For Thou, within no walls confined  
 Inhabitest the humble mind;  
 Such ever bring Thee where they come,  
 And going, take Thee to their home.

Dear Shepherd of Thy chosen few!  
 Thy former mercies here renew;  
 Here to our waiting hearts proclaim  
 The sweetness of Thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer,  
 To strengthen faith, and sweeten care;  
 To teach our faint desires to rise,  
 And bring all Heaven before our eyes.

Behold, at Thy commanding word  
 We stretch the curtain and the cord;\*  
 Come Thou, and fill this wider space,  
 And bless us with a large increase.

Lord, we are few, but Thou art near:  
 Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear;  
 Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,  
 And make a thousand hearts Thine own.

## XXVII. WELCOME TO THE TABLE.

THIS is the feast of heavenly wine,  
 And God invites to sup;  
 The juices of the living vine  
 Were press'd to fill the cup.

Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,  
 With royal dainties fed;  
 Not heaven affords a costlier treat,  
 For Jesus is the bread.

The vile, the lost, He calls to them;  
 Ye trembling souls, appear!  
 The righteous in their own esteem  
 Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse  
 The banquet spread for you;

\* Isaiah liv. 2.

Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,  
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,  
And may obtain a place,  
Surely the Lord will welcome me,  
And I shall see His face.

#### XXVIII. JESUS HASTING TO SUFFER.

THE Saviour, what a noble flame  
Was kindled in His breast,  
When hasting to Jerusalem,  
He march'd before the rest ;

Good will to men, and zeal for God,  
His every thought engross ;  
He longs to be baptized with blood,\*  
He pants to reach the cross !

With all His suffering full in view,  
And woes to us unknown,  
Forth to the task His spirit flew ;  
'Twas love that urged Him on.

Lord, we return Thee what we can :  
Our hearts shall sound abroad,  
Salvation to the dying Man,  
And to the rising God !

And while Thy bleeding glories here  
Engage our wondering eyes,  
We learn our lighter cross to bear,  
And hasten to the skies.

#### XXIX. EXHORTATION TO PRAYER.

WHAT various hindrances we meet  
In coming to a mercy seat !  
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,  
But wishes to be often there ?

Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight ;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright ;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.

\* Luke xii. 50.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,  
 Success was found on Israel's side;  
 But when through weariness they fail'd  
 That moment Amalek prevail'd.\*

Have you no words? Ah! think again,  
 Words flow apace when you complain,  
 And fill your fellow-creature's ear  
 With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent  
 To heaven in supplication sent,  
 Your cheerful song would oftener be,  
 "Hear what the Lord has done for me."

### XXX. THE LIGHT AND GLORY OF THE WORD.

THE Spirit breathes upon the word,  
 And brings the truth to sight;  
 Precepts and promises afford  
 A sanctifying light.

A glory gilds the sacred page,  
 Majestic like the sun;  
 It gives a light to every age.  
 It gives, but borrows none.

The hand that gave it still supplies  
 The gracious light and heat;  
 His truths upon the nations rise,  
 They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be thine,  
 For such a bright display,  
 As makes a world of darkness shine  
 With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue  
 The steps of Him I love,  
 Till glory break upon my view  
 In brighter worlds above.

### XXXI. ON THE DEATH OF A MINISTER.

HIS master taken from his head,  
 Elisha saw him go;  
 And in desponding accents said,  
 "Ah, what must Israel do?"

But he forgot the Lord who lifts  
 The beggar to the throne;

\* Exodus xvi. 11.



Nor knew that all Elijah's gifts  
Would soon be made his own.

What! when a Paul has run his course,  
Or when Apollos dies,  
Is Israel left without resource,  
And have we no supplies?

Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives,  
We have a boundless store,  
And shall be fed with what He gives,  
Who lives for evermore.

### XXXII. THE SHINING LIGHT.

My former hopes are fled,  
My terror now begins;  
I feel, alas! that I am dead  
In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly?  
I hear the thunder roar;  
The Law proclaims Destruction nigh,  
And Vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,  
I dread impending doom:  
But sure a friendly whisper says,  
"Flee from the wrath to come."

I see, or think I see,  
A glimmering from afar;  
A beam of day, that shines for me,  
To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,\*  
It marks the pilgrim's way;  
I'll gaze upon it while I run,  
And watch the rising day.

### XXXIII. THE WAITING SOUL.

BREATHE from the gentle south, O Lord,  
And cheer me from the north;  
Blow on the treasures of thy word,  
And call the spices forth!

I wish, Thou knowest, to be resign'd,  
And wait with patient hope;  
But hope delay'd fatigues the mind,  
And drinks the spirits up.

\* Psalm cxxx. 6.

Help me to reach the distant goal ;  
 Confirm my feeble knee ;  
 Pity the sickness of a soul  
 That faints for love of Thee !

Cold as I feel this heart of mine,  
 Yet, since I feel it so,  
 It yields some hope of life divine  
 Within, however low.

I seem forsaken and alone,  
 I hear the lion roar ;  
 And every door is shut but one,  
 And that is Mercy's door.

There, till the dear Deliverer come,  
 I'll wait with humble prayer ;  
 And when He calls His exile home,  
 The Lord shall find him there.

#### XXXIV. SEEKING THE BELOVED.

To those who love the Lord I speak ;  
 Is my Beloved near ?  
 The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,  
 Oh ! when will He appear ?

Though once a man of grief and shame,  
 Yet now He fills a throne,  
 And bears the greatest, sweetest name,  
 That earth or heaven have known.

Grace flies before, and love attends  
 His steps where'er He goes ;  
 Though none can see Him but His friends,  
 And they were once His foes.

He speaks ;—obedient to His call  
 Our warm affections move :  
 Did He but shine alike on all,  
 Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,  
 And war would cease to roar ;  
 And cruel and bloodthirsty men  
 Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such His grace ;  
 Oh, may He shine on you !  
 And tell Him, when you see His face,  
 I long to see Him too.\*

\* Cant. v. 8.

## XXXV. WELCOME CROSS.

'Tis my happiness below  
 Not to live without the cross,  
 But the Saviour's power to know,  
 Sanctifying every loss :  
 Trials must and will befall ;  
 But with humble faith to see  
 Love inscribed upon them all,  
 This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds  
 Of affliction, pain, and toil ;  
 These spring up and choke the weeds  
 Which would else o'erspread the soil :  
 Trials make the promise sweet,  
 Trials give new life to prayer ;  
 Trials bring me to His feet,  
 Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,  
 No chastisement by the way,  
 Might I not with reason fear  
 I should prove a castaway ?  
 Bastards may escape the rod,\*  
 Sunk in earthly vain delight ;  
 But the true-born child of God  
 Must not—would not, if he might.

## XXXVI. AFFLICTIONS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD.

OH how I love Thy holy Word,  
 Thy gracious covenant, O Lord !  
 It guides me in the peaceful way ;  
 I think upon it all the day.

What are the mines of shining wealth,  
 The strength of youth, the bloom of health !  
 What are all joys compared with those  
 Thine everlasting Word bestows !

Long unafflicted, undismay'd,  
 In pleasure's path secure I stray'd ;  
 Thou mad'st me feel thy chast'ning rod,†  
 And straight I turn'd unto my God.

What though it pierced my fainting heart,  
 I bless'd Thine hand that caused the smart :  
 It taught my tears awhile to flow,  
 But saved me from eternal woe.

\* Hebrews xii. 8.

† Psalm cxix. 71.

Oh! hadst Thou left me unchastised,  
 Thy precepts I had still despised;  
 And still the snare in secret laid  
 Had my unwary feet betray'd.

I love thee, therefore, O my God,  
 And breathe towards Thy dear abode;  
 Where, in Thy presence fully blest,  
 Thy chosen saints for ever rest.

## XXXVII. TEMPTATION.

THE billows swell, the winds are high,  
 Clouds overcast my wintry sky;  
 Out of the depths to Thee I call,—  
 My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,  
 And guard and guide me through the storm:  
 Defend me from each threatening ill,  
 Control the waves,—say, "Peace! be still."

Amidst the roaring of the sea  
 My soul still hangs her hope on Thee;  
 Thy constant love, thy faithful care,  
 Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name  
 Attend the followers of the Lamb,  
 Who leave the world's deceitful shore,  
 And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,  
 My Saviour through the floods I seek;  
 Let neither winds nor stormy main  
 Force back my shatter'd bark again.

## XXXVIII. LOOKING UPWARDS IN A STORM.

GOD of my life, to Thee I call,  
 Afflicted at Thy feet I fall;  
 When the great water-floods prevail,\*  
 Leave not my trembling heart to fail!

Friend of the friendless and the faint,  
 Where should I lodge my deep complaint,  
 Where but with Thee, whose open door  
 Invites the helpless and the poor!

Did ever mourner plead with Thee,  
 And Thou refuse that mourner's plea?

\* Psalm lxi. 15.



Does not the word still fix'd remain,  
That none shall seek Thy face in vain ?

That were a grief I could not bear,  
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer ;  
But a prayer-hearing, answering God  
Supports me under every load.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me ;  
I have an Advocate with Thee ;  
They whom the world caresses most  
Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despised, forgot,\*  
Yet God, my God, forgets me not :  
And he is safe, and must succeed,  
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

### XXXIX. THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

MY soul is sad, and much dismay'd ;  
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,  
With fierce Apollyon at their head,  
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose !

See, from the ever-burning lake,  
How like a smoky cloud they rise !  
With horrid blasts my soul they shake,  
With storms of blasphemies and lies.

Their fiery arrows reach the mark,†  
My throbbing heart with anguish tear ;  
Each lights upon a kindred spark,  
And finds abundant fuel there.

I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord ;  
Oh ! I would drive it from my breast,  
With Thy own sharp two-edged sword,  
Far as the east is from the west.

Come, then, and chase the cruel host,  
Heal the deep wounds I have received !  
Nor let the power of darkness boast,  
That I am foil'd, and Thou art grieved !

### XL. PEACE AFTER A STORM.

WHEN darkness long has veil'd my mind,  
And smiling day once more appears,  
Then, my Redeemer, then I find  
The folly of my doubts and fears.

\* Psalm xl. 17.

† Eph. vi. 16.

Straight I upbraid my wandering heart,  
 And blush that I should ever be  
 Thus prone to act so base a part,  
 Or harbour one hard thought of Thee !

Oh ! let me then at length be taught  
 What I am still so slow to learn,  
 That God is love, and changes not,  
 Nor knows the shadow of a turn.

Sweet truth, and easy to repeat !  
 But when my faith is sharply tried,  
 I find myself a learner yet,  
 Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide.

But, O my Lord, one look from Thee  
 Subdues the disobedient will,  
 Drives doubt and discontent away,  
 And Thy rebellious worm is still.

Thou art as ready to forgive  
 As I am ready to repine ;  
 Thou, therefore, all the praise receive ;  
 Be shame and self-abhorrence mine.

#### XLI. MOURNING AND LONGING.

THE Saviour hides His face ;  
 My spirit thirsts to prove  
 Renew'd supplies of pardoning grace,  
 And never-fading love.

The favour'd souls who know  
 What glories shine in Him,  
 Pant for His presence as the roe  
 Pants for the living stream.

What trifles tease me now !  
 They swarm like summer flies ;  
 They cleave to everything I do,  
 And swim before my eyes.

How dull the Sabbath day,  
 Without the Sabbath's Lord !  
 How toilsome then to sing and pray,  
 And wait upon the Word !

Of all the truths I hear,  
 How few delight my taste !  
 I glean a berry here and there,  
 But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)  
 Still hope to be supplied ;

No pleasure else is worth a thought,  
Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,  
Unworthy of His care,  
The Lord will my desire perform,  
And grant me all my prayer.

#### XLII. SELF-ACQUAINTANCE.

DEAR Lord ! accept a sinful heart,  
Which of itself complains,  
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,  
The evil it contains.

There fiery seeds of anger lurk,  
Which often hurt my frame ;  
And wait but for the tempter's work,  
To fan them to a flame.

Legality holds out a bribe  
To purchase life from Thee ;  
And Discontent would fain prescribe  
How Thou shalt deal with me.

While Unbelief withstands Thy grace,  
And puts the mercy by ;  
Presumption, with a brow of brass,  
Says, " Give me, or I die ! "

How eager are my thoughts to roam,  
In quest of what they love !  
But ah ! when duty calls them home,  
How heavily they move !

Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,  
Transform me by Thy power,  
And make me Thy beloved abode,  
And let me roam no more.

#### XLIII. PRAYER FOR PATIENCE.

LORD, who hast suffer'd all for me,  
My peace and pardon to procure,  
The lighter cross I bear for Thee,  
Help me with patience to endure.

The storm of loud repining hush ;  
I would in humble silence mourn ;  
Why should the unburnt, though burning bush,  
Be angry as the crackling thorn ?

Man should not faint at Thy rebuke,  
 Like Joshua falling on his face,\*  
 When the cursed thing that Achan took  
 Brought Israel into just disgrace.

Perhaps some golden wedge suppress'd,  
 Some secret sin offends my God;  
 Perhaps that Babylonish vest,  
 Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

Ah! were I buffeted all day,  
 Mock'd, crown'd with thorns, and spit upon,  
 I yet should have no right to say,  
 My great distress is mine alone.

Let me not angrily declare  
 No pain was ever sharp like mine,  
 Nor murmur at the cross I bear,  
 But rather weep, remembering Thine.

#### XLIV. SUBMISSION.

O LORD, my best desire fulfil,  
 And help me to resign  
 Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,  
 And make Thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at Thy command,  
 Whose love forbids my fears?  
 Or tremble at the gracious hand  
 That wipes away my tears?

No, rather let me freely yield  
 What most I prize to Thee;  
 Who never hast a good withheld,  
 Or wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favour, all my journey through,  
 Thou art engaged to grant;  
 What else I want, or think I do,  
 'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,  
 Shall I resist them both?

A poor blind creature of a day,  
 And crush'd before the moth!

But ah! my inward spirit cries,  
 Still bind me to Thy sway;  
 Else the next cloud that veils the skies  
 Drives all these thoughts away.

\* Joshua vii. 10, 11.

## XLV. THE HAPPY CHANGE.

How bless'd Thy creature is, O God,  
 When with a single eye,  
 He views the lustre of Thy Word,  
 The dayspring from on high !  
 Through all the storms that veil the skies  
 And frown on earthly things,  
 The Sun of Righteousness he eyes,  
 With healing on His wings.  
 Struck by that light, the human heart,  
 A barren soil no more,  
 Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,  
 Where serpents lurk'd before.\*  
 The soul, a dreary province once  
 Of Satan's dark domain,  
 Feels a new empire form'd within,  
 And owns a heavenly reign.  
 The glorious orb whose golden beams  
 The fruitful year control,  
 Since first obedient to Thy Word,  
 He started from the goal,  
 Has cheer'd the nations with the joys  
 His orient rays impart ;  
 But, Jesus, 'tis Thy light alone  
 Can shine upon the heart.

## XLVI. RETIREMENT.

FAR from the world, O Lord, I flee,  
 From strife and tumult far ;  
 From scenes where Satan wages still  
 His most successful war.  
 The calm retreat, the silent shade,  
 With prayer and praise agree ;  
 And seem, by Thy sweet bounty made,  
 For those who follow Thee.  
 There if Thy Spirit touch the soul,  
 And grace her mean abode,  
 Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,  
 She communes with her God !  
 There like the nightingale she pours  
 Her solitary lays ;  
 Nor asks a witness of her song,  
 Nor thirsts for human praise.

\* Isaiah xxxv. 7.



Author and Guardian of my life,  
 Sweet source of light Divine,  
 And,—all harmonious names in one,—  
 My Saviour ! Thou art mine !

What thanks I owe Thee, and what love,  
 A boundless, endless store,  
 Shall echo through the realms above,  
 When time shall be no more.

XLVII. THE HIDDEN LIFE.

To tell the Saviour all my wants,  
 How pleasing is the task !  
 Nor less to praise Him when He grants  
 Beyond what I can ask.

My labouring spirit vainly seeks  
 To tell but half the joy,  
 With how much tenderness He speaks,  
 And helps me to reply.

Nor were it wise, nor should I choose,  
 Such secrets to declare ;  
 Like precious wines their taste they lose,  
 Exposed to open air.

But this with boldness I proclaim,  
 Nor care if thousands hear,  
 Sweet is the ointment of His name,  
 Not life is half so dear.

And can you frown, my former friends,  
 Who knew what once I was,  
 And blame the song that thus commends  
 The Man who bore the cross ?

Trust me, I draw the likeness true,  
 And not as fancy paints ;  
 Such honour may He give to you,  
 For such have all His saints.

XLVIII. JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING.

SOMETIMES a light surprises  
 The Christian while he sings ;  
 It is the Lord who rises  
 With healing on His wings :  
 When comforts are declining,  
 He grants the soul again  
 A season of clear shining,  
 To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation  
 We sweetly then pursue  
 The theme of God's salvation,  
 And find it ever new ;  
 Set free from present sorrow,  
 We cheerfully can say,  
 E'en let the unknown to-morrow \*  
 Bring with it what it may !

It can bring with it nothing,  
 But He will bear us through ;  
 Who gives the lilies clothing,  
 Will clothe His people too ;  
 Beneath the spreading heavens  
 No creature but is fed ;  
 And He who feeds the ravens  
 Will give His children bread.

Though vine nor fig tree neither †  
 Their wonted fruit shall bear,  
 Though all the field should wither,  
 Nor flocks nor herds be there :  
 Yet God the same abiding,  
 His praise shall tune my voice ;  
 For, while in Him confiding,  
 I cannot but rejoice.

#### XLIX. TRUE PLEASURES.

LORD, my soul with pleasure springs  
 When Jesus's name I hear ;  
 And when God the Spirit brings  
 The word of promise near :  
 Beauties too, in holiness,  
 Still delighted I perceive ;  
 Nor have words that can express  
 The joys Thy precepts give.

Clothed in sanctity and grace,  
 How sweet it is to see  
 Those who love Thee as they pass,  
 Or when they wait on Thee.  
 Pleasant too to sit and tell  
 What we owe to love Divine ;  
 Till our bosoms grateful swell,  
 And eyes begin to shine.

Those the comforts I possess,  
 Which God shall still increase,  
 All His ways are pleasantness, ‡  
 And all His paths are peace.

\* Matthew vi. 34.

† Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.

‡ Prov. iii. 17.

Nothing Jesus did or spoke,  
 Henceforth let me ever slight;  
 For I love His easy yoke,\*  
 And find His burden light.

L. THE CHRISTIAN.

HONOUR and happiness unite  
 To make the Christian's name a praise;  
 How fair the scene, how clear the light,  
 That fills the remnant of His days!

A kingly character He bears,  
 No change His priestly office knows;  
 Unfading is the crown He wears,  
 His joys can never reach a close.

Adorn'd with glory from on high,  
 Salvation shines upon His face;  
 His robe is of the ethereal dye,  
 His steps are dignity and grace.

Inferior honours He disdains,  
 Nor stoops to take applause from earth;  
 The King of kings Himself maintains  
 The expenses of His heavenly birth.

The noblest creature seen below,  
 Ordain'd to fill a throne above;  
 God gives him all He can bestow,  
 His kingdom of eternal love!

My soul is ravish'd at the thought!  
 Methinks from earth I see Him rise!  
 Angels congratulate His lot,  
 And shout Him welcome to the skies!

LI. LIVELY HOPE AND GRACIOUS FEAR.

I WAS a grovelling creature once,  
 And basely cleaved to earth;  
 I wanted spirit to renounce  
 The clod that gave me birth.

But God hath breathed upon a worm,  
 And sent me from above  
 Wings such as clothe an angel's form,  
 The wings of joy and love.

With these to Pisgah's top I fly  
 And there delighted stand,

\* Matt. xi. 30.

To view, beneath a shining sky,  
 The spacious promised land.  
 The Lord of all the vast domain  
 Has promised it to me,  
 The length and breadth of all the plain  
 As far as faith can see.  
 How glorious is my privilege !  
 To Thee for help I call ;  
 I stand upon a mountain's edge,  
 Oh save me, lest I fall !  
 Though much exalted in the Lord,  
 My strength is not my own ;  
 Then let me tremble at His word,  
 And none shall cast me down.

## LII. FOR THE POOR.

WHEN Hagar found the bottle spent,  
 And wept o'er Ishmael,  
 A message from the Lord was sent  
 To guide her to a well.\*  
 Should not Elijah's cake and cruse †  
 Convince us at this day,  
 A gracious God will not refuse  
 Provisions by the way ?  
 His saints and servants shall be fed,  
 The promise is secure ;  
 "Bread shall be given them," as He said,  
 "Their water shall be sure." ‡  
 Repasts far richer they shall prove,  
 Than all earth's dainties are ;  
 'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love,  
 Though in the meanest fare.  
 To Jesus then your trouble bring,  
 Nor murmur at your lot ;  
 While you are poor and He is King,  
 You shall not be forgot.

## LIII. MY SOUL THIRSTETH FOR GOD.

I THIRST, but not as once I did,  
 The vain delights of earth to share ;  
 Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid  
 That I should seek my pleasures there.

\* Genesis xxi. 19.

† 1 Kings xvii. 14.

‡ Isaiah xxxiii. 16.

It was the sight of Thy dear cross  
 First wean'd my soul from earthly things ;  
 And taught me to esteem as dross  
 The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from Thee,  
 That quickens all things where it flows,  
 And makes a wretched thorn like me  
 Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.

Dear fountain of delight unknown !  
 No longer sink below the brim ;  
 But overflow, and pour me down  
 A living and life-giving stream !

For sure of all the plants that share  
 The notice of thy Father's eye,  
 None proves less grateful to His care,  
 Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

#### LIV. LOVE CONSTRAINING TO OBEDIENCE.

No strength of nature can suffice  
 To serve the Lord aright :  
 And what she has she misapplies,  
 For want of clearer light.

How long beneath the law I lay  
 In bondage and distress ;  
 I toil'd the precept to obey,  
 But toil'd without success.

Then, to abstain from outward sin  
 Was more than I could do ;  
 Now, if I feel its power within,  
 I feel I hate it too.

Then all my servile works were done  
 A righteousness to raise ;  
 Now, freely chosen in the Son,  
 I freely choose His ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word,  
 "That I may worthier grow ?"  
 "What shall I render to the Lord ?"  
 Is my inquiry now.

To see the law by Christ fulfill'd  
 And hear His pardoning voice  
 Changes a slave into a child,\*  
 And duty into choice.

\* Romans iii. 31.



## LV. THE HEART HEALED AND CHANGED BY MERCY.

SIN enslaved me many years,  
 And led me bound and blind;  
 Till at length a thousand fears  
 Came swarming o'er my mind.  
 "Where," said I, in deep distress,  
 "Will these sinful pleasures end?  
 How shall I secure my peace,  
 And make the Lord my friend?"

Friends and ministers said much  
 The gospel to enforce;  
 But my blindness still was such,  
 I chose a legal course:  
 Much I fasted, watch'd, and strove,  
 Scarce would shew my face abroad,  
 Fear'd almost to speak or move,  
 A stranger still to God.

Thus afraid to trust His grace,  
 Long time did I rebel;  
 Till despairing of my case,  
 Down at His feet I fell:  
 Then my stubborn heart He broke,  
 And subdued me to His sway;  
 By a simple word He spoke,  
 "Thy sins are done away."

## LVI. HATRED OF SIN.

HOLY Lord God! I love Thy truth,  
 Nor dare Thy least commandment slight;  
 Yet pierced by sin, the serpent's tooth,  
 I mourn the anguish of the bite.

But though the poison lurks within,  
 Hope bids me still with patience wait;  
 Till death shall set me free from sin,  
 Free from the only thing I hate.

Had I a throne above the rest,  
 Where angels and archangels dwell,  
 One sin, unslain, within my breast,  
 Would make that heaven as dark as hell.

The prisoner sent to breathe fresh air,  
 And blest with liberty again,  
 Would mourn were he condemn'd to wear  
 One link of all his former chain.

But, oh ! no foe invades the bliss,  
 When glory crowns the Christian's head ;  
 One view of Jesus as He is  
 Will strike all sin for ever dead.

## LVII. THE NEW CONVERT.

THE new-born child of gospel grace,  
 Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,  
 Beneath Emmanuel's shining face  
 Lifts up his blooming branch on high.

No fears he feels, he sees no foes,  
 No conflict yet his faith employs,  
 Nor has he learnt to whom he owes  
 The strength and peace his soul enjoys.

But sin soon darts its cruel sting,  
 And comforts sinking day by day,  
 What seem'd his own, a self-fed spring,  
 Proves but a brook that glides away.

When Gideon arm'd his numerous host,  
 The Lord soon made his numbers less ;  
 And said, " Lest Israel vainly boast,\*  
 My arm procured me this success !"

Thus will He bring our spirits down,  
 And draw our ebbing comforts low,  
 That saved by grace, but not our own,  
 We may not claim the praise we owe.

## LVIII. TRUE AND FALSE COMFORTS.

O GOD, whose favourable eye  
 The sin-sick soul revives,  
 Holy and heavenly is the joy  
 Thy shining presence gives.

Not such as hypocrites suppose,  
 Who with a graceless heart  
 Taste not of Thee, but drink a dose,  
 Prepared by Satan's art.

Intoxicating joys are theirs,  
 Who while they boast their light,  
 And seem to soar above the stars,  
 Are plunging into night.

Lull'd in a soft and fatal sleep,  
 They sin and yet rejoice ;

\* Judges vii. 2.

Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,  
Would they not hear His voice?

Be mine the comforts that reclaim  
The soul from Satan's power ;  
That make me blush for what I am,  
And hate my sin the more.

'Tis joy enough, my All in All,  
At Thy dear feet to lie ;  
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,  
And none can higher fly.

LIX. A LIVING AND A DEAD FAITH.

THE Lord receives His highest praise  
From humble minds and hearts sincere ;  
While all the loud professor says  
Offends the righteous Judge's ear.

To walk as children of the day,  
To mark the precepts' holy light,  
To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,  
Shew who are pleasing in His sight.

Not words alone it cost the Lord,  
To purchase pardon for His own ;  
Nor will a soul by grace restored  
Return the Saviour words alone.

With golden bells, the priestly vest,  
And rich pomegranates border'd round,\*  
The need of holiness express'd,  
And call'd for fruit as well as sound.

Easy indeed it were to reach  
A mansion in the courts above,  
If swelling words and fluent speech  
Might serve instead of faith and love.

But none shall gain the blissful place,  
Or God's unclouded glory see,  
Who talks of free and sovereign grace,  
Unless that grace has made him free !

LX. ABUSE OF THE GOSPEL.

Too many, Lord, abuse Thy grace  
In this licentious day,  
And while they boast they see Thy face,  
They turn their own away.

\* Exodus xxviii. 33.

Thy book displays a gracious light  
That can the blind restore;  
But these are dazzled by the sight,  
And blinded still the more.

The pardon such presume upon,  
They do not beg, but steal;  
And when they plead it at Thy throne,  
Oh! where's the Spirit's seal?

Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,  
The dear Redeemer bled?  
Is this the grace the saints imbibe  
From Christ the living head?

Ah, Lord, we know Thy chosen few  
Are fed with heavenly fare;  
But these,—the wretched husks they chew,  
Proclaim them what they are.

The liberty our hearts implore  
Is not to live in sin;  
But still to wait at Wisdom's door,  
Till Mercy calls us in.

#### LXI. THE NARROW WAY.

WHAT thousands never knew the road!  
What thousands hate it when 'tis known!  
None but the chosen tribes of God  
Will seek or choose it for their own.

A thousand ways in ruin end,  
One only leads to joys on high;  
By that my willing steps ascend,  
Pleased with a journey to the sky.

No more I ask or hope to find  
Delight or happiness below;  
Sorrow may well possess the mind  
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

The joy that fades is not for me,  
I seek immortal joys above;  
There glory without end shall be  
The bright reward of faith and love.

Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,  
Contented lick your native dust!  
But God shall fight with all his storms,  
Against the idol of your trust.

## LXII. DEPENDENCE.

To keep the lamp alive,  
 With oil we fill the bowl;  
 'Tis water makes the willow thrive,  
 And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand  
 Supplies the living stream;  
 It is not at our own command,  
 But still derived from Him.

Beware of Peter's word,\*  
 Nor confidently say,  
 "I never will deny Thee, Lord,"—  
 But,—“Grant I never may.”

Man's wisdom is to seek  
 His strength in God alone;  
 And e'en an angel would be weak,  
 Who trusted in his own.

Retreat beneath His wings,  
 And in His grace confide!  
 This more exalts the King of kings,†  
 Than all your works beside.

In Jesus is our store,  
 Grace issues from His throne;  
 Whoever says, “I want no more,”  
 Confesses he has none.

## LXIII. NOT OF WORKS.

GRACE, triumphant in the throne,  
 Scorns a rival, reigns alone;  
 Come and bow beneath her sway!  
 Cast your idol works away!  
 Works of man, when made his plea,  
 Never shall accepted be;  
 Fruits of pride (vain-glorious worm!)  
 Are the best he can perform.

Self, the god his soul adores,  
 Influences all his powers;  
 Jesus is a slighted name,  
 Self-advancement all his aim:  
 But when God the Judge shall come,  
 To pronounce the final doom,  
 Then for rocks and hills to hide  
 All his works and all his pride!

\* Matthew xxvi. 33.

† John vi. 29.



Still the boasting heart replies,  
 What the worthy and the wise,  
 Friends to temperance and peace,  
 Have not these a righteousness?  
 Banish every vain pretence  
 Built on human excellence;  
 Perish every thing in man,  
 But the grace that never can.

## LXIV. PRAISE FOR FAITH.

OF all the gifts Thine hand bestows,  
 Thou Giver of all good!  
 Not heaven itself a richer knows  
 Than my Redeemer's blood.

Faith too, the blood-receiving grace,  
 From the same hand we gain;  
 Else, sweetly as it suits our case,  
 That gift had been in vain.

Till Thou Thy teaching power apply,  
 Our hearts refuse to see,  
 And weak, as a distemper'd eye,  
 Shut out the view of Thee.

Blind to the merits of Thy Son,  
 What misery we endure!  
 Yet fly that Hand from which alone  
 We could expect a cure.

We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,  
 To Thee our all we owe;  
 The precious Saviour, and the power  
 That makes Him precious too.

## LXV. GRACE AND PROVIDENCE.

ALMIGHTY KING! whose wondrous hand  
 Supports the weight of sea and land;  
 Whose grace is such a boundless store,  
 No heart shall break that sighs for more;

Thy providence supplies my food,  
 And 'tis Thy blessing makes it good;  
 My soul is nourish'd by Thy Word,  
 Let soul and body praise the Lord!

My streams of outward comfort came  
 From Him who built this earthly frame;  
 Whate'er I want His bounty gives,  
 By whom my soul for ever lives.

Either His hand preserves from pain,  
Or, if I feel it, heals again ;  
From Satan's malice shields my breast,  
Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low  
Beneath the gratitude I owe !  
It means Thy praise, however poor,  
An angel's song can do no more.

**LXVI. I WILL PRAISE THE LORD AT ALL TIMES.**

WINTER has a joy for me,  
While the Saviour's charms I read,  
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,  
In the snowdrop's pensive head.

Spring returns, and brings along  
Life-invigorating suns :  
Hark ! the turtle's plaintive song  
Seems to speak His dying groans !

Summer has a thousand charms,  
All expressive of His worth ;  
'Tis His sun that lights and warms,  
His the air that cools the earth.

What ! has autumn left to say  
Nothing of a Saviour's grace ?  
Yes, the beams of milder day  
Tell me of His smiling face.

Light appears with early dawn,  
While the sun makes haste to rise ;  
See His bleeding beauties drawn  
On the blushes of the skies.

Evening with a silent pace,  
Slowly moving in the west,  
Shews an emblem of His grace,  
Points to an eternal rest.

**LXVII. LONGING TO BE WITH CHRIST.**

To Jesus, the crown of my hope,  
My soul is in haste to be gone ;  
Oh bear me, ye cherubim, up,  
And waft me away to His throne !

My Saviour, whom absent I love,  
Whom, not having seen I adore ;  
Whose name is exalted above  
All glory, dominion, and power ;

Dissolve thou these bonds that detain  
 My soul from her portion in thee,  
 Ah ! strike off this adamant chain,  
 And make me eternally free.

When that happy era begins,  
 When array'd in Thy glories I shine,  
 Nor grieve any more, by my sins,  
 The bosom on which I recline ;

Oh then shall the veil be removed,  
 And round me Thy brightness be pour'd  
 I shall meet Him whom absent I loved,  
 I shall see Him whom unseen I adored.

And then, never more shall the fears,  
 The trials, temptations, and woes,  
 Which darken this valley of tears,  
 Intrude on my blissful repose.

Or, if yet remember'd above,  
 Remembrance no sadness shall raise,  
 They will be but new signs of Thy love,  
 New themes for my wonder and praise.

Thus the strokes which from sin and from pain  
 Shall set me eternally free,  
 Will but strengthen and rivet the chain  
 Which binds me, my Saviour, to Thee.

#### LXVIII. LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS.

[This hymn was composed during a solitary walk in the fields, while in dread of a recurrence of his malady ; in it he expresses his resignation and confidence in God.]

GOD moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform ;  
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
 Of never-failing skill,  
 He treasures up His bright designs,  
 And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
 The clouds ye so much dread  
 Are big with mercy, and shall break  
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
 But trust Him for His grace ;  
 Behind a frowning providence  
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,\*  
And scan His work in vain:  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

\* John xiii. 7.

## MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

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### THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN; SHEWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

[The ballad of John Gilpin was originally written for his own circle, with no view to publicity. Mrs Unwin sent it to the *Public Advertiser*, where it attracted little notice. Several years after, it was brought under the notice of Mr Henderson the actor, who was giving a series of recitations; its success was immense.]

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen  
Of credit and renown,  
A trainband captain eke was he  
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,  
"Though wedded we have been  
These twice ten tedious years, yet we  
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,  
And we will then repair  
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,  
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister and my sister's child,  
Myself and children three,  
Will fill the chaise, so you must ride  
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire  
Of womankind but one,  
And you are she, my dearest dear,  
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linendraper bold,  
As all the world doth know,  
And my good friend the calender  
Will lend his horse to go."



Quoth Mrs 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."

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.

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.

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.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,  
Were never folk so glad,  
The stones did rattle underneath  
As if Cheapside were mad.

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;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,  
His journey to begin,  
When, turning round his head, he saw  
Three customers come in.

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.

'Twas long before the customers  
Were suited to their mind,  
When Betty screaming came down stairs,  
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he,— "yet bring it me,  
My leathern belt likewise,  
In which I bear my trusty sword  
When I do exercise."

Now mistress Gilpin, careful soul!  
Had two stone bottles found,  
To hold the liquor that she loved,  
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,  
Through which the belt he drew,  
And hung a bottle on each side  
To make his balance true.

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.

Now see him mounted once again  
Upon his nimble steed,  
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones  
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road  
Beneath his well-shod feet,  
The snorting beast began to trot,  
Which gall'd him in his seat.

"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.

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.

His horse, who never in that sort  
Had handled been before,  
What thing upon his back had got  
Did wonder more and more.

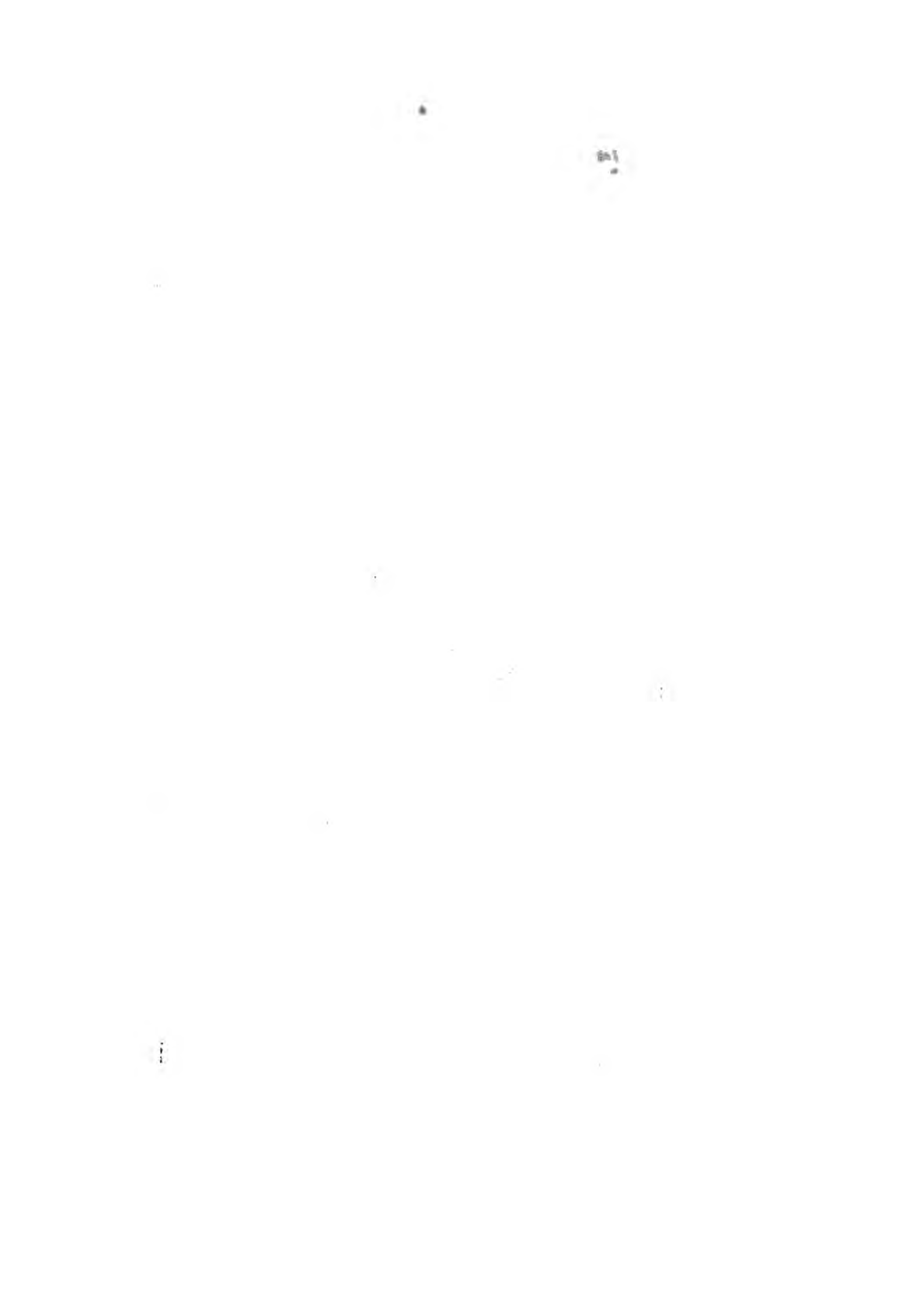
Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,  
Away went hat and wig,  
He little dreamt when he set out,  
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,  
Like streamer long and gay,  
Till loop and button failing both,  
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern  
The bottles he had slung,  
A bottle swinging at each side,  
As hath been said or sung.

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.





Away went Gilpin—who but he !  
His fame soon spread around,—  
He carries weight ! he rides a race !  
'Tis for a thousand pound !

And still as fast as he drew near,  
'Twas wonderful to view  
How in a trice the turnpike men  
Their gates wide open threw.

And now as he went bowing down  
His reeking head full low,  
The bottles twain behind his back  
Were shatter'd at a blow.

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.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,  
With leathern girdle braced,  
For all might see the bottle necks  
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington  
These gambles he did play,  
Until he came unto the Wash  
Of Edmonton so gay.

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.

At Edmonton his loving wife  
From the balcony spied  
Her tender husband, wondering much  
To see how he did ride.

"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 !"

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.

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.



Away went Gilpin, out of breath,  
And sore against his will,  
Till at his friend the calender's  
His horse at last stood still.

The calender amazed to see  
His neighbour in such trim  
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,  
And thus accosted him :

“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?”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,  
And loved a timely joke,  
And thus unto the calender  
In merry guise he spoke :

“I came because your horse would come;  
And if I well forbode,  
My hat and wig will soon be here,  
They are upon the road.”

The calendar, right glad to find  
His friend in merry pin,  
Return'd him not a single word,  
But to the house went in;

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.

He held them up, and in his turn  
Thus shew'd his ready wit,  
“My head is twice as big as yours,  
They therefore needs must fit.

“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.”

Said John, “It is my wedding-day,  
And all the world would stare,  
If wife should dine at Edmonton,  
And I should dine at Ware.”

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.”

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 ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he  
Had heard a lion roar,  
And gallop'd off with all his might,  
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went Gilpin's hat and wig :  
He lost them sooner than at first,  
For why ?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw  
Her husband posting down  
Into the country far away,  
She pull'd out half-a-crown ;

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.”

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 ;

But not performing what he meant,  
And gladly would have done,  
The frightened steed he frightened more,  
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went postboy at his heels,  
The postboy's horse right glad to miss  
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road  
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,  
With postboy scampering in the rear,  
They raised the hue and cry :—

“ 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.

And now the turnpike gates again  
Flew open in short space,  
The toll-men thinking as before  
That Gilpin rode a race.

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.

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 !

---

VERSES WRITTEN AT BATH,

ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE, in 1748.

FORTUNE! I thank thee : gentle goddess, thanks  
 Not that my Muse, though bashful, shall deny  
 She would have thank'd thee rather, hadst thou cast  
 A treasure in her way ; for neither need  
 Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes  
 And bowel-raking pains of emptiness,  
 Nor noontide feast, nor evening's cool repast,  
 Hopes she from this, presumptuous—though perhaps  
 The cobbler, leather-carving artist, might.  
 Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon,  
 Whatever ; not as erst the fabled cock,  
 Vain-glorious fool, unknowing what he found,  
 Spurn'd the rich gem thou gavest him. Wherefore ah !  
 Why not on me that favour (worthier sure,)  
 Confer'dst thou, goddess ? Thou art blind, thou sayest :  
 Enough !—thy blindness shall excuse the deed.

Nor does my Muse no benefit exhale  
 From this thy scant indulgence ;—even here,  
 Hints, worthy sage philosophy, are found,  
 Illustrious hints to moralise my song.  
 This ponderous Heel of perforated hide  
 Compact, with pegs indented many a row,  
 Haply, (for such its massy form bespeaks,)  
 The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown  
 Upbore : on this supported oft he stretch'd,  
 With uncouth strides, along the furrow'd glebe,  
 Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time  
 (What will not cruel time ?) on awry step,  
 Sever'd the strict cohesion ; when, alas !  
 He, who could erst with even equal pace,  
 Pursue his destined way with symmetry  
 And some proportion form'd, now, on one side,  
 Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,  
 Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop !  
 With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on.

Thus fares it oft with other than the feet  
 Of humble villager :—the statesman thus,  
 Up the steep road where proud ambition leads,  
 Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds  
 His prosperous way ; nor fears miscarriage foul,  
 While policy prevails and friends prove true :  
 But that support soon failing, by him left  
 On whom he most depended,—basely left,  
 Betray'd, deserted,—from his airy height  
 Headlong he falls, and through the rest of life  
 Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

---

 PSALM CXXXVII.

To Babylon's proud waters brought,  
 In bondage where we lay,  
 With tears on Sion's Hill we thought,  
 And sigh'd our hours away ;  
 Neglected on the willows hung  
 Our useless harps, while every tongue  
 Bewail'd the fatal day.

Then did the base insulting foe  
 Some joyous notes demand,  
 Such as in Sion used to flow  
 From Judah's happy band :  
 Alas ! what joyous notes have we,  
 Our country spoil'd, no longer free,  
 And in a foreign land !

O Solyma ! if e'er thy praise  
 Be silent in my song,  
 Rude and unpleasing be the lays,  
 And artless be my tongue !  
 Thy name my fancy still employs ;  
 To thee, great fountain of my joys,  
 My sweetest airs belong.

Remember, Lord ! that hostile sound,  
 When Edom's children cried,  
 "Razed be her turrets to the ground,  
 And humbled be her pride !"  
 Remember, Lord ! and let the foe  
 The terrors of Thy vengeance know,  
 The vengeance they defied !

Thou too, great Babylon, shalt fall  
 A victim to our God ;  
 Thy monstrous crimes already call  
 For Heaven's chastising rod.

Happy who shall thy little ones  
Relentless dash against the stones,  
And spread their limbs abroad.

---

AN ODE,

ON READING MR RICHARDSON'S HISTORY OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON.

SAY, ye apostate and profane,  
Wretches who blush not to disdain  
Allegiance to your God,  
Did e'er your idly-wasted love  
Of virtue for her sake remove  
And lift you from the crowd?

Would you the race of glory run,  
Know, the devout, and they alone,  
Are equal to the task:  
The labours of the illustrious course  
Far other than the unaided force  
Of human vigour ask,

To arm against repeated ill  
The patient heart, too brave to feel  
The tortures of despair;  
Nor safer yet high-crested Pride,  
When wealth flows in with every tide  
To gain admittance there.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword  
The oppress'd;—unseen and unimplored,  
To cheer the face of woe;  
From lawless insult to defend  
An orphan's right, a fallen friend,  
And a forgiven foe;

These, these distinguish from the crowd,  
And these alone, the great and good,  
The guardians of mankind;  
Whose bosoms with these virtues heave,  
Oh, with what matchless speed, they leave  
The multitude behind!

Then ask ye, from what cause on earth  
Virtues like these derive their birth?  
Derived from Heaven alone,  
Full on that favour'd breast they shine,  
Where faith and resignation join  
To call the blessing down.



Such is that heart ;—but while the Muse  
 Thy theme, O Richardson, pursues,  
 Her feebler spirits faint ;  
 She cannot reach, and would not wrong,  
 That subject for an angel's song,  
 The hero, and the saint !

---

IN A LETTER TO C. P., ESQ.

ILL WITH THE RHEUMATISM.

GRANT me the Muse, ye gods ! whose humble flight  
 Seeks not the mountain-top's pernicious height ;  
 Who can the tall Parnassian cliff forsake,  
 To visit of the still Lethean lake ;  
 Now her slow pinions brush the silent shore,  
 Now gently skim the unwrinkled waters o'er,  
 There dips her downy plumes, thence upward flies,  
 And sheds soft slumbers on her votary's eyes.

---

IN A LETTER TO THE SAME.

IN IMITATION OF SHAKSPEARE.

TRUST me the meed of praise, dealt thriftily  
 From the nice scale of judgment, honours more  
 Than does the lavish and o'erbearing tide  
 Of profuse courtesy. Not all the gems  
 Of India's richest soil at random spread  
 O'er the gay vesture of some glittering dame,  
 Give such alluring vantage to the person,  
 As the scant lustre of a few, with choice  
 And comely guise of ornament disposed.

---

SONG.

No more shall hapless Celia's ears  
 Be flutter'd with the cries  
 Of lovers drown'd in floods of tears,  
 Or murder'd by her eyes ;  
 No serenades to break her rest,  
 Nor songs her slumbers to molest,  
 With my fa, la, la.

The fragrant flowers that once would bloom  
 And flourish in her hair,

Since she no longer breathes perfume  
 Their odours to repair,  
 Must fade, alas! and wither now,  
 As placed on any common brow,  
 With my fa, la, la.

Her lip, so winning and so meek,  
 No longer has its charms;  
 As well she might by whistling seek  
 To lure us to her arms;  
 Affected once 'tis real now,  
 As her forsaken gums may shew,  
 With my fa, la, la.

The down that on her chin so smooth  
 So lovely once appear'd,  
 That, too, has left her with her youth,  
 Or sprouts into a beard;  
 As fields, so green when newly sown,  
 With stubble stiff are overgrown,  
 With my fa, la, la.

Then, Celia, leave your apish tricks,  
 And change your girlish airs,  
 For ombre, snuff, and politics,  
 Those joys that suit your years;  
 No patches can lost youth recall,  
 Nor whitewash prop a tumbling wall,  
 With my fa, la, la.

---

AN ATTEMPT AT THE MANNER OF WALLER.

DRAYTON, *March*, 1753.

DID not thy reason and thy sense,  
 With most persuasive eloquence,  
 Convince me that obedience due,  
 None may so justly claim as you,  
 By right of beauty you would be  
 Mistress o'er my heart and me.

Then fear not I should e'er rebel  
 My gentle love! I might as well  
 A forward peevishness put on,  
 And quarrel with the mid-day sun;  
 Or question who gave him a right  
 To be so fiery and so bright.

Nay, this were less absurd and vain  
 Than disobedience to thy reign;

His beams are often too severe ;  
 But thou art mild, as thou art fair ;  
 First from necessity we own your sway,  
 Then scorn our freedom, and by choice obey.

---

A SONG.

THE sparkling eye, the mantling cheek,  
 The polish'd front, the snowy neck,  
 How seldom we behold in one !  
 Glossy locks, and brow serene,  
 Venus' smiles, Diana's mien,  
 All meet in you, and you alone.

Beauty, like other powers, maintains  
 Her empire, and by union reigns ;  
 Each single feature faintly warms :  
 But where at once we view display'd  
 Unblemish'd grace, the perfect maid  
 Our eyes, our ears, our heart alarms.

So when on earth the god of day  
 Obliquely sheds his temper'd ray,  
 Through convex orbs the beams transmit,  
 The beams that gently warm'd before,  
 Collected, gently warm no more,  
 But glow with more prevailing heat.

---

A SONG.

ON the green margin of the brook  
 Despairing Phyllida reclined,  
 Whilst every sigh, and every look,  
 Declared the anguish of her mind.  
 Am I less lovely then ? (she cries,  
 And in the waves her form survey'd ;)   
 Oh yes, I see my languid eyes,  
 My faded cheek, my colour fled :  
 These eyes no more like lightning pierced,  
 These cheeks grew pale, when Damon first  
 His Phyllida betray'd.

The rose he in his bosom wore,  
 How oft upon my breast was seen !  
 And when I kiss'd the drooping flower,  
 Behold, he cried, it blooms again !  
 The wreaths that bound my braided hair,  
 Himself next day was proud to wear  
 At church, or on the green.

While thus sad Phyllida lamented,  
 Chance brought unlucky Thyrsis on;  
 Unwillingly the nymph consented,  
 But Damon first the cheat begun.  
 She wiped the fallen tears away,  
 Then sigh'd and blush'd, as who should say,  
 Ah! Thyrsis, I am won.

---

#### UPON A VENERABLE RIVAL.

FULL thirty frosts since thou wert young  
 Have chill'd the wither'd grove,  
 Thou wretch! and hast thou lived so long,  
 Nor yet forgot to love!

Ye Sages! spite of your pretences  
 To wisdom, you must own  
 Your folly frequently commences  
 When you acknowledge none.

Not that I deem it weak to love,  
 Or folly to admire;  
 But ah! the pangs we lovers prove  
 Far other years require.

Unheeded on the youthful brow  
 The beams of Phœbus play;  
 But unsupported Age stoops low  
 Beneath the sultry ray.

For once, then, if untutor'd youth,  
 Youth unapproved by years,  
 May chance to deviate into truth,  
 When your experience errs;

For once attempt not to despise  
 What I esteem a rule:  
 Who early loves, though young, is wise,—  
 Who old, though grey, a fool.

---

#### ON THE PICTURE OF A SLEEPING CHILD.

FROM THE LATIN OF VINCENT BOURNE.

SWEET babe, whose image here express'd  
 Does thy peaceful slumbers shew:  
 Guilt or fear, to break thy rest,  
 Never did thy spirit know.

Soothing slumbers, soft repose,  
Such as mock the painter's skill,  
Such as innocence bestows,  
Harmless infant, lull thee still!

---

## THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH.

MORTALS! around your destined heads  
Thick fly the shafts of Death,  
And lo! the savage spoiler spreads  
A thousand toils beneath.

In vain we trifle with our fate;  
Try every art in vain;  
At best we but prolong the date,  
And lengthen out our pain.

Fondly we think all danger fled,  
For Death is ever nigh;  
Outstrips our unavailing speed,  
Or meets us as we fly.

Thus the wreck'd mariner may strive  
Some desert shore to gain,  
Secure of life, if he survive  
The fury of the main.

But there, to famine doom'd a prey,  
Finds the mistaken wretch  
He but escaped the troubled sea,  
To perish on the beach.

Since then in vain we strive to guard  
Our frailty from the foe,  
Lord, let me live not unprepared  
To meet the fatal blow!

---

## AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, ESQ.

1754.

'Tis not that I design to rob  
Thee of thy birthright, gentle Bob,  
For thou art born sole heir and single  
Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;  
Nor that I mean, while thus I knit  
My threadbare sentiments together,  
To shew my genius or my wit,  
When God and you know, I have neither;

---



Or such, as might be better shown  
 By letting poetry alone.  
 'Tis not with either of these views,  
 That I presume to address the Muse :  
 But to divert a fierce banditti,  
 (Sworn foes to every thing that's witty,)  
 That, with a black infernal train,  
 Make cruel inroads in my brain,  
 And daily threaten to drive thence  
 My little garrison of sense :  
 The fierce banditti which I mean,  
 Are gloomy thoughts led on by Spleen.  
 Then there's another reason yet,  
 Which is, that I may fairly quit  
 The debt which justly became due  
 The moment when I heard from you :  
 And you might grumble, crony mine,  
 If paid in any other coin ;  
 Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,  
 (I would say twenty sheets of prose,)  
 Can ne'er be deem'd worth half so much  
 As one of gold, and yours was such.  
 Thus the preliminaries settled,  
 I fairly find myself pitch-kettled ; \*  
 And cannot see, though few see better,  
 How I shall hammer out a letter.

First, for a thought—since all agree—  
 A thought—I have it—let me see—  
 'Tis gone again—plague on't ! I thought  
 I had it—but I have it not.  
 Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,  
 That useful thing, her needle, gone,  
 Rake well the cinders, sweep the floor,  
 And sift the dust behind the door ;  
 While eager Hodge beholds the prize  
 In old grimalkin's glaring eyes ;  
 And Gammer finds it on her knees  
 In every shining straw she sees.  
 This simile were apt enough,  
 But I've another, critic-proof.  
 The virtuoso thus at noon,  
 Broiling beneath a July sun,  
 The gilded butterfly pursues  
 O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews,  
 And after many a vain essay  
 To captivate the tempting prey,

\* Pitch-kettled, a favourite phrase at the time when this Epistle was written, expressive of being puzzled, or what in the Spectator's time would have been called *bamboozled*.—HAYLEY.

Gives him at length the lucky pat,  
 And has him safe beneath his hat;  
 Then lifts it gently from the ground;  
 But ah! 'tis lost as soon as found;  
 Culprit his liberty regains;  
 Flits out of sight and mocks his pains.  
 The sense was dark, 'twas therefore fit  
 With simile to illustrate it;  
 But as too much obscures the sight,  
 As often as too little light,  
 We have our similes cut short,  
 For matters of more grave import.  
 That Matthew's numbers run with ease  
 Each man of common sense agrees;  
 All men of common sense allow,  
 That Robert's lines are easy too;  
 Where then the preference shall we place,  
 Or how do justice in this case?  
 Matthew (says Fame) with endless pains  
 Smoothed and refined the meanest strains,  
 Nor suffer'd one ill-chosen rhyme  
 To escape him at the idlest time;  
 And thus o'er all a lustre cast,  
 That while the language lives shall last.  
 An't please your ladyship (quoth I,—  
 For 'tis my business to reply;)—  
 Sure so much labour, so much toil,  
 Bespeak at last a stubborn soil.  
 Theirs be the laurel-wreath decreed,  
 Who both write well and write full speed;  
 Who throw their Helicon about  
 As freely as a conduit spout.  
 Friend Robert, thus like *chien savant*,  
 Lets fall a poem *en passant*,  
 Nor needs his genuine ore refine;  
 'Tis ready polish'd from the mine.

---

 OF HIMSELF.

[Cowper in this poem humorously alludes to the effect which his residence in the Temple had on him.]

WILLIAM was once a bashful youth;  
 His modesty was such,  
 That one might say (to say the truth)  
 He rather had too much.

Some said that it was want of sense,  
 And others want of spirit,

(So blest a thing is impudence,  
 While others could not bear it.  
 But some a different notion had,  
 And at each other winking,  
 Observed, that though he little said,  
 He paid it off with thinking.  
 Howe'er, it happen'd, by degrees,  
 He mended and grew perter;  
 In company was more at ease,  
 And dress'd a little smarter;  
 Nay, now and then would look quite gay,  
 As other people do;  
 And sometimes said, or tried to say,  
 A witty thing or so.  
 He eyed the women, and made free  
 To comment on their shapes;  
 So that there was, or seem'd to be,  
 No fear of a relapse.  
 The women said, who thought him rough,  
 But now no longer foolish,  
 "The creature may do well enough,  
 But wants a deal of polish."  
 At length, improved from head to heel,  
 'Twere scarce too much to say,  
 No dancing bear was so genteel,  
 Or half so *dégagé*.  
 Now that a miracle so strange  
 May not in vain be shown,  
 Let the dear maid who wrought the change  
 E'en claim him for her own.

CUTFIELD, *July*, 1752.

### AN APOLOGY

FOR NOT SHEWING HER WHAT I HAD WROTE.

[The Delia of the following pieces was his cousin, Miss Theodora Jane Cowper, between whom and the Poet there was a strong mutual attachment. Her father, Mr Ashley Cowper, objected to the union, and the lovers separated never to meet again. Miss Cowper lived till 1824, never having married.]

DID not my Muse (what can she less?)  
 Perceive her own unworthiness,  
 Could she by some well-chosen theme,  
 But hope to merit your esteem,

She would not thus conceal her lays,  
 Ambitious to deserve your praise.  
 But should my Delia take offence,  
 And frown on her impertinence,  
 In silence, sorrowing and forlorn,  
 Would the despairing trifler mourn,  
 Curse her ill-tuned, unpleasing lute,  
 Then sigh and sit for ever mute.  
 In secret therefore let her lay,  
 Squandering her idle notes away  
 In secret as she chants along,  
 Cheerful and careless in her song ;  
 Nor heeds she whether harsh or clear,  
 Free from each terror, every fear,  
 From that, of all most dreaded, free,  
 The terror of offending thee.

---

 AT THE SAME PLACE.

DELIA, the unkindest girl on earth,  
 When I besought the fair,  
 That favour of intrinsic worth,  
 A ringlet of her hair,  
 Refused that instant to comply  
 With my absurd request,  
 For reasons she could specify,  
 Some twenty score at least.  
 Trust me, my dear, however odd  
 It may appear to say,  
 I sought it merely to defraud  
 Thy spoiler of his prey.  
 Yet when its sister locks shall fade,  
 As quickly fade they must,  
 When all their beauties are decay'd  
 Their gloss, their colour, lost—  
 Ah then ! if haply to my share  
 Some slender pittance fall,  
 If I but gain one single hair,  
 Nor age usurp them all ;—  
 When you behold it still as sleek,  
 As lovely to the view,  
 As when it left thy snowy neck,—  
 That Eden where it grew,—  
 Then shall my Delia's self declare  
 That I profess'd the truth,  
 And have preserved my little share  
 In everlasting youth.

AT THE SAME PLACE.

THIS evening, Delia, you and I  
 Have managed most delightfully,  
 For with a frown we parted;  
 Having contrived some trifle that  
 We both may be much troubled at,  
 And sadly disconcerted.

Yet well as each perform'd their part,  
 We might perceive it was but art;  
 And that we both intended  
 To sacrifice a little ease;  
 For all such petty flaws as these  
 Are made but to be mended.

You knew, dissembler! all the while,  
 How sweet it was to reconcile  
 After this heavy pelt;  
 That we should gain by this allay  
 When next we met, and laugh away  
 The care we never felt.

Happy! when we but seek to endure  
 A little pain, then find a cure  
 By double joy requited;  
 For friendship, like a sever'd bone,  
 Improves and joins a stronger tone  
 When amply reunited.

---

 WRITTEN IN A QUARREL.

(THE DELIVERY OF IT PREVENTED BY A RECONCILIATION.)

THINK, Delia, with what cruel haste  
 Our fleeting pleasures move,  
 Nor heedless thus in sorrow waste  
 The moments due to love;

Be wise, my fair, and gently treat  
 These few that are our friends;  
 Think thus abused, what sad regret  
 Their speedy flight attends!

Sure in those eyes I loved so well,  
 And wish'd so long to see,  
 Anger I thought could never dwell,  
 Or anger aim'd at me.

No bold offence of mine I knew  
 Should e'er provoke your hate;  
 And, early taught to think you true,  
 Still hoped a gentler fate.



With kindness bless the present hour,  
 Or oh! we meet in vain!  
 What can we do in absence more  
 Than suffer and complain?  
 Fated to ills beyond redress,  
 We must endure our woe;  
 The days allow'd us to possess,  
 'Tis madness to forego.

---

## THE SYMPTOMS OF LOVE.

WOULD my Delia know if I love, let her take  
 My last thought at night, and the first when I wake;  
 When my prayers and best wishes preferr'd for her sake.

Let her guess what I muse on, when rambling alone  
 I stride o'er the stubble each day with my gun,  
 Never ready to shoot till the covey is flown.

Let her think what odd whimsies I have in my brain,  
 When I read one page over and over again,  
 And discover at last that I read it in vain.

Let her say why so fix'd and so steady my look,  
 Without ever regarding the person who spoke,  
 Still affecting to laugh, without hearing the joke.

Or why, when with pleasure her praises I hear,  
 (That sweetest of melody sure to my ear,)  
 I attend, and at once inattentive appear.

And lastly, when summon'd to drink to my flame,  
 Let her guess why I never once mention her name,  
 Though herself and the woman I love are the same.

---

SEE where the Thames, the purest stream  
 That wavers to the noonday beam,  
 Divides the vale below;  
 While like a vein of liquid ore  
 His waves enrich the happy shore,  
 Still shining as they flow.

Nor yet, my Delia, to the main  
 Runs the sweet tide without a stain,  
 Unsullied as it seems;  
 The nymphs of many a sabbie flood  
 Deform with streaks of oozy mud  
 The bosom of the Thames.

Some idle rivulets that feed  
 And suckle every noisome weed,  
 A sandy bottom boast ;  
 For ever bright, for ever clear,  
 The trifling shallow rills appear  
 In their own channel lost.

Thus fares it with the human soul,  
 Where copious floods of passion roll,  
 By genuine love supplied ;  
 Fair in itself the current shows,  
 But ah ! a thousand anxious woes  
 Pollute the noble tide.

These are emotions known to few ;  
 For where at most a vapoury dew  
 Surrounds the tranquil heart,  
 Then as the triflers never prove  
 The glad excess of real love,  
 They never prove the smart.

Oh then, my life, at last relent !  
 Though cruel the reproach I sent,  
 My sorrow was unfeign'd :  
 Your passion, had I loved you not,  
 You might have scorn'd, renounced, forgot,  
 And I had ne'er complain'd.

While you indulge a groundless fear,  
 The imaginary woes you bear  
 Are real woes to me :  
 But thou art kind, and good thou art,  
 Nor wilt, by wronging thine own heart,  
 Unjustly punish me.

---

How bless'd the youth whom fate ordains  
 A kind relief from all his pains,  
 In some admirèd fair ;  
 Whose tenderest wishes find express'd  
 Their own resemblance in her breast,  
 Exactly copied there !

What good soe'er the gods dispense,  
 The enjoyment of its influence  
 Still on her love depends ;  
 Her love the shield that guards his heart,  
 Or wards the blow, or blunts the dart  
 That peevish Fortune sends.

Thus, Delia, while thy love endures,  
 The flame my happy breast secures

From fortune's fickle power ;  
 Change as she list, she may increase,  
 But not abate my happiness,  
 Confirm'd by thee before.

Thus while I share her smiles with thee,  
 Welcome, my love, shall ever be  
 The favours she bestows ;  
 Yet not on those I found my bliss,  
 But in the noble ecstasies  
 The faithful bosom knows.

And when she prunes her wings for flight,  
 And flutters nimbly from my sight,  
 Contented I resign  
 Whate'er she gave ; thy love alone  
 I can securely call my own,  
 Happy while that is mine.

---

BERKHAMSTEAD.

BID adieu, my sad heart, bid adieu to thy peace !  
 Thy pleasure is past, and thy sorrows increase ;  
 See the shadows of evening how far they extend,  
 And a long night is coming, that never may end ;  
 For the sun is now set that enliven'd the scene,  
 And an age must be past ere it rises again.

Already deprived of its splendour and heat,  
 I feel thee more slowly, more heavily beat ;  
 Perhaps overstrain'd with the quick pulse of pleasure,  
 Thou art glad of this respite to beat at thy leisure ;  
 But the sigh of distress shall now weary thee more  
 Than the flutter and tumult of passion before.

The heart of a lover is never at rest,  
 With joy overwhelm'd, or with sorrow oppress'd :  
 When Delia is near, all is ecstasy then,  
 And I even forget I must lose her again :  
 When absent, as wretched as happy before,  
 Despairing I cry, " I shall see her no more ! "

---

At BERKHAMSTEAD.

WRITTEN AFTER LEAVING HER AT NEW BURNS.

How quick the change from joy to woe !  
 How chequer'd is our lot below !  
 Seldom we view the prospect fair,  
 Dark clouds of sorrow, pain, and care,  
 (Some pleasing intervals between,)  
 Scowl over more than half the scene.

Last week with Delia, gentle maid,  
 Far hence in happier fields I stray'd,  
 While on her dear enchanting tongue  
 Soft sounds of grateful welcome hung,  
 For absence had withheld it long.  
 "Welcome, my long-lost love," she said,  
 "E'er since our adverse fates decreed  
 That we must part, and I must mourn  
 'Till once more bless'd by thy return,  
 Love, on whose influence I relied  
 For all the transports I enjoy'd,  
 Has play'd the cruel tyrant's part,  
 And turn'd tormentor to my heart.  
 But let me hold thee to my breast,  
 Dear partner of my joy and rest,  
 And not a pain, and not a fear,  
 Or anxious doubt shall enter there."  
 Happy, thought I, the favour'd youth,  
 Bless'd with such undissembled truth!  
 Five suns successive rose and set,  
 And saw no monarch in his state,  
 Wrapp'd in the blaze of majesty,  
 So free from every care as I.

Next day the scene was overcast;  
 Such day till then I never pass'd,  
 For on that day, relentless fate!  
 Delia and I must separate.  
 Yet ere we look'd our last farewell,  
 From her dear lips this comfort fell:  
 "Fear not that time, where'er we rove,  
 Or absence, shall abate my love."  
 And can I doubt, my charming maid,  
 As unsincere what you have said?  
 Banish'd from thee to what I hate,  
 Dull neighbours and insipid chat,  
 No joy to cheer me, none in view,  
 But the dear hope of meeting you;  
 And that through passion's optic scene,  
 With ages interposed between;  
 Bless'd with the kind support you give,  
 'Tis by your promised truth I live;  
 How deep my woes, how fierce my flame,  
 You best may tell, who feel the same.

---

ON HER ENDEAVOURING TO CONCEAL HER GRIEF  
AT PARTING.

AH! wherefore should my weeping maid suppress  
Those gentle signs of undissembled woe?  
When from soft love proceeds the deep distress,  
Ah! why forbid the willing tears to flow?

Since for my sake each dear translucent drop  
Breaks forth, best witness of thy truth sincere,  
My lips should drink the precious mixture up,  
And, ere it falls, receive the trembling tear.

Trust me, these symptoms of thy faithful heart,  
In absence shall my dearest hope sustain;  
Delia! since such thy sorrow that we part,  
Such when we meet thy joy shall be again.

Hard is that heart and unsubdued by love  
That feels no pain, nor ever heaves a sigh;  
Such hearts the fiercest passions only prove,  
Or freeze in cold insensibility.

Oh! then indulge thy grief, nor fear to tell  
The gentle source from whence thy sorrows flow;  
Nor think it weakness when we love to feel,  
Nor think it weakness what we feel to show.

---

HOPE, like the short-lived ray that gleams awhile  
Through wintry skies, upon the frozen waste,  
Cheers e'en the face of misery to a smile;  
But soon the momentary pleasure's past.

How oft, my Delia, since our last farewell,  
(Years that have roll'd since that distressful hour,)  
Grieved I have said, when most our hopes prevail,  
Our promised happiness is least secure.

Oft I have thought the scene of troubles closed,  
And hoped once more to gaze upon your charms;  
As oft some dire mischance has interposed,  
And snatch'd the expected blessing from my arms.

The seaman thus, his shatter'd vessel lost,  
Still vainly strives to shun the threatening death;  
And while he thinks to gain the friendly coast,  
And drops his feet, and feels the sands beneath,

Borne by the wave steep-sloping from the shore,  
Back to the inclement deep, again he beats  
The surge aside, and seems to tread secure;  
And now the refluent wave his baffled toil defeats.



Had you, my love, forbade me to pursue  
 My fond attempt, disdainfully retired,  
 And with proud scorn compell'd me to subdue  
 The ill-fated passion by yourself inspired :

Then haply to some distant spot removed,  
 Hopeless to gain, unwilling to molest  
 With fond entreaties whom I dearly loved,  
 Despair or absence had redeem'd my rest.

But now, sole partner in my Delia's heart,  
 Yet doom'd far off in exile to complain,  
 Eternal absence cannot ease my smart,  
 And hope subsists but to prolong my pain.

Oh then, kind Heaven, be this my latest breath !  
 Here end my life, or make it worth my care ;  
 Absence from whom we love is worse than death,  
 And frustrate hope severer than despair.

---

R. S. S.

ALL-WORSHIPPED Gold ! thou mighty mystery !  
 Say by what name shall I address thee, either  
 Our blessing, or our bane ? Without thy aid,  
 The generous pangs of pity but distress  
 The human heart, that fain would feel the bless  
 Of blessing others ; and, enslaved by thee,  
 Far from relieving woes which others feel,  
 Misers oppress themselves. Our blessing then  
 With virtue when possess'd ; without, our bane.  
 If in my bosom unperceived there lurk  
 The deep-sown seeds of avarice or ambition,  
 Blame me, ye great ones, (for I scorn your censure,)  
 But let the generous and the good commend me ;  
 That to my Delia I direct them all,  
 The worthiest object of a virtuous love.  
 Oh ! to some distant scene, a willing exile  
 From the wild uproar of this busy world,  
 Were it my fate with Delia to retire ;  
 With her to wander through the sylvan shade,  
 Each morn, or o'er the moss-imbrownèd turf,  
 Where, bless'd as the prime parents of mankind  
 In their own Eden, we would envy none ;  
 But, greatly pitying whom the world calls happy,  
 Gently spin out the silken thread of life ;  
 While from her lips attentive I receive  
 The tenderest dictates of the purest flame,  
 And from her eyes (where soft complacence sits

Illumined with the radiant beams of sense,  
 Tranquillity beyond a monarch's reach.  
 Forgive me, Heaven, this only avarice  
 My soul indulges; I confess the crime,  
 (If to esteem, to covet such perfection  
 Be criminal,) oh grant me Delia! grant me wealth!  
 Wealth to alleviate, not increase my wants;  
 And grant me virtue, without which nor wealth  
 Nor Delia can avail to make me bless'd.

---

WRITTEN IN A FIT OF ILLNESS.

R. S. S.

IN these sad hours, a prey to ceaseless pain,  
 While feverish pulses leap in every vein,  
 When each faint breath the last short effort seems  
 Of life just parting from my feeble limbs;  
 How wild soe'er my wandering thoughts may be,  
 Still, gentle Delia, still they turn on thee!  
 At length if, slumbering to a short repose,  
 A sweet oblivion frees me from my woes,  
 Thy form appears, thy footsteps I pursue,  
 Through springy vales, and meadows wash'd in dew;  
 Thy arm supports me to the fountain's brink,  
 Where by some secret power forbid to drink,  
 Gasping with thirst, I view the tempting flood  
 That flies my touch, or thickens into mud;  
 Till thine own hand immersed the goblet dips,  
 And bears it streaming to my burning lips.  
 There borne aloft on fancy's wing we fly,  
 Like souls embodied to their native sky;  
 Now every rock, each mountain, disappears;  
 And the round earth an even surface wears;  
 When lo! the force of some resistless weight  
 Bears me straight down from that pernicious height;  
 Parting, in vain our struggling arms we close;  
 Abhorred forms, dire phantoms interpose;  
 With trembling voice on thy loved name I call;  
 And gulfs yawn ready to receive my fall.  
 From these fallacious visions of distress  
 I wake; nor are my real sorrows less.  
 Thy absence, Delia, heightens every ill,  
 And gives e'en trivial pains the power to kill.  
 Oh! wert thou near me; yet that wish forbear!  
 'Twere vain, my love,—'twere vain to wish thee near;  
 Thy tender heart would heave with anguish too,  
 And by partaking, but increase my woe.

Alone I'll grieve, till gloomy sorrow past,  
 Heltah, like the cheeful day-spring, comes at last,—  
 Comes fraught with bliss to banish every pain,  
 Hope, joy, and peace, and Delia in her train !

---

TO DELIA.

1755.

ME to whatever state the gods assign,  
 Believe, my love, whatever state be mine,  
 Ne'er shall my breast one anxious sorrow know,  
 Ne'er shall my heart confess a real woe,  
 If to thy share Heaven's choicest blessings fall,  
 As thou hast virtue to deserve them all.  
 Yet vain, alas ! that idle hope would be  
 That builds on happiness remote from thee.  
 Oh ! may thy charms, whate'er our fate decrees,  
 Please, as they must, but let them only please—  
 Not like the sun with equal influence shine,  
 Nor warm with transport any heart but mine.  
 Ye who from wealth the ill-grounded title boast  
 To claim whatever beauty charms you most ;  
 Ye sons of fortune, who consult alone  
 Her parent's will, regardless of her own,  
 Know that a love like ours, a generous flame,  
 No wealth can purchase, and no power reclaim.  
 The soul's affection can be only given  
 Free, unextorted, as the grace of Heaven.

Is there whose faithful bosom can endure  
 Pangs fierce as mine, nor ever hope a cure ?  
 Who sighs in absence of the dear-loved maid,  
 Nor summons once indifference to his aid ?  
 Who can, like me, the nice resentment prove,  
 The thousand soft disquietudes of love ;  
 The trivial strifes that cause a real pain ;  
 The real bliss when reconciled again ?  
 Let him alone dispute the real prize,  
 And read his sentence in my Delia's eyes ;  
 There shall he read all gentleness and truth,  
 But not himself, the dear distinguish'd youth ;  
 Pity for him perhaps they may express—  
 Pity, that will but heighten his distress.  
 But, wretched rival ! he must sigh to see  
 The sprightlier rays of love directed all to me.

And thou, dear antidote of every pain  
 Which fortune can inflict, or love ordain,

Since early love has taught thee to despise  
 What the world's worthless votaries only prize,  
 Believe, my love ! no less the generous god  
 Rules in my breast, his ever blest abode ;  
 There has he driven each gross desire away,  
 Directing every wish and every thought to thee !  
 Then can I ever leave my Delia's arms,  
 A slave, devoted to inferior charms ?  
 Can e'er my soul her reason so disgrace ?  
 For what blest minister of heavenly race  
 Would quit that Heaven to find a happier place ?

---

DISAPPOINTMENT.

[Written after the last meeting between Cowper and his Cousin.]

DOOM'D, as I am, in solitude to waste  
 The present moments, and regret the past ;  
 Deprived of every joy I valued most,  
 My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost,  
 Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,  
 The dull effect of humour, or of spleen !  
 Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,  
 Him snatch'd by fate in early youth away ;  
 And her—through tedious years of doubt and pain,  
 Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain !  
 Oh prone to pity, generous, and sincere,  
 Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear ;  
 Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,  
 Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes ;  
 See me—ere yet my destined course half done,  
 Cast forth a wanderer on a world unknown !  
 See me neglected on the world's rude coast,  
 Each dear companion of my voyage lost !  
 Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,  
 And ready tears wait only leave to flow !  
 Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,  
 All that delights the happy—palls with me !

---

ODE.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND.

THOU magic lyre, whose fascinating sound  
 Seduced the savage monsters from their cave,  
 Drew rocks and trees, and forms uncouth around,  
 And bade wild Hebrus hush his listening wave ;

No more thy undulating warblings flow  
O'er Thracian wilds of everlasting snow !

Awake to sweeter sounds, thou magic lyre,  
And paint a lover's bliss—a lover's pain !  
Far nobler triumphs now thy notes inspire,  
For see, Eurydice attends thy strain ;  
Her smile, a prize beyond the conjuror's aim,  
Superior to the cancell'd breath of fame.

From her sweet brow to chase the gloom of care,  
To check the tear that dims the beaming eye,  
To bid her heart the rising sigh forbear,  
And flush her orient cheek with brighter joy,  
In that dear breast soft sympathy to move,  
And touch the springs of rapture and of love.

Ah me ! how long bewilder'd and astray,  
Lost and benighted, did my footsteps rove,  
Till sent by Heaven to cheer my pathless ray,  
A star arose—the radiant star of love.  
The God propitious join'd our willing hands,  
And Hymen wreathed us in his rosy bands.

Yet not the beaming eye, or placid brow,  
Or golden tresses, hid the subtle dart ;  
To charms superior far than those I bow,  
And nobler worth enslaves my vanquish'd heart ;  
The beauty, elegance, and grace combined,  
Which beam transcendent from that angel mind.

While vulgar passions, meteors of a day,  
Expire before the chilling blasts of age,  
Our holy flame with pure and steady ray,  
Its glooms shall brighten, and its pangs assuage ;  
By Virtue (sacred vestal) fed, shall shine,  
And warm our fainting souls with energy divine.

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THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

PRINTED IN DUNCOMBE'S HORACE.

1759.

A HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION OF THE AUTHOR'S JOURNEY FROM  
ROME TO BRUNDISIUM.

'Twas a long journey lay before us,  
When I and honest Heliodorus,  
Who far in point of rhetoric  
Surpasses every living Greek,



Each leaving our respective home  
Together sallied forth from Rome.  
First at Aricia we alight,  
And there refresh and pass the night,  
Our entertainment rather coarse  
Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse.  
Thence o'er the causeway soft and fair  
To Appii-forum we repair.  
But as this road is well supplied  
(Temptation strong!) on either side  
With inns commodious, snug, and warm,  
We split the journey, and perform  
In two days' time what's often done  
By brisker travellers in one.  
Here rather choosing not to sup  
Than with bad water mix my cup,  
After a warm debate in spite  
Of a provoking appetite,  
I sturdily resolved at last  
To balk it, and pronounce a fast,  
And in a moody humour wait,  
While my less dainty comrades bait.  
Now o'er the spangled hemisphere  
Diffused the starry train appear,  
When there arose a desperate brawl;  
The slaves and bargemen, one and all,  
Rending their throats (have mercy on us!)  
As if they were resolved to stun us.  
"Steer the barge this way to the shore!  
I tell you we'll admit no more!  
Plague! will you never be content?"  
Thus a whole hour at least is spent,  
While they receive the several fares,  
And kick the mule into his gears.  
Happy, these difficulties past,  
Could we have fallen asleep at last?  
But, what with humming, croaking, biting,  
Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,  
These tuneful natives of the lake  
Conspired to keep us broad awake.  
Besides, to make the concert full,  
Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,  
The bargeman and a passenger,  
Each in his turn, essayed an air  
In honour of his absent fair.  
At length the passenger, oppress'd  
With wine, left off, and snored the rest.  
The weary bargeman too gave o'er,  
And hearing his companion snore,

Seized the occasion, fix'd the barge,  
 Turn'd out his mule to graze at large,  
 And slept forgetful of his charge.  
 And now the sun o'er eastern hill,  
 Discover'd that our barge stood still ;  
 When one, whose anger vex'd him sore,  
 With malice fraught, leaps quick on shore,  
 Plucks up a stake, with many a thwack  
 Assails the mule and driver's back.

Then slowly moving on with pain,  
 At ten Feronia's stream we gain,  
 And in her pure and glassy wave  
 Our hands and faces gladly lave.  
 Climbing three miles, fair Anxur's height  
 We reach, with stony quarries white.  
 While here, as was agreed, we wait,  
 Till, charged with business of the state,  
 Mæcenas and Cocceius come,  
 The messengers of peace from Rome.  
 My eyes, by watery humours blear  
 And sore, I with black balsam smear.  
 At length they join us, and with them  
 Our worthy friend Fonteius came ;  
 A man of such complete desert,  
 Antony loved him at his heart.  
 At Fundi we refused to bait,  
 And laugh'd at vain Aufidius' state,  
 A prætor now, a scribe before,  
 The purple-border'd robe he wore,  
 His slave the smoking censer bore.  
 Tired at Muræna's we repose,  
 At Formia sup at Capito's.

With smiles the rising morn we greet,  
 At Sinuessa pleased to meet  
 With Plotius, Varius, and the bard  
 Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.  
 The world no purer spirits knows ;  
 For none my heart more warmly glows.  
 Oh ! what embraces we bestow'd,  
 And with what joy our breasts o'erflow'd !  
 Sure while my sense is sound and clear,  
 Long as I live, I shall prefer  
 A gay, good-natured, easy friend,  
 To every blessing Heaven can send.  
 At a small village, the next night,  
 Near the Vulturnus we alight ;  
 Where, as employ'd on state affairs,  
 We were supplied by the purveyors  
 Frankly at once, and without hire,

With food for man and horse, and fire.  
 Capua next day betimes we reach,  
 Where Virgil and myself, who each  
 Labour'd with different maladies,  
 His such a stomach,—mine such eyes,—  
 As would not bear strong exercise,  
 In drowsy mood to sleep resort;  
 Mæcenas to the tennis-court.  
 Next at Cocceius's farm we're treated,  
 Above the Caudian tavern seated;  
 His kind and hospitable board  
 With choice of wholesome food was stored.

Now, O ye Nine, inspire my lays!  
 To nobler themes my fancy raise!  
 Two combatants, who scorn to yield  
 The noisy, tongue-disputed field,  
 Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim  
 A poet's tribute to their fame;  
 Cicirrus of the true Oscian breed,  
 Sarmentus, who was never freed,  
 But ran away. We won't defame him;  
 His lady lives, and still may claim him.  
 Thus dignified, in harder fray  
 These champions their keen wit display,  
 And first Sarmentus led the way.  
 "Thy locks," quoth he, "so rough and coarse,  
 Look like the mane of some wild horse."  
 We laugh: Cicirrus undismay'd—  
 "Have at you!"—cries, and shakes his head.  
 "'Tis well," Sarmentus says, "you've lost  
 That horn your forehead once could boast;  
 Since maim'd and mangled as you are,  
 You seem to butt." A hideous scar  
 Improved ('tis true) with double grace  
 The native horrors of his face.  
 Well. After much jocosely said  
 Of his grim front, so fiery red,  
 (For carbuncles had blotch'd it o'er,  
 As usual on Campania's shore,)  
 "Give us," he cried, "since you're so big,  
 A sample of the Cyclops jig!  
 Your shanks, methinks, no buskins ask,  
 Nor does your phiz require a mask."  
 To this Cicirrus: "In return  
 Of you, sir, now I fain would learn,  
 When 'twas, no longer deem'd a slave,  
 Your chains you to the Lares gave.  
 For though a scrivener's right you claim,  
 Your lady's title is the same.

But what could make you run away,  
 Since, pigmy as you are, each day  
 A single pound of bread would quite  
 O'erpower your puny appetite?"  
 Thus joked the champions, while we laugh'd,  
 And many a cheerful bumper quaff'd.

To Beneventum next we steer;  
 Where our good host, by over care  
 In roasting thrushes lean as mice,  
 Had almost fallen a sacrifice.  
 The kitchen soon was all on fire,  
 And to the roof the flames aspire.  
 There might you see each man and master  
 Striving, amidst this sad disaster,  
 To save the supper. Then they came  
 With speed enough to quench the flame.  
 From hence we first at distance see  
 The Apulian hills, well known to me,  
 Parch'd by the sultry western blast;  
 And which we never should have pass'd,  
 Had not Trivicus by the way  
 Received us at the close of day.  
 But each was forced at entering here  
 To pay the tribute of a tear,  
 For more of smoke than fire was seen;  
 The hearth was piled with logs so green.  
 From hence in chaises we were carried  
 Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarried  
 At a small town, whose name my verse  
 (So barbarous is it) can't rehearse.  
 Know it you may by many a sign,  
 Water is dearer far than wine.  
 There bread is deem'd such dainty fare,  
 That every prudent traveller  
 His wallet loads with many a crust;  
 For at Canusium, you might just  
 As well attempt to gnaw a stone  
 As think to get a morsel down.  
 That too with scanty streams is fed;  
 Its founder was brave Diomed.  
 Good Varius (ah, that friends must part!)  
 Here left us all with aching heart.  
 At Rubi we arrived that day,  
 Well jaded by the length of way,  
 And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter.  
 Next day no weather could be better;  
 No roads so bad; we scarce could crawl  
 Along to fishy Barium's wall.  
 The Egnatians next, who by the rules

Of common sense are knaves or fools,  
 Made all our sides with laughter heave,  
 Since we with them must needs believe,  
 That incense in their temples burns,  
 And without fire to ashes turns.  
 To circumcision's bigots tell  
 Such tales! for me, I know full well,  
 That in high heaven, unmoved by care,  
 The god's eternal quiet share:  
 Nor can I deem their spleen the cause  
 Why fickle nature breaks her laws.  
 Brundisium last we reach; and there  
 Stop short the muse and traveller.

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THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF  
 HORACE.

THE DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPERTINENT.

ADAPTED TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

1759.

SAUNTERING along the street one day,  
 On trifles musing by the way,  
 Up steps a free familiar wight;  
 (I scarcely knew the man by sight.)  
 "Carlos," he cried, "your hand, my dear;  
 Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!  
 Pray Heaven I see you well!" "So, so;  
 Even well enough, as times now go.  
 The same good wishes, sir, to you."  
 Finding he still pursued me close,  
 "Sir, you have business, I suppose?"  
 "My business, sir, is quickly done,  
 'Tis but to make my merit known.  
 Sir, I have read"—"O learnèd sir,  
 You and your learning I revere."  
 Then, sweating with anxiety,  
 And sadly longing to get free,  
 Gods, how I scamper'd, scuffled for't,  
 Ran, halted, ran again, stopp'd short,  
 Beckon'd my boy, and pull'd him near,  
 And whisper'd nothing in his ear.  
 Teased with his loose unjointed chat,  
 "What street is this? What house is that?"  
 O Harlow how I envied thee  
 Thy unabash'd effrontery,



Who darest a foe with freedom blame,  
 And call a coxcomb by his name !  
 When I return'd him answer none,  
 Obligingly the fool ran on,  
 " I see you 're dismally distress'd,  
 Would give the world to be released,  
 But, by your leave, sir, I shall still  
 Stick to your skirts, do what you will.  
 Pray which way does your journey tend ?"  
 " Oh 'tis a tedious way, my friend,  
 Across the Thames, the Lord knows where :  
 I would not trouble you so far."  
 " Well, I 'm at leisure to attend you."  
 " Are you ?" thought I, " the De'il befriend you !"  
 No ass with double panniers rack'd,  
 Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,  
 E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull  
 As I, nor half so like a fool.  
 " Sir, I know little of myself,"  
 Proceeds the pert conceited elf,  
 " If Gray or Mason you will deem  
 Than me more worthy your esteem.  
 Poems I write by folios,  
 As fast as other men write prose.  
 Then I can sing so loud, so clear,  
 That Beard \* cannot with me compare.  
 In dancing, too, I all surpass,  
 Not Cooke can move with such a grace."  
 Here I made shift, with much ado,  
 To interpose a word or two.  
 " Have you no parents, sir, no friends,  
 Whose welfare on your own depends ?"  
 " Parents, relations, say you ? No.  
 They 're all disposed of long ago."  
 " Happy to be no more perplex'd !  
 My fate too threatens, I go next.  
 Dispatch me, sir, 'tis now too late,  
 Alas ! to struggle with my fate !  
 Well, I 'm convinced my time is come.  
 When young, a gipsy told my doom ;  
 The beldame shook her palsied head,  
 As she perused my palm, and said,  
 ' Of poison, pestilence, or war,  
 Gout, stone, defluxion, or catarrh,  
 You have no reason to beware.  
 Beware the coxcomb's idle prate ;  
 Chiefly, my son, beware of that ;

\* John Beard, who married a daughter of Rich, and succeeded him in the management of Covent Garden in 1761.

Be sure, when you behold him, fly  
 Out of all earshot, or you die !”  
 To Rufus’ Hall we now draw near  
 Where he was summon’d to appear,  
 Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,  
 Or suffer judgment by default.  
 “For Heaven’s sake, if you love me, wait  
 One moment ! I’ll be with you straight.”  
 Glad of a plausible pretence—  
 “Sir, I must beg you to dispense  
 With my attendance in the court.  
 My legs will surely suffer for’t.”  
 “Nay, prithee, Carlos, stop a while !”  
 “Faith, sir, in law I have no skill.  
 Besides, I have no time to spare,  
 I must be going, you know where.”  
 “Well, I protest, I’m doubtful now,  
 Whether to leave my suit or you !”  
 “Me, without scruple !” I reply,  
 “Me, by all means, sir !”—“No, not I.  
*Allons, Monsieur !*” ’Twere vain (you know)  
 To strive with a victorious foe.  
 So I reluctantly obey,  
 And follow, where he leads the way.  
 “You and Newcastle are so close ;  
 Still hand and glove, sir, I suppose ?”  
 “Newcastle (let me tell you, sir,)  
 Has not his equal any where.”  
 “Well. There indeed your fortune’s made !  
 Faith, sir, you understand your trade.  
 Would you but give me your good word !  
 Just introduce me to my Lord.  
 I should serve charmingly by way  
 Of second fiddle, as they say :  
 What think you, sir ? ’twere a good jest.  
 ’Slife, we should quickly scout the rest.”  
 “Sir, you mistake the matter far,  
 We have no second fiddles there.”  
 “Richer than I some folks may be :  
 More learnèd, but it hurts not me.  
 Friends though he has of different kind,  
 Each has his proper place assign’d.”  
 “Strange matters these alleged by you !”  
 “Strange they may be, but they are true.”  
 “Well, then, I vow, ’tis mighty clever,  
 Now I long ten times more than ever  
 To be advanced extremely near  
 One of his shining character.  
 Have but the will—there wants no more,

'Tis plain enough you have the power.  
 His easy temper (that's the worst)  
 He knows, and is so shy at first.  
 But such a cavalier as you—  
 Lord, sir, you'll quickly bring him to !  
 Well ; if I fail in my design,  
 Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.  
 If by the saucy servile tribe  
 Denied, what think you of a bribe ?  
 Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,  
 But try my luck again to-morrow.  
 Never attempt to visit him  
 But at the most convenient time,  
 Attend him on each levee day,  
 And there my humble duty pay.  
 Labour, like this, our want supplies ;  
 And they must stoop, who mean to rise."

While thus he wittingly harangued,  
 For which you'll guess I wish'd him hang'd,  
 Campley, a friend of mine, came by,  
 Who knew his humour more than I.  
 We stop, salute, and—" Why so fast,  
 Friend Carlos ? whither all this haste ?"  
 Fired at the thoughts of a reprieve,  
 I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,  
 Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,  
 Do everything but speak plain out :  
 While he, sad dog, from the beginning,  
 Determined to mistake my meaning,  
 Instead of pitying my curse,  
 By jeering made it ten times worse.  
 " Campley, what secret (pray !) was that  
 You wanted to communicate !"  
 " I recollect. But 'tis no matter.  
 Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.  
 E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell  
 Another time, sir, just as well."  
 Was ever such a dismal day ?  
 Unlucky cur, he steals away,  
 And leaves me, half bereft of life,  
 At mercy of the butcher's knife ;  
 When sudden, shouting from afar,  
 See his antagonist appear !  
 The bailiff seized him quick as thought.  
 " Ho, Mr Scoundrel ! are you caught ?  
 Sir, you are witness to the arrest."  
 " Ay, marry, sir, I'll do my best."  
 The mob huzzas. Away they trudge,  
 Culprit and all, before the judge.

Meanwhile I luckily enough  
 (Thanks to Apollo) got clear off.

---

ADDRESS TO MISS MACARTNEY,

AFTERWARDS MRS GREVILLE, ON READING HER "PRAYER FOR  
 INDIFFERENCE."

1762.

AND dwells there in a female heart,  
 By bounteous Heaven design'd  
 The choicest raptures to impart,  
 To feel the most refined;

Dwells there a wish in such a breast  
 Its nature to forego,  
 To smother in ignoble rest  
 At once both bliss and woe?

Far be the thought, and far the strain,  
 Which breathes the low desire,  
 How sweet so'er the verse complain,  
 Though Phœbus string the lyre.

Come then, fair maid, (in nature wise,)  
 Who, knowing them, can tell  
 From generous sympathy what joys  
 The glowing bosom swell;

In justice to the various powers  
 Of pleasing, which you share,  
 Join me, amid your silent hours,  
 To form the better prayer.

With lenient balm may Oberon hence  
 To fairy-land be driven,  
 With every herb that blunts the sense  
 Mankind received from Heaven.

"Oh, if my Sovereign Author please,  
 Far be it from my fate,  
 To live unblest in torpid ease,  
 And slumber on in state;

"Each tender tie of life defied,  
 Whence social pleasures spring;  
 Unmoved with all the world beside,  
 A solitary thing."

Some Alpine mountain wrapt in snow,  
 Thus braves the whirling blast,

Eternal winter doom'd to know,  
No genial spring to taste ;

In vain warm suns their influence shed,  
The zephyrs sport in vain,  
He rears unchanged his barren head,  
Whilst beauty decks the plain.

What though in scaly armour dress'd,  
Indifference may repel  
The shafts of woe, in such a breast  
No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan,  
And fix'd by Heaven's decree,  
That all the true delights of man  
Should spring from sympathy.

'Tis nature bids, and whilst the laws  
Of nature we retain,  
Our self-approving bosom draws  
A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear,  
The sordid never know ;  
And ecstasy attends the tear,  
When virtue bids it flow.

For when it streams from that pure source,  
No bribes the heart can win,  
To check, or alter from its course  
The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,  
Who, if from labour eased,  
Extend no care beyond themselves,  
Unpleasing and unpleas'd.

Let no low thought suggest the prayer !  
Oh ! grant, kind Heaven, to me,  
Long as I draw ethereal air,  
Sweet Sensibility !

Where'er the heavenly nymph is seen,  
With lustre-beaming eye,  
A train, attendant on their queen,  
(Her rosy chorus) fly.

The jocund Loves in Hymen's band,  
With torches ever bright,  
And generous Friendship hand in hand,  
With Pity's watery sight.



The gentler Virtues too are join'd  
 In youth immortal warm,  
 The soft relations which combined  
 Give life her every charm.

The Arts come smiling in the close,  
 And lend celestial fire;  
 The marble breathes, the canvass glows,  
 The Muses sweep the lyre.

"Still may my melting bosom cleave  
 To sufferings not my own;  
 And still the sigh responsive heave,  
 Where'er is heard a groan.

"So Pity shall take Virtue's part,  
 Her natural ally,  
 And fashioning my soften'd heart,  
 Prepare it for the sky."

This artless vow may Heaven receive,  
 And you, fond maid, approve;  
 So may your guiding angel give  
 Whate'er you wish or love.

So may the rosy-finger'd hours  
 Lead on the various year,  
 And every joy, which now is yours,  
 Extend a larger sphere.

And suns to come, as round they wheel,  
 Your golden moments bless,  
 With all a tender heart can feel,  
 Or lively fancy guess.

---

AN ODE.

SECUNDUM ARTEM.

[THIS appeared in the *St James's Magazine*, with the initial L. attached; but there is no doubt Cowper was the author; it was written in bantering ridicule of the Pindarics of Gray and Mason.]

L.

SHALL I begin with *Ah*, or *Oh*?  
 Be sad? *Oh*! yes. Be glad? *Ah*! no.  
 Light subjects suit not grave Pindaric ode,  
 Which walks in metre down the Strophic road.  
 But let the sober matron wear  
 Her own mechanic sober air:

*Ah me!* ill suits, *alas!* the sprightly jig,  
 Long robes of ermine, or Sir Cloudesley's wig.  
 Come, placid Dulness, gently come,  
 And all my faculties benumb;  
 Let thought turn exile, while the vacant mind  
 To trickie words and pretty phrase confined,  
 Pumping for trim description's art,  
 To win the ear, neglects the heart.  
 So shall thy sister Taste's peculiar sons,  
 Lineal descendants from the Goths and Huns,  
 Struck with the true and grand sublime  
 Of *rhythm* converted into *rime*,  
 Court the quaint muse, and con her lessons o'er,  
 When sleep the sluggish waves by Granta's shore:  
 There shall each poet share and trim,  
 Stretch, cramp, or lop the verse's limb,  
 While rebel Wit beholds them with disdain,  
 And Fancy flies aloft, nor heeds their servile chain.

## II.

O Fancy, bright aërial maid!  
 Where have thy vagrant footsteps stray'd!  
 For, *ah!* I miss thee 'midst thy wonted haunt,  
 Since silent now the enthusiastic chaunt,  
 Which erst like frenzy roll'd along,  
 Driven by the impetuous tide of song;  
 Rushing secure where native genius bore,  
 Not cautious coasting by the shelving shore.  
 Hail to the sons of modern Rime,  
 Mechanic dealers in sublime,  
 Whose lady Muse full wantonly is drest,  
 In light expression quaint, and tinsel vest,  
 Where swelling epithets are laid  
 (Art's ineffectual parade)  
 As varnish on the cheek of harlot light;  
 The rest thin sown with profit or delight,  
 But ill compares with ancient song,  
 Where Genius pour'd its flood along;  
 Yet such is Art's presumptuous idle claim,  
 She marshals out the way to modern fame;  
 From Grecian fable's pompous lore  
 Description's studied, glittering store,  
 Smooth, soothing sounds, and sweet alternate rime,  
 Clinking, like change of bells, in tingle tangle chime.

## III.

The lark shall soar in every Ode,  
 With flowers of light description strew'd;

And sweetly, warbling Philomel, shall flow  
 Thy soothing sadness in mechanic woe.  
 Trim epithets shall spread their gloss,  
 While every cell's o'ergrown with moss :  
 Here oaks shall rise in chains of ivy bound,  
 There smouldering stones o'erspread the rugged ground.  
 Here forests brown, and azure hills,  
 There babbling fountains, and prattling rills ;  
 Here some gay river floats in crisped streams,  
 While the bright sun now gilds his morning beams,  
 Or sinking on his Thetis' breast,  
 Drives in description down the west.  
 Oh let me boast, with pride becoming skill,  
 I crown the summit of Parnassus' hill :  
 While Taste and Genius shall dispense,  
 And sound shall triumph over sense ;  
 O'er the gay mead with curious steps I'll stray,  
 And, like the bee, steal all the sweets away ;  
 Extract its beauty, and its power,  
 From every new poetic flower,  
 And sweets collected may a wreath compose,  
 To bind the poet's brow, or please the critic's nose.

---

LINES WRITTEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF  
 DELIRIUM.\*

HATRED and vengeance,—my eternal portion  
 Scarce can endure delay of execution,—  
 Wait with impatient readiness to seize my  
 Soul in a moment.

Damn'd below Judas ; more abhor'd than he was,  
 Who for a few pence sold his holy Master !  
 Twice betray'd, Jesus me, the last delinquent,  
 Deems the profanest.

Man disavows, and Deity disowns me,  
 Hell might afford my miseries a shelter ;  
 Therefore, Hell keeps her ever-hungry mouths all  
 Bolted against me.

Hard lot ! encompass'd with a thousand dangers ;  
 Weary, faint, trembling with a thousand terrors,  
 I'm call'd, if vanquish'd ! to receive a sentence  
 Worse than Abiram's.

Him the vindictive rod of angry Justice  
 Sent quick and howling to the centre headlong ;  
 I, fed with judgment, in a fleshly tomb, am  
 Buried above ground

\* Composed while under the care of Dr Cotton at St Albans.

## A TALE, FOUNDED ON A FACT,

WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream  
 There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme ;  
 In subterraneous caves his life he led  
 Black as the mine in which he wrought for bread.  
 When on a day, emerging from the deep,  
 A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep !)  
 The wages of his weekly toil he bore  
 To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more ;  
 As if the noblest of the feather'd kind  
 Were but for battle and for death design'd ;  
 As if the consecrated hours were meant  
 For sport, to minds on cruelty intent ;  
 It chanced (such chances Providence obey)  
 He met a fellow-labourer on the way,  
 Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed :  
 But now the savage temper was reclaim'd,  
 Persuasion on his lips had taken place ;  
 For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.  
 His iron heart with Scripture he assail'd,  
 Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.  
 His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,  
 Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew.  
 He wept ; he trembled ; cast his eyes around,  
 To find a worse than he ; but none he found.  
 He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel.  
 Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.  
 Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies !  
 He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.  
 That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,  
 Gilded with hope, yet shaded, too, by fear.  
 The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine  
 Learn'd, by his altered speech, the change divine !  
 Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day  
 Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.  
 "No," said the penitent, "such words shall share  
 This breath no more ; devoted now to prayer.  
 Oh ! if Thou seest (Thine eye the future sees)  
 That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these ;  
 Now strike me to the ground on which I kneel,  
 Ere yet this heart relapses into steel :  
 Now take me to that heaven I once defied,  
 Thy presence, Thy embrace !—He spoke and died !

## THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.

[The following piece, versified from a tale called the Mahometan Hog, was published in the *Leeds Journal* without Cowper's knowledge, with some additions by Mr Newton—these are indicated by brackets.]

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;  
 But for one piece they thought it hard  
 From the whole hog to be debarr'd;  
 And set their wits 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.  
 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.  
 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.



## THE PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE.

[“The newspaper informs me of the arrival of the Jamaica fleet. I hope it imports some pineapple plants for me. I have a good frame, and a good bed prepared to receive them. I send you annexed a fable, in which the pineapple makes a figure, and shall be glad if you like the taste of it.”—*Letter to Mr Hill, 2d October, 1779.*]

THE pineapples, in triple row,  
 Were basking hot, and all in blow;  
 A bee of most deserving 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.

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,  
 And disappointment all the fruit.  
 While Cynthia ogles, as she passes,  
 The nymph between two chariot glasses,  
 She is the pineapple, and he  
 The silly unsuccessful bee.  
 The maid who views with pensive air  
 The showglass 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,  
 Exposed to view, but not to touch;  
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,  
 We long for pineapples 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.

ON THE  
PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.,  
TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

[In a letter to Mr Hill, 14th November 1779, enclosing these verses, Cowper writes—"Your approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sunbeams from their surface."]

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,  
And in his sportive days,  
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,  
And Genius shed its rays.

See! with united wonder cried  
The experienced and the sage,  
Ambition in a boy supplied  
With all the skill of age!

Discernment, eloquence, and grace,  
Proclaim him born to sway  
The balance in the highest place,  
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise;  
He sprang impetuous forth,  
Secure of conquest, where the prize  
Attends superior worth.

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.

---

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day;  
I only wish 'twould come  
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)  
A little nearer home.

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.

When lawless mobs insult the court,  
That man shall be my toast,  
If breaking windows be the sport,  
Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls  
 The choicest flowers she bears,  
 Who constitutionally pulls  
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,  
 Though some folks can't endure them,  
 Who say the mob are mad outright,  
 And that a rope must cure them.

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.

---

### THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long  
 Hath 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 glowworm 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,  
 You would abhor to do me wrong,  
 As much as I to spoil your song;  
 For 'twas the self-same power Divine  
 Taught you to sing, and me to shine;  
 That you with music, I with light,  
 Might beautify and cheer the night."  
 The songster heard his short oration,  
 And, warbling out his approbation,  
 Released him, as my story tells,  
 And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn  
 Their real interest to discern;  
 That brother should not war with brother,  
 And worry and devour each other;  
 But sing and shine with sweet consent,  
 Till life's poor transient night is spent,

Respecting in each other's case  
 The gifts of nature and of grace.  
 Those Christians best deserve the name,  
 Who studiously make peace their aim ;  
 Peace both the duty and the prize  
 Of him that creeps and him that flies.

---

 THE RAVEN.

[Cowper wrote to Mr Newton in May 1780: "A crow, rook, or raven has built a nest in one of the young elm trees at the side of Mrs Aspray's orchard. In the violent storm that blew yesterday morning, I saw it agitated to a degree that seemed to threaten its immediate destruction, and versified the following thoughts upon the occasion."]

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  
 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,  
 They teach both conjurers 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  
 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.

---

THE DOVES.

[A letter of Cowper to Mr Newton, sent with this fable, tells us that the happy doves were that gentleman and his wife; the following is an extract from it:—"The male dove was smoking a pipe, and the female dove was sewing, while she thus delivered herself. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye."]

REASONING at every step he treads,  
 Man yet mistakes his way,  
 While meaner things, whom instinct leads,  
 Are rarely known to stray.

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:

"Our mutual bond of faith and truth  
 No time shall disengage,  
 Those blessings of our early youth,  
 Shall cheer our latest age:

"While innocence without disguise,  
 And constancy sincere,  
 Shall fill the circles of those eyes,  
 And mine can read them there;

"Those ills, that wait on all below,  
 Shall ne'er be felt by me,  
 Or gently felt, and only so,  
 As being shared by me.

"When lightnings flash among the trees,  
 Or kites are hovering near,  
 I fear lest thee alone they seize,  
 And know no other fear.

"'Tis then I feel myself a wife,  
 And press thy wedded side,  
 Resolved a union form'd for life  
 Death never shall divide.

"But oh! if, fickle and unchaste,  
 (Forgive a transient thought,)



Thou couldst become unkind at last,  
 And scorn thy present lot,  
 "No need of lightnings from on high,  
 Or kites with cruel beak;  
 Denied the endearments of thine eye,  
 This widow'd heart would break."  
 Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,  
 Soft as the passing wind,  
 And I recorded what I heard,  
 A lesson for mankind.

---

AN ENGLISH VERSIFICATION OF A THOUGHT

THAT POPPED INTO MY HEAD ABOUT TWO MONTHS SINCE.

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 bless'd where'er she goes;  
 Pure-bosom'd, as that watery glass,  
 And heaven reflected in her face!

---

ON THE

BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS., BY THE MOB IN THE MONTH OF JUNE 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,  
 Sworn foes to sense and law,  
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile  
 Than ever Roman saw!  
 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.  
 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.

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.

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.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed  
 From Flora's balmy store,  
 The quintessence of all he read  
 Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,  
 Have done him cruel wrong;  
 The flowers are gone—but still we find  
 The honey on his tongue.

## A RIDDLE.

I AM just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,  
 And the parent of numbers that cannot be told,  
 I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault—  
 I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought,  
 An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,  
 And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.\*

## 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:

\* Mr Bell in his edition of Cowper says:—This Riddle was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where many of Cowper's lighter pieces occasionally appeared. A correspondent furnished the following:—

## ANSWER.

A riddle by Cowper  
 Made me swear like a trooper;  
 But my anger, alas! was in vain;  
 For remembering the bliss  
 Of beauty's soft kiss,  
 I now long for such riddles again.—J. T.

Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land  
 Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;  
 Lethæan 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!

---

TO THE REV. MR NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

(WRITTEN IN OCTOBER 1780.)

THAT ocean you have late survey'd,  
 Those rocks I too have seen,  
 But I, afflicted and dismay'd,  
 You, tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep  
 Saw stretch'd before your view,  
 With conscious joy, the threatening deep,  
 No longer such to you.

To me the waves, that ceaseless broke  
 Upon the dangerous coast,  
 Hoarsely and ominously spoke  
 Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,  
 And found the peaceful shore;  
 I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,  
 Come home to part no more.

---

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,  
 The thistle's downy seed my fare,  
 My drink the morning dew;  
 I perch'd at will on every spray,  
 My form genteel, my plumage gay,  
 My strains for ever new.

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 grate.

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 shewn me less,  
 Had been your prisoner still.

### REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE.

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

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.

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.

"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."

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.

"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?"

"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."

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.

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!"

## ON THE HIGH PRICE OF FISH.

[The following was called forth by the receipt of a hamper of fish from Mrs Newton, with the intention of dissuading her from sending any more until they became cheaper. The next rhyming letter shews that her reply was a hamper of oysters.]

COCOA-NUT naught,  
 Fish too dear,  
 None must be bought  
 For us that are here :

No lobster on earth,  
 That ever I saw,  
 To me would be worth  
 Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait  
 Till fish can be got  
 At a reasonable rate,  
 Whether lobster or not ;

Till the French and the Dutch  
 Have quitted the seas,  
 And then send as much  
 And as oft as you please.

## TO MRS NEWTON.

A NOBLE theme demands a noble verse,  
 In such I thank you for your fine *oysters*.  
 The barrel was magnificently large,  
 But, being sent to Olney at free charge,  
 Was not inserted in the driver's list,  
 And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd ;  
 For, when the messenger whom we despatch'd  
 Inquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd ;  
 Denying that his waggon or his wain  
 Did any such commodity contain.  
 In consequence of which, your welcome boon  
 Did not arrive till yesterday at noon ;  
 In consequence of which some chanced to die,  
 And some, though very sweet, were very dry.  
 Now Madam says, (and what she says must still  
 Deserve attention, say she what she will,)  
 That what we call the diligence, be-case  
 It goes to London with a swifter pace,  
 Would better suit the carriage of your gift,  
 Returning downward with a pace as swift ;



And therefore recommends it with this aim—  
 To save at least three days,—the price the same ;  
 For though it will not carry or convey  
 For less than twelvecence, send whate'er you may,  
 For oysters bred upon the salt sea-shore,  
 Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.  
 News have I none that I can deign to write,  
 Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night ;  
 And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,  
 Caught in the first beginning of the shower ;  
 But walking, running, and with much ado,  
 Got home—just time enough to be wet through ;  
 Yet both are well, and, wondrous to be told,  
 Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold ;  
 And wishing just the same good hap to you,  
 We say, good Madam, and good Sir, adieu !

---

MARY AND JOHN.

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,  
 'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.  
 Should John wed a score, oh the claws and the scratches !  
 It can't be a match :—'tis a bundle of matches.\*

---

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DEAR President, whose art sublime  
 Gives perpetuity to time,  
 And bids transactions of a day,  
 That fleeting hours would waft away  
 To dark futurity, survive,  
 And in unfading beauty live,—  
 You cannot with a grace decline  
 A special mandate of the Nine—  
 Yourself, whatever task you choose,  
 So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the sisterhood : We come—  
 Fix well your palette on your thumb,  
 Prepare the pencil and the tints—  
 We come to furnish you with hints.  
 French disappointment, British glory,  
 Must be the subject of the story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,  
 Then slope it to a point below ;

\* "One of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing, or just before I begin."—Letter to Newton, Nov. 27, 1781. This is a sly hit at the *Thelyphthora*.

Your outline easy, airy, light,  
 Fill'd up becomes a paper kite.  
 Let independence, sanguine, horrid,  
 Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:  
 Beneath (but lay aside your graces)  
 Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,  
 Each with a staring, steadfast eye,  
 Fix'd on his great and good ally.  
 France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—  
 Britannia's lightning cuts the string.  
 The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,  
 Just rends it into thirteen pieces,  
 Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,  
 And lays them all at George's feet.

Iberia, trembling from afar,  
 Renounces the confederate war;  
 Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,  
 France calls her shatter'd navies home.  
 Repenting Holland learns to mourn  
 The sacred treaties she has torn;  
 Astonishment and awe profound  
 Are stamp'd upon the nations round;  
 Without one friend, above all foes,  
 Britannia gives the world repose.

---

#### A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN.

DEAR Anna—between friend and friend,  
 Prose answers every common end;  
 Serves, in a plain and homely way,  
 To express the occurrence of the day;  
 Our health, the weather, and the news,  
 What walks we take, what books we choose,  
 And all the floating thoughts we find  
 Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,  
 Far more alive than other men,  
 He feels a gentle tingling come  
 Down to his finger and his thumb,  
 Derived from nature's noblest part,  
 The centre of a glowing heart:  
 And this is what the world, who knows  
 No flights above the pitch of prose,  
 His more sublime vagaries slighting,  
 Denominates an itch for writing.  
 No wonder I, who scribble rhyme  
 To catch the triflers of the time,

And tell them truths divine and clear,  
 Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;  
 Who labour hard to allure and draw  
 The loiterers I never saw,  
 Should feel that itching and that tingling  
 With all my purpose intermingling,  
 To your intrinsic merit true,  
 When call'd to address myself to you.

Mysterious are His ways, whose power  
 Brings forth that unexpected hour,  
 When minds, that never met before,  
 Shall meet, unite, and part no more:  
 It is the allotment of the skies,  
 The hand of the Supremely Wise,  
 That guides and governs our affections,  
 And plans and orders our connexions:  
 Directs us in our distant road,  
 And marks the bounds of our abode.  
 Thus we were settled when you found us,  
 Peasants and children all around us,  
 Not dreaming of so dear a friend,  
 Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.\*  
 Thus Martha, even against her will,  
 Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;  
 And you, though you must needs prefer  
 The fairer scenes of Sweet Sancerre,†  
 Are come from distant Loire, to choose  
 A cottage on the banks of Ouse.  
 This page of Providence quite new,  
 And now just opening to our view,  
 Employs our present thoughts and pains  
 To guess and spell what it contains:  
 But day by day, and year by year,  
 Will make the dark enigma clear;  
 And furnish us, perhaps, at last,  
 Like other scenes already past,  
 With proof, that we, and our affairs,  
 Are part of a Jehovah's cares;  
 For God unfolds by slow degrees  
 The purport of His deep decrees;  
 Sheds every hour a clearer light  
 In aid of our defective sight;  
 And spreads, at length, before the soul,  
 A beautiful and perfect whole,  
 Which busy man's inventive brain  
 Toils to anticipate, in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known  
 The beauties of a rose full blown,

\* A part of Olney.

† Lady Austen's residence in France.

Could you, though luminous your eye,  
 By looking on the bud descry,  
 Or guess, with a prophetic power,  
 The future splendour of the flower?  
 Just so, the Omnipotent, who turns  
 The system of a world's concerns,  
 From mere minutiae can educe  
 Events of most important use,  
 And bid a dawning sky display  
 The blaze of a meridian day.  
 The works of man tend, one and all,  
 As needs they must, from great to small;  
 And vanity absorbs at length  
 The monuments of human strength.  
 But who can tell how vast the plan  
 Which this day's incident began?  
 Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion  
 For our dim-sighted observation;  
 It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird  
 That cleaves the yielding air unheard,  
 And yet may prove when understood  
 An harbinger of endless good.  
 Not that I deem, or mean to call  
 Friendship a blessing cheap or small:  
 But merely to remark, that ours,  
 Like some of Nature's sweetest flowers,  
 Rose from a seed of tiny size,  
 That seem'd to promise no such prize;  
 A transient visit intervening,  
 And made almost without a meaning,  
 (Hardly the effect of inclination,  
 Much less of pleasing expectation,)  
 Produced a friendship, then begun,  
 That has cemented us in one;  
 And placed it in our power to prove,  
 By long fidelity and love,  
 That Solomon has wisely spoken,—  
 "A threefold cord is not soon broken."

---

### 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 cloudcapt pyramid of snow.  
 No thunders shook with deep intestine sound  
 The blooming groves that girdled all 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,  
 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.  
 Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,  
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.  
 Oh bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,  
 Oh charming Paradise of short-lived 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.

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 neighbours' and their own.  
 Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue  
 Their only crime, vicinity to you!  
 The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,  
 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 firstborn son,  
 Attend to finish what the sword begun,  
 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 gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,  
 (Such is the thirst of opulence and ease,)  
 Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,  
 Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,  
 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,  
 And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,  
 To prove you there, destroyers as ye are.

Oh 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,  
 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 !

---

### THE FLATTING MILL.

#### AN ILLUSTRATION.

WHEN a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold  
 Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,  
 It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd  
 In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears  
 Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,  
 Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,  
 And warm'd by the pressure is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doom'd to sustain  
 The thump after thump of a gold-beater's mallet,  
 And at last is of service in sickness or pain  
 To cover a pill for a delicate palate.

Alas for the poet ! who dares undertake  
 To urge reformation of national ill—  
 His head and his heart are both likely to ache  
 With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,  
 Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,  
 Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,  
 And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all, he must beat it as thin and as fine  
 As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows ;  
 For truth is unwelcome, however divine,  
 And unless you adorn it, nausea follows.

---

FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. MR NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST MARY WOOLNOTH.

(*May 28th, 1782.*)

SAYS the pipe to the snuff-box, I can't understand  
 What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,  
 That you are in fashion all over the land,  
 And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

Do but see what a pretty contemplative air  
 I give to the company,—pray do but note 'em,—  
 You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,  
 Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.

My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,  
 While you are a nuisance where'er you appear ;  
 There is nothing but snivelling and blowing of noses,  
 Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear.

Then, lifting his lid in a delicate way,  
 And opening his mouth with a smile quite engaging,  
 The box in reply was heard plainly to say,  
 What a silly dispute is this we are waging !

If you have a little of merit to claim,  
 You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed ;  
 And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,  
 The beforemention'd drug in apology plead.

Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,  
 No room for a sneer, much less a cachinnus ;  
 We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,  
 But of anything else they may choose to put in us.

---

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

*June 22, 1782.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If reading verse be your delight,  
 'Tis mine as much, or more, to write ;  
 But what we would, so weak is man,  
 Lies oft remote from what we can.  
 For instance, at this very time  
 I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme  
 To soothe my friend, and, had I power,  
 To cheat him of an anxious hour ;  
 Not meaning (for I must confess,  
 It were but folly to suppress)  
 His pleasure or his good alone,  
 But squinting partly at my own.  
 But though the sun is flaming high  
 In the centre of yon arch, the sky,  
 And he had once (and who but he?)  
 The name for setting genius free,  
 Yet whether poets of past days  
 Yielded him undeservèd praise,  
 And he by no uncommon lot  
 Was famed for virtues he had not ;  
 Or whether, which is like enough,  
 His Highness may have taken huff,  
 So seldom sought with invocation,  
 Since it has been the reigning fashion  
 To disregard his inspiration,  
 I seem no brighter in my wits,  
 For all the radiance he emits,  
 Than if I saw, through midnight vapour,  
 The glimmering of a farthing taper.  
 Oh for a succedaneum, then,  
 To accelerate a creeping pen !  
 Oh for a ready succedaneum,  
 Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium  
 Pondere liberet exoso,  
 Et morbo jam caliginoso !  
 'Tis here ; this oval box well fill'd  
 With best tobacco, finely mill'd,  
 Beats all Anticyra's pretences  
 To disengage the encumber'd senses.

Oh Nymph of transatlantic fame,  
 Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,  
 Whether reposing on the side  
 Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,  
 Or listening with delight not small  
 To Niagara's distant fall,  
 'Tis thine to cherish and to feed  
 The pungent nose-refreshing weed,  
 Which, whether pulverised it gain  
 A speedy passage to the brain,  
 Or whether, touch'd with fire, it rise  
 In circling eddies to the skies,  
 Does thought more quicken and refine  
 Than all the breath of all the Nine—  
 Forgive the bard, if bard he be,  
 Who once too wantonly made free,  
 To touch with a satiric wipe  
 That symbol of thy power, the pipe;  
 So may no blight infest thy plains  
 And no unseasonable rains;  
 And so may smiling peace once more  
 Visit America's sad shore;  
 And thou, secure from all alarms,  
 Of thundering drums and glittering arms,  
 Rove unconfined beneath the shade  
 Thy wide expanded leaves have made;  
 So may thy votaries increase,  
 And fumigation never cease.  
 May Newton with renew'd delights  
 Perform thy odoriferous rites,  
 While clouds of incense half divine  
 Involve thy disappearing shrine;  
 And so may smoke-inhaling Bull  
 Be always filling, never full.

---

VERSES PRINTED BY HIMSELF, ON A FLOOD  
 AT OLNEY.\*

(August 12, 1782.)

To watch the storms and hear the sky  
 Give all our almanacks the lie;  
 To shake with cold, and see the plains  
 In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;  
 'Tis thus I spend my moments here,  
 And wish myself a Dutch mynheer;

\* These lines were addressed to Lady Austen at Clifton.

I then should have no need of wit,  
 For lumpish Hollander unfit !  
 Nor should I then repine at mud,  
 Or meadows deluged with a flood ;  
 But in a bog live well content,  
 And find it just my element :  
 Should be a clod, and not a man ;  
 Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,  
 With charitable aid to drag  
 My mind out of its proper quag ;  
 Should have the genius of a boor,  
 And no ambition to have more.

---

FRIENDSHIP.

AMICITIA NISI INTER BONOS ESSE NON POTEST.—*Cicero.*

WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,  
 But men unqualified and base  
 Will boast it their possession ?  
 Profusion apes the noble part  
 Of liberality of heart,  
 And dulness of discretion.

If every polish'd gem we find,  
 Illuminating heart or mind,  
 Provoke to imitation,  
 No wonder friendship does the same,  
 That jewel of the purest flame,  
 Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend  
 The requisites that form a friend,  
 A real and a sound one ;  
 Nor any fool he would deceive,  
 But prove as ready to believe,  
 And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,  
 Boys care but little whom they trust,  
 An error soon corrected,—  
 For who but learns in riper years  
 That man, when smoothest he appears,  
 Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,  
 Lest, having misapplied our eyes,  
 And taken trash for treasure,  
 We should unwarily conclude  
 Friendship a false ideal good,  
 A mere Utopian pleasure.



An acquisition rather rare  
Is yet no subject of despair ;  
Nor is it wise complaining,  
If either on forbidden ground,  
Or where it was not to be found,  
We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,  
That stands on sordid interest,  
Or mean self-love erected ;  
Nor such as may a while subsist  
Between the sot and sensualist,  
For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend, should come disposed  
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed  
The graces and the beauties  
That form the character he seeks ;  
For 'tis a union that bespeaks  
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,  
And equal truth on either side,  
And constantly supported ;  
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse  
Another of sinister views,  
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice ?  
It is indeed above all price,  
And must be made the basis ;  
But every virtue of the soul  
Must constitute the charming whole,  
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide  
The closest knot that may be tied,  
By ceaseless sharp corrosion ;  
A temper passionate and fierce  
May suddenly your joys disperse  
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite  
In hopes of permanent delight ;  
The secret just committed,  
Forgetting its important weight,  
They drop through mere desire to prate,  
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,  
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,  
If envy chance to creep in ;

An envious man, if you succeed,  
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,  
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,  
So jealousy looks forth distress'd  
On good that seems approaching,  
And if success his steps attend,  
Discerns a rival in a friend,  
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,  
(Unless belied by common fame,)  
Are sadly prone to quarrel,  
To deem the wit a friend displays  
A tax upon their own just praise,  
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee  
Will seldom scruple to make free  
With friendship's finest feeling,  
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
And say he wounded you in jest,  
By way of balm for healing.

Who ever keeps an open ear  
For tattlers will be sure to hear  
The trumpet of contention ;  
Aspersions is the babbler's trade,  
To listen is to lend him aid,  
And rush into dissension.

A friendship that in frequent fits  
Of controversial rage emits  
The sparks of disputation,  
Like hand in hand insurance plates,  
Most unavoidably creates  
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul  
True as a needle to the pole,  
Their humour yet so various—  
They manifest their whole life through  
The needle's deviations too,  
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet  
On terms of amity complete ;  
Plebeians must surrender,  
And yield so much to noble folk,  
It is combining fire with smoke,  
Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene  
 (As Irish bogs are always green)  
 They sleep secure from waking;  
 And are indeed a bog, that bears  
 Your unparticipated cares  
 Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix  
 Their heterogeneous politics  
 Without an effervescence,  
 Like that of salts with lemon juice,  
 Which does not yet like that produce  
 A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,  
 And make a calm of human life;  
 But friends that chance to differ  
 On points which God has left at large,  
 How fiercely will they meet and charge!  
 No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent  
 Needs no expense of argument,  
 No cutting and contriving—  
 Seeking a real friend, we seem  
 To adopt the chemist's golden dream,  
 With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,  
 Some blemish in due time made known  
 By trespass or omission:  
 Sometimes occasion brings to light  
 Our friend's defect, long hid from sight,  
 And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man  
 As circumspectly as you can,  
 And, having made election,  
 Beware no negligence of yours,  
 Such as a friend but ill endures,  
 Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,  
 That friends should be sincere and just,  
 That constancy befits them,  
 Are observations on the case,  
 That savour much of common place,  
 And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,  
 An architect requires alone  
 To finish a fine building—

The palace were but half complete,  
 If he could possibly forget  
 The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,  
 And proves by thumps upon your back  
 How he esteems your merit,  
 Is such a friend, that one had need  
 Be very much his friend indeed  
 To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,  
 Or something not to be defined,  
 First fixes our attention ;  
 So manners decent and polite,  
 The same we practised at first sight,  
 Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,  
 "Say little, and hear all you can."  
 Safe policy, but hateful—  
 So barren sands imbibe the shower,  
 But render neither fruit nor flower,  
 Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,  
 Shall find me as reserved as he,  
 No subterfuge or pleading  
 Shall win my confidence again ;  
 I will by no means entertain  
 A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas ! at last  
 These are but samples, and a taste  
 Of evils yet unmention'd—  
 May prove the task a task indeed,  
 In which 'tis much if we succeed,  
 However well intention'd.

Pursue the search, and you will find  
 Good sense and knowledge of mankind  
 To be at least expedient,  
 And, after summing all the rest,  
 Religion ruling in the breast  
 A principal ingredient.

The noblest friendship ever shown  
 The Saviour's history makes known,  
 Though some have turn'd and turn'd it ;  
 And, whether being crased or blind,  
 Or seeking with a biass'd mind,  
 Have not, it seems, discern'd it.

O Friendship ! if my soul forego  
 Thy dear delights while here below,  
 To mortify and grieve me,  
 May I myself at last appear  
 Unworthy, base, and insincere,  
 Or may my friend deceive me !

---

 THE COLUBRIAD.

CLOSE by the threshold of a door nail'd fast  
 Three kittens sat ; each kitten look'd aghast ;  
 I passing swift and inattentive by,  
 At the three kittens cast a careless eye,  
 Not much concern'd to know what they did there,  
 Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.  
 But presently a loud and furious hiss  
 Caused me to stop, and to exclaim, " What's this ?"  
 When lo ! upon the threshold met my view,  
 With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,  
 A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.  
 Forth from his head his forkèd tongue he throws,  
 Darting it full against a kitten's nose,  
 Who having never seen in field or house  
 The like, sat still and silent as a mouse ;  
 Only projecting with attention due,  
 Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, " Who are you ?"  
 On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,  
 But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe,  
 With which, well-arm'd, I hasten'd to the spot,  
 To find the viper,—but I found him not.  
 And, turning up the leaves and shrubs around,  
 Found only—that he was not to be found.  
 But still the kittens, sitting as before,  
 Sat watching close the bottom of the door.  
 " I hope," said I, " the villain I would kill  
 Has slipp'd between the door and the door-sill ;  
 And if I make despatch and follow hard,  
 No doubt but I shall find him in the yard :"  
 For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,  
 'Twas in the garden that I found him first.  
 Even there I found him, there the full-grown cat  
 His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat,  
 As curious as the kittens erst had been  
 To learn what this phenomenon might mean.  
 Fill'd with heroic ardour at the sight,  
 And fearing every moment he would bite,  
 And rob our household of our only cat  
 That was of age to combat with a rat,



With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,  
 And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

---

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
 Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
 Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
 Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
 Who, nursed with tender care,  
 And to domestic bounds confined,  
 Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
 His pittance every night,  
 He did it with a jealous look,  
 And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
 And milk, and oats, and straw;  
 Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
 With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
 On pippins' russet peel,  
 And, when his juicy salads fail'd,  
 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
 Whereon he loved to bound,  
 To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
 And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
 For then he lost his fear,  
 But most before approaching showers,  
 Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons  
 He thus saw steal away,  
 Dozing out all his idle noons,  
 And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
 For he would oft beguile  
 My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
 And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade  
 He finds his long last home,

And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
Must soon partake his grave.

---

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

HIC etiam jacet,  
Qui totum novennium vixit,  
Puss.

Siste paulisper,  
Qui præteriturus es,  
Et tecum sic reputa—  
Hunc neque canis venaticus,  
Nec plumbum missile,  
Nec laqueus,  
Nec imbres nimii,  
Confecêre :  
Tamen mortuus est—  
Et moriar ego.

---

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.\*

TO THE MARCH IN SCIPIO.

TOLL for the brave !  
The brave that are no more !  
All sunk beneath the wave,  
Fast by their native shore !  
Eight hundred of the brave,  
Whose courage well was tried,  
Had made the vessel heel,  
And laid her on her side.  
A land-breeze shook the shrouds,  
And she was overset ;  
Down went the Royal George,  
With all her crew complete.  
Toll for the brave !  
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;  
His last sea-fight is fought ;  
His work of glory done.

\* The *Royal George*, 108 guns, was lost off Spithead, on the 29th August 1782. She was undergoing some repairs and was careened over, when a sudden gust of wind overset her.

It was not in the battle;  
 No tempest gave the shock;  
 She sprang no fatal leak;  
 She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;  
 His fingers held the pen,  
 When Kempenfelt went down  
 With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,  
 Once dreaded by our foes!  
 And mingle with our cup  
 The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,  
 And she may float again  
 Full charged with England's thunder,  
 And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,  
 His victories are o'er;  
 And he and his eight hundred  
 Shall plough the wave no more.

---

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII CUI, GEORGIUS REGALE  
 NOMEN, INDITUM.

PLANGIMUS fortes. Periêre fortes,  
 Patrium propter periêre littus  
 Bis quater centum; subitò sub alto  
 Æquore mersi.

Navis, innitens lateri, jacebat,  
 Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,  
 Cum levis, funes quatiens, ad imum  
 Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam  
 Fortibus vitem voluêre parcæ,  
 Nec sinunt ultra tibi nos recentes  
 Nectere laurus.

Magne, qui nomen, licet incanorum,  
 Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!  
 At tuos olim memorabit ævum  
 Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,  
 Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,  
 Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox  
 Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosi  
 Voce fallebant hilari laborem,  
 Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram im-  
 plevrat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,  
 Humidum ex alto spolium levate,  
 Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos  
 Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic dñs placuit) fuêre :  
 Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit  
 Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen  
 Tollere ad astra.

---

SONG.—ON PEACE.

AIR—“*My fond Shepherds of late.*”

No longer I follow a sound;  
 No longer a dream I pursue;  
 O happiness! not to be found,  
 Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,  
 In the regions of pleasure and taste;  
 I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,  
 But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope  
 The voice of true wisdom inspires;  
 'Tis sufficient, if peace be the scope,  
 And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind  
 That seeks it in meekness and love;  
 But rapture and bliss are confined  
 To the glorified spirits above.

---

SONG.

AIR—“*The Lass of Pattie's Mill.*”

WHEN all within is peace,  
 How nature seems to smile;  
 Delights that never cease  
 The livelong day beguile.  
 From morn to dewy eve,  
 With open hand she showers  
 Fresh blessings, to deceive  
 And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart  
 Gives Nature power to please ;  
 The mind that feels no smart  
 Enlivens all it sees,  
 Can make a wintry sky  
 Seem bright as smiling May,  
 And evening's closing eye  
 As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,  
 So beauteously array'd  
 In Nature's various robe,  
 With wondrous skill display'd,  
 Is to a mourner's heart  
 A dreary wild at best ;  
 It flutters to depart,  
 And longs to be at rest.

---

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS ;

OR, LABOUR IN VAIN.

A NEW SONG TO A TUNE NEVER SUNG BEFORE.

1.

I SING of a journey to Clifton,  
 We would have perform'd if we could,  
 Without cart or barrow to lift on  
 Poor Mary and me through the mud.  
 Slee sla slud,  
 Stuck in the mud,  
 Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood !

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding,  
 Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs,  
 'Tis near as good walking as riding,  
 When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.  
 Wheels, no doubt,  
 Go briskly about,  
 But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout !

3.

SHE.

"Well ! now I protest it is charming ;  
 How finely the weather improves !  
 That cloud, though 'tis rather alarming,  
 How slowly and stately it moves !"



HE.

"Pshaw! never mind,  
'Tis not in the wind,  
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind."

4.

SHE.

"I am glad we are come for an airing,  
For folks may be pounded and penn'd,  
Until they grow rusty, not caring  
To stir half-a-mile to an end."

HE.

"The longer we stay,  
The longer we may;  
It's a folly to think about weather or way."

5.

SHE.

"But now I begin to be frighted;  
If I fall, what a way I should roll!  
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,—  
Stay! stop! I am sunk in a hole!"

HE.

"Nay, never care!  
'Tis a common affair;  
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there."

6.

SHE.

"Let me breathe now a little, and ponder  
On what it were better to do;  
That terrible lane I see yonder,  
I think we shall never get through."

HE.

"So think I:—  
But, by the by,  
We never shall know, if we never should try."

7.

SHE.

"But should we get there, how shall we get home?  
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past!  
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come  
To a difficult stile, I am ruin'd at last!"

O this lane !  
 Now it is plain  
 That struggling and striving is labour in vain."

8.

E E.

"Stick fast there while I go and look—"

SHE.

"Don't go away, for fear I should fall!"

HE.

"I have examined it every nook,  
 And what you see here is a sample of all.  
 Come, wheel round,  
 The dirt we have found  
 Would be an estate at a farthing a pound."

9.

Now, sister Anne, the guitar you must take,  
 Set it, and sing it, and make it a song;  
 I have varied the verse for variety's sake,  
 And cut it off short—because it was long.  
     'Tis hobbling and lame,  
     Which critics wont blame,  
 For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

---

### THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,  
 Which Mary to Anna convey'd;\*  
 The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,  
 And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,  
 And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,  
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret  
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was  
 For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,  
 And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas !  
 I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part  
 Some act by the delicate mind,  
 Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart  
 Already to sorrow resign'd.

\* Mrs Unwin and Lady Austen.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,  
 Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile;  
 And the tear that is wiped with a little address.  
 May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

---

THE VALEDICTION.

[Cowper wrote the following poem in a fit of indignation at his old friends Thurlow and Colman, to whom he had sent copies of his first volume of poems, which neither of them acknowledged.]

FAREWELL, false hearts! whose best affections fail  
 Like shallow brooks which summer suns exhale!  
 Forgetful of the man whom once ye chose,  
 Cold in his cause, and careless of his woes;  
 I bid you both a long and last adieu!  
 Cold in my turn, and unconcern'd like you.  
 First farewell Niger! \* whom, now duly proved,  
 I disregard as much as I have loved.  
 Your brain well furnish'd, and your tongue well taught  
 To press with energy your ardent thought,  
 Your senatorial dignity of face,  
 Sound sense, intrepid spirit, manly grace,  
 Have raised you high as talents can ascend,  
 Made you a peer, but spoilt you for a friend!  
 Pretend to all that parts have e'er acquired;  
 Be great, be fear'd, be envied, be admired;  
 To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,  
 But not hereafter to the name of friend!  
 I sent you verse, and, as your lordship knows,  
 Back'd with a modest sheet of humble prose;  
 Not to recall a promise to your mind,  
 Fulfill'd with ease had you been so inclined,  
 But to comply with feelings, and to give  
 Proof of an old affection still alive.  
 Your sullen silence serves at least to tell  
 Your alter'd heart; and so, my lord, farewell!  
 Next, busy actor on a meaner stage, †  
 Amusement-monger of a trifling age,  
 Illustrious histrionic patentee, ‡  
 Terentius, § once my friend, farewell to thee!  
 In thee some virtuous qualities combine,  
 To fit thee for a nobler part than thine,  
 Who, born a gentleman, hast stoop'd too low,  
 To live by buskin, sock, and raree-show.

\* Lord Thurlow.

† Colman.

‡ Colman was proprietor of the Haymarket Theatre.

§ Alluding to Colman's translation of *Terence*.

Thy schoolfellow, and partner of thy plays,  
 When Nichols \* swung the birch and twined the bays,  
 And having known thee bearded and full grown,  
 The weekly censor of a laughing town, †  
 I thought the volume I presumed to send,  
 Graced with the name of a long-absent friend,  
 Might prove a welcome gift, and touch thine heart,  
 Not hard by nature, in a feeling part.  
 But thou, it seems, (what cannot grandeur do,  
 Though but a dream !) are grown disdainful too ;  
 And strutting in thy school of queens and kings,  
 Who fret their hour and are forgotten things,  
 Hast caught the cold distemper of the day,  
 And, like his lordship, cast thy friend away.  
 O Friendship ! cordial of the human breast !  
 So little felt, so fervently profess'd !  
 Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years ;  
 The promise of delicious fruit appears :  
 We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,  
 Such is the folly of our dreaming youth ;  
 But soon, alas ! detect the rash mistake  
 That sanguine inexperience loves to make ;  
 And view with tears the expected harvest lost,  
 Decay'd by time, or wither'd by a frost.  
 Whoever undertakes a friend's great part  
 Should be renew'd in nature, pure in heart,  
 Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove  
 A thousand ways the force of genuine love.  
 He may be call'd to give up health and gain,  
 To exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,  
 To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,  
 And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.  
 The heart of man, for such a task too frail,  
 When most relied on is most sure to fail ;  
 And, summon'd to partake its fellow's woe,  
 Starts from its office, like a broken bow.

Votaries of business, and of pleasure, prove  
 Faithless alike in friendship and in love.  
 Retired from all the circles of the gay,  
 And all the crowds that bustle life away,  
 To scenes where competition, envy, strife,  
 Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,  
 Let me, the charge of some good angel, find  
 One who has known and has escaped mankind ;  
 Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away  
 The manners, not the morals, of the day :  
 With him, perhaps with *her*, (for men have known

\* The master of Westminster school.

† The *Connoisseur*, with which Colman was connected.

No firmer friendships than the fair have shown,)
 Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,  
 All former friends forgiven and forgot,  
 Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,  
 Union of hearts, without a flaw between.  
 'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,  
 If God give health, that sunshine of our days!  
 And if He add, a blessing shared by few,  
 Content of heart, more praises still are due:  
 But if He grant a friend, that boon possess'd  
 Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;  
 And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,  
 Born from above, and made divinely wise,  
 He gives, what bankrupt Nature never can,  
 Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,  
 Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,  
 A soul, an image of Himself, and therefore true.

---

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784.

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued  
 Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'd,  
 Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?  
 Roar as they might, the overbearing winds  
 That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—  
 And in thy minikin and embryo state,  
 Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,  
 Didst outlive tempests, such as rung and rack'd  
 The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,  
 And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.  
 Indebted to no magnet and no chart,  
 Nor under guidance of the polar fire,  
 Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,  
 Grazing at large in meadows submarine,  
 Where flat Batavia, just emerging, peeps  
 Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks  
 Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots  
 Her wondrous causeway far into the main.  
 Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,  
 And I not more, that I should feed on thee.  
 Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,  
 To him who sent thee! and success, as oft  
 As it descends into the billowy gulf,  
 To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!  
 Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin  
 Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd  
 To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.



## PAIRING-TIME ANTICIPATED.

## A FABLE.

I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau\*  
 If birds confabulate or no ;  
 'Tis clear that they were always able  
 To hold discourse, at least in fable ;  
 And even the child who knows no better  
 Than to interpret by the letter,  
 A story of a cock and bull,  
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced them on a winter's day,  
 But warm and bright and calm as May,  
 The birds, conceiving a design  
 To forestall sweet St Valentine,  
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove  
 Assembled on affairs of love,  
 And with much twitter and much chatter  
 Began to agitate the matter.  
 At length a Bullfinch, who could boast  
 More years and wisdom than the most,  
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,  
 A moment's liberty to speak ;  
 And silence publicly enjoin'd,  
 Deliver'd briefly thus his mind :

“ My friends ! be cautious how ye treat  
 The subject upon which we meet ;  
 I fear we shall have winter yet.”

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,  
 With golden wing and satin poll,  
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried  
 What marriage means, thus pert replied :

“ Methinks the gentleman,” quoth she,  
 “ Opposite in the apple-tree,  
 By his good will would keep us single  
 Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle ;  
 Or (which is likelier to befall)  
 Till death exterminate us all.  
 I marry without more ado ;

My dear Dick Redcap, what say you ?”

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,  
 Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,  
 Attested, glad, his approbation  
 Of an immediate conjugation.  
 Their sentiments so well express'd

\* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?—C.

Influenced mightily the rest;  
 All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.  
 But though the birds were thus in haste,  
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,  
 And destiny, that sometimes bears  
 An aspect stern on man's affairs,  
 Not altogether smiled on theirs.  
 The wind, of late breathed gently forth,  
 Now shifted east, and east by north;  
 Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,  
 Could shelter them from rain or snow:  
 Stepping into their nests, they paddled,  
 Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;  
 Soon every father bird and mother  
 Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,  
 Parted without the least regret,  
 Except that they had ever met,  
 And learn'd in future to be wiser  
 Than to neglect a good adviser.

## MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate  
 This lesson seems to carry—  
 Choose not alone a proper mate,  
 But proper time to marry.

## HUMAN FRAILITY.

WEAK and irresolute is man;  
 The purpose of to-day,  
 Woven with pains into his plan,  
 To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent and smart the spring,  
 Vice seems already slain;  
 But passion rudely snaps the string,  
 And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent  
 Finds out his weaker part,  
 Virtue engages his assent,  
 But pleasure wins his heart.

'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.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,  
 And dangers little known,

A stranger to superior strength,  
 Man vainly trusts his own.  
 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.

---

 ODE TO PEACE.

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.  
 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 ?  
 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 ?  
 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 ?

---

 VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK, DURING HIS  
 SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?  
 Oh tell me I yet have a friend,  
 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is the glance of the mind!  
 Compared with the speed of its flight,  
 The tempest itself lags behind,  
 And the swift-wingèd 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.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,  
 The beast is laid down in his lair,  
 Even here is a season of rest,  
 And I to my cabin repair.

There 's mercy in every place,  
 And mercy, encouraging thought!  
 Gives even affliction a grace,  
 And reconciles man to his lot.

---

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,  
 Both speed their journey with the restless stream,  
 The silent pace with which they steal away,  
 No wealth can bribe, no prayer 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.

---

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL.

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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 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,  
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralise 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  
 But half a coat, and shew his bosom bare.  
 The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
 That all was naught within, and all found out.

Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear  
 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, that I have known in days of old,  
 Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;  
 While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow  
 Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
 An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,  
 Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

---

### THE MORALISER CORRECTED.

#### A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold  
 That title now too trite and old,)  
 A man, once young, who lived retired  
 As hermit could have well desired,  
 His hours of study closed at last,  
 And finish'd his concise repast,

Stopped his cruise, replaced his book  
 Within its customary nook,  
 And, staff in hand, set forth to share  
 The sober cordial of sweet air,  
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied  
 To serious thought at evening-tide.  
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,  
 And from the trees, that fringed his hill  
 Shades slanting at the close of day  
 Chill'd more his else delightful way,  
 Distant a little mile he spied  
 A western bank's still sunny side,  
 And right toward the favour'd place  
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace,  
 In hope to bask a little yet,  
 Just reach'd it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!  
 Learns something from whate'er occurs;—  
 And hence, he said, my mind computes  
 The real worth of man's pursuits.  
 His object chosen, wealth or fame,  
 Or other sublunary game,  
 Imagination to his view  
 Presents it deck'd with every hue,  
 That can seduce him not to spare  
 His powers of best exertion there,  
 But youth, health, vigour to expend  
 On so desirable an end.  
 Ere long approach life's evening shades,  
 The glow that fancy gave it fades;  
 And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace  
 That first engaged him in the chase.

True, answer'd an angelic guide,  
 Attendant at the senior's side,—  
 But whether all the time it cost,  
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,  
 Must be decided by the worth  
 Of that which call'd his ardour forth.  
 Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,  
 Must cause him shame or discontent;  
 A vicious object still is worse,  
 Successful there he wins a curse;  
 But he, whom even in life's last stage  
 Endeavours laudable engage,  
 Is paid at least in peace of mind,  
 And sense of having well design'd;  
 And if, ere he attain his end,  
 His sun precipitate descend,  
 A brighter prize than that he meant

Shall recompense his mere intent.  
 No virtuous wish can bear a date  
 Either too early or too late.

---

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains  
 That, to the wrong side leaning,  
 Indite much metre with much pains,  
 And little or no meaning ;

Ah, why since oceans, rivers, streams,  
 That water all the nations,  
 Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,  
 In constant exhalations ;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,  
 Too covetous of drink,  
 Apollo, hast thou stolen away  
 A poet's drop of ink ?

Upborne into the viewless air,  
 It floats a vapour now,  
 Impell'd through regions dense and rare,  
 By all the winds that blow ;

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,  
 Combined with millions more,  
 To form an iris in the skies,  
 Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop ! and happy then  
 Beyond the happiest lot,  
 Of all that ever pass'd my pen,  
 So soon to be forgot !

Phœbus, if such be thy design,  
 To place it in thy bow,  
 Give wit, that what is left may shine  
 With equal grace below.

---

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat ;  
 My shrubs displaced from that retreat  
 Enjoy'd the open air ;  
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song  
 Had been their mutual solace long,  
 Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing  
That flutter loose on golden wing,  
    And frolic where they list;  
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,  
But that delight they never knew,  
    And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,  
With force not easily suppress'd;  
    And Dick felt some desires,  
That, after many an effort vain,  
Instructed him at length to gain  
    A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite  
The freeman to a farewell flight;  
    But Tom was still confined;  
And Dick, although his way was clear,  
Was much too generous and sincere  
    To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,  
And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say,  
    You must not live alone;—  
Nor would he quit that chosen stand  
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,  
    Return'd him to his own.

Oh ye, who never taste the joys  
Of friendship, satisfied with noise,  
    Fandango, ball, and rout!  
Blush when I tell you how a bird  
A prison with a friend preferr'd  
    To liberty without.

---

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM NORTHCOT.

Hic sepultus est  
Inter suorum lacrymas  
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,  
GULIELMI et MARIE filius  
Unicus, unicé dilectus,  
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,  
Aprilis die septimo,  
1780. Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valetō!  
Namque iterum tecum, sim modò dignus, ero.  
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,  
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

## TRANSLATION.

FAREWELL ! " But not for ever," Hope replies,  
Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies !  
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,  
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again.

## 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,  
Engaged myself to be at home,  
And shall expect him at the door  
Precisely when 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 :  
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."  
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 trivial provocation ?



The kindest and the happiest pair  
 Will find occasion to forbear ;  
 And something every day they live  
 To pity and perhaps forgive.  
 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  
 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,  
 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  
 Shews love to be a mere profession ;  
 Proves that the heart is none of his,  
 Or soon expels him if it is.

---

### BOADICEA.

#### AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior Queen,  
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
 Sought, with an indignant mien,  
 Counsels of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak  
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief ;  
 Every burning word he spoke  
 Full of rage, and full of grief.

"Princess ! if our aged eyes  
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
 'Tis because resentment ties  
 All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish—write that word  
 In the blood that she has spilt ;  
 Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,  
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"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!

"Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,  
Pregnant with celestial fire,  
Bending as he swept the chords  
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

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.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
Heaven awards the vengeance due;  
Empire is on us bestow'd,  
Shame and ruin wait for you.

---

TO THE REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

---

### TO THE REVEREND MR. NEWTON.

#### AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

THE swallows in their torpid state  
 Compose their useless wing,  
 And bees in hives as idly wait  
 The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,  
 The wildest wind that blows,  
 Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,  
 Secure of their repose.

But man all feeling and awake,  
 The gloomy scene surveys,  
 With present ills his heart must ache,  
 And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,  
 Bids me and Mary mourn;  
 But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,  
 And whispers your return.

Then April with her sister May  
 Shall chase him from the bowers,  
 And weave fresh garlands every day,  
 To crown the smiling hours.

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.

---

### THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend  
 If more admired than she—  
 But where will fierce contention end  
 If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene  
 Appear'd two lovely foes,  
 Aspiring to the rank of queen,  
 The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd into rage,  
 And swelling with disdain,  
 Appeal'd to many a poet's page  
 To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,  
 A fair imperial flower,  
 She seem design'd for Flora's hand,  
 The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate  
 The goddess chanced to hear,  
 And flew to save, ere yet too late,  
 The pride of the parterre.

"Yours is," she said, "the nobler hue,  
 And yours the statelier mien,  
 And, till a third surpasses you,  
 Let each be deem'd a queen."

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks  
 The fairest British fair,  
 The seat of empire is her cheeks,  
 They reign united there.

---

### IDEM LATINÉ REDDITUM.

HEU inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,  
 Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest!  
 Sed fines ultrà solitos discordia tendit,  
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessûs,  
 Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas,  
 Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultûs,  
 Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsitâ superbia tangunt,  
 Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinû,  
 Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatûm,  
 Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,  
 Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,  
 Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usûs  
 Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,  
 Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes.  
 Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,  
 Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit,  
 Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color,  
 Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,  
 Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham  
 Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit ;  
 Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus  
 Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

---

### THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

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.

'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.



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'd graced with a livelier hue,  
 And the winter of sorrow best shows  
 The truth of a friend such as you.

---

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.  
 '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.  
 " 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,  
 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.  
 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.  
 "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,  
 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,  
 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 shew'd he felt it.

---

#### EPITAPH ON DR JOHNSON.

HERE Johnson lies, a sage by all allow'd,  
 Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;  
 Whose prose was eloquence, by Wisdom taught,  
 The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;  
 Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,  
 Superior praise to the mere poet's song;  
 Who many a noble gift from heaven possess'd,  
 And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.  
 O man, immortal by a double prize,  
 By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

---

## ON THE AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON LITERATURE.

THE Genius of the Augustan age  
 His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,  
 And bursting with heroic rage,  
 When literary Heron appear'd.

"Thou hast," he cried, "like him of old,  
 Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,  
 By being scandalously bold,  
 Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

"And for traducing Virgil's name  
 Shalt share his merited reward ;  
 A perpetuity of fame,  
 That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd."

---

 THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

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 !

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.

But fix'd unalterable care,  
 Forgoes not what she feels within,  
 Shews the same sadness every where,  
 And slights the season and the scene.

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.

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.

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 POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are fell'd ; farewell to the shade,  
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade !  
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view  
 Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew ;  
 And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
 And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade !

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,  
 Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
 And the scene where his melody charm'd me before  
 Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,  
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,  
 With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,  
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,  
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man ;  
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,  
 Have a being less durable even than he.

## TO MISS C—, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

How many between east and west  
 Disgrace their parent earth,  
 Whose deeds constrain us to detest  
 The day that gave them birth !  
 Not so when Stella's natal morn  
 Revolving months restore,  
 We can rejoice that she was born,  
 And wish her born once more !

## GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

THIS cap that so stately appears,  
 With ribbon-bound tassel on high,  
 Which seems by the crest that it rears  
 Ambitious of brushing the sky :  
 This cap to my cousin I owe,  
 She gave it, and gave me beside,  
 Wreathed into an elegant bow,  
 The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,  
 Contrived both for toil and repose,  
 Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,  
 In which I both scribble and dose,  
 Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,  
 And rival in lustre of that  
 In which, or astronomy lies,  
 Fair Cassiopeia sat :

These carpets, so soft to the foot,  
 Caledonia's traffic and pride,  
 Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,  
 Escaped from the cross-country ride !  
 This table and mirror within,  
 Secure from collision and dust,  
 At which I oft shave cheek and chin,  
 And periwig nicely adjust :

This moveable structure of shelves,  
 For its beauty admired and its use,  
 And charged with octavos and twelves,  
 The gayest I had to produce ;  
 Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,  
 My poems enchanted I view,  
 And hope, in due time, to behold  
 My Iliad and Odyssey too :

This china, that decks the alcove,  
 Which here people call a buffet,  
 But what the gods call it above,  
 Has ne'er been revealed to us yet :  
 These curtains that keep the room warm  
 Or cool, as the season demands,  
 Those stoves that for pattern and form  
 Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands :

All these are not half that I owe  
 To One, from our earliest youth  
 To me ever ready to shew  
 Benignity, friendship, and truth ;  
 For time, the destroyer declared  
 And foe of our perishing kind,  
 If even her face he has spared,  
 Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods  
 And chattels of leisure and ease,  
 I indulge my poetical moods  
 In many such fancies as these ;



And fancies I fear they will seem—  
 Poet's goods are not often so fine;  
 The poets will swear that I dream,  
 When I sing of the splendour of mine.

## STANZAS.

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH OF  
 ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON, ANNO DOMINI 1787.\*

Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
 Regumque turres. HORACE.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door  
 Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run  
 The Nen's barge-laden wave,  
 All these, life's rambling journey done,  
 Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail  
 Than in foregoing years?  
 Did famine or did plague prevail,  
 That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,  
 Nor plague nor famine came;  
 This annual tribute Death requires,  
 And never waives his claim.

\* In a letter to Lady Hesketh, Cowper describes the origin of this series. "On Monday morning last, Sam. brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and, being desired to sit, spoke as follows: 'Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All-Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr C. [Cox,] the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You will do me a great favour, sir, if you will furnish me with one.' To this I replied, 'Mr C., you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a name-sake of yours in particular, C—, the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose.' 'Alas! sir, I have heretofore borrowed help of him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him.' I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, 'Perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason.' But, on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and, pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The waggon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs on individuals! I have written *one* that serves *two hundred* persons."

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,  
 And some are mark'd to fall ;  
 The axe will smite at God's command,  
 And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay tree, ever green,  
 With its new foliage on,  
 The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,  
 I pass'd,—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth  
 With which I charge my page !  
 A worm is in the bud of youth,  
 And at the root of age.

No present health can health insure  
 For yet an hour to come ;  
 No medicine, though it oft can cure,  
 Can always balk the tomb.

And oh ! that humble as my lot,  
 And scorn'd as is my strain,  
 These truths, though known, too much forgot,  
 I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,  
 And, ere he quits the pen,  
 Begg *you* for once to take *his* part,  
 And answer all—Amen !

---

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

Quod adest, memento  
 Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis  
 Rit, feruntur. HORACE.

Improve the present hour, for all beside  
 Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage  
 To whom the rising year shall prove his last,  
 As I can number in my punctual page,  
 And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet  
 On which the press might stamp him next to die ;  
 And, reading here his sentence, how replete  
 With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys  
 In which he sports away the treasure now ;

And prayer more seasonable than the noise  
 Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifer, on the brink  
 Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,  
 Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,  
 Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived ! Could I prophetic say  
 Who next is fated, and who next to fall,  
 The rest might then seem privileged to play ;  
 But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to all.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light  
 They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade ;  
 One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,  
 Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,  
 Still need repeated warnings, and at last,  
 A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,  
 Die self-accused of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for which no after-thrift atones !  
 The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin ;  
 Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,  
 But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living ! by the mouths be taught  
 Of all those sepulchres, instructors true,  
 That, soon or late, death also is your lot,  
 And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

---

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.      VIRG.  
 There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

“ O MOST delightful hour by man  
 Experienced here below,  
 The hour that terminates his span,  
 His folly and his woe !

“ Worlds should not bribe me back to tread  
 Again life's dreary waste,  
 To see again my day o'erspread  
 With all the gloomy past.

“ My home henceforth is in the skies,  
 Earth, seas, and sun, adieu !

All heaven unfolded to my eyes,  
I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd  
Of faith's supporting rod,  
Then breathed his soul into its rest,  
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few  
Sincere on virtue's side;  
And all his strength from Scripture drew,  
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he fear'd,  
He hated, hoped, and loved;  
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,  
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,  
And evil felt within;  
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,  
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last  
Call'd up from earth to heaven,  
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,  
By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be mine, each reader cries,  
When my last hour arrives;  
They shall be yours, my verse replies,  
Such only be your lives.

---

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

*Ne commonentem recta sperne.*—BUCHANAN.  
Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day  
Where the prison'd lark is hung,  
Heedless of his loudest lay,  
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round  
Nightly lifts his voice on high,  
None accustom'd to the sound,  
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and Clerk,  
Yearly in my song proclaim  
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—  
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,  
Publishing to all aloud,—  
Soon the grave must be your home,  
And your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,  
Oft repeated in your ears,  
Seems to sound too much in vain,  
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd  
Of such magnitude and weight,  
Grow, by being oft impress'd,  
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,  
Hear it often as we may;  
New as ever seem our sins,  
Though committed every day.

Death and judgment, heaven and hell—  
These alone, so often heard,  
No more move us than the bell  
When some stranger is interr'd.

Oh then, ere the turf or tomb  
Cover us from every eye,  
Spirit of instruction! come,  
Make us learn that we must die.

---

### ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subject pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!—VIRG.*

Happy the mortal who has traced effects  
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,  
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,  
Man thinks he fades too soon;  
Though 'tis his privilege to die,  
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan  
His blest concerns aright,  
Would gladly stretch life's little span  
To ages, if he might;

To ages in a world of pain,  
To ages, where he goes



Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,  
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,  
Enamour'd of its harm !  
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,  
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power ?  
Why deem we Death a foe ?  
Recoil from weary life's best hour,  
And covet longer woe ?

The cause is Conscience :—Conscience oft  
Her tale of guilt renews ;  
Her voice is terrible though soft,  
And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared  
Man mourns his fleeting breath :  
All evils then seem light, compared  
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him ; there's the fear  
That prompts the wish to stay :  
He has incurr'd a long arrear,  
And must despair to pay.

*Pay!*—follow Christ, and all is paid :  
His death your peace ensures ;  
Think on the grave where He was laid,  
And calm descend to yours.

---

### ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

*De sacres autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur. Cic., De Leg.*  
But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

HE lives who lives to God alone,  
And all are dead beside ;  
For other source than God is none  
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite  
His love as best we may ;  
To make his precepts our delight,  
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring  
Of giddy joys comprised,  
Is falsely named, and no such thing,  
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,  
 Who only live to prove  
 For what poor toys they can disclaim  
 An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel;  
 Much menaced, nothing dread;  
 Have wounds which only God can heal,  
 Yet never ask His aid?

Who deem His house a useless place,  
 Faith, want of common sense;  
 And ardour in the Christian race,  
 A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day  
 Which God asserts His own  
 Dishonour with unhallow'd play,  
 And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd  
 On word and deed, imply  
 The better part of man unblest  
 With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want, uncured  
 Till man resigns his breath,  
 Speaks him a criminal, assured  
 Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!  
 Yet so will God repay  
 Sabbaths profaned without remorse,  
 And mercy cast away.

---

LINES COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF  
 ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.,

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH.\*

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage  
 All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!  
 In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd  
 Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (oh blessings rarely found!)  
 Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd,  
 Through every period of this changeful state  
 Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

\* Mr Ashley Cowper was the father of Miss Theodora Cowper.

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem  
 O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,  
 Although thy worth be more than half suppress'd  
 Love shall be satisfied, and veil the rest.

---

### THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

MARIA ! I have every good  
 For thee wish'd many a time,  
 Both sad and in a cheerful mood,  
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,  
 More prudent, or more sprightly,  
 Or more ingenious, or more freed  
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd  
 Can I for thee require,  
 In wedded love already bless'd,  
 To thy whole heart's desire ?

None here is happy but in part ;  
 Full bliss is bliss divine ;  
 There dwells some wish in every heart,  
 And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,  
 Which fate shall brightly gild,  
 ('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)  
 I wish it all fulfill'd.

---

### THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,  
 Afric's coast I left forlorn ;  
 To increase a stranger's treasures,  
 O'er the raging billows borne.  
 Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;  
 But, though slave they have enroll'd me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England's rights, I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task ?

Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature  
 Make the plant for which we toil?  
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
 Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,  
 Lolling at your jovial boards,  
 Think how many backs have smarted  
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,  
 Is there One who reigns on high?  
 Has He bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from His throne, the sky?  
 Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,  
 Matches, blood-extorting screws,  
 Are the means that duty urges  
 Agents of His will to use?

Hark! He answers!—wild tornadoes  
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,  
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
 Are the voice with which He speaks.  
 He, foreseeing what vexations  
 Afric's sons should undergo,  
 Fix'd their tyrants' habitations  
 Where His whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,  
 Ere our necks received the chain;  
 By the miseries that we tasted,  
 Crossing in your barks the main;  
 By our sufferings, since ye brought us  
 To the man-degrading mart,  
 All sustain'd by patience, taught us  
 Only by a broken heart!

Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
 Till some reason ye shall find  
 Worthier of regard and stronger  
 Than the colour of our kind.  
 Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings  
 Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
 Prove that you have human feelings  
 Ere you proudly question ours!

## PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.

I OWN I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,  
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;  
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,  
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,  
For how could we do without sugar and rum?  
Especially sugar, so needful we see;  
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes  
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains;  
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will;  
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,  
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said;  
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,  
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind  
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,  
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;  
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,  
Had once his integrity put to the test;  
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,  
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd, "Oh no!  
What! rob our good neighbour? I pray you don't go!  
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread:  
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,  
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;  
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,  
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—"I see they will go;  
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!  
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,  
But staying behind will do him no good.

"If the matter depended alone upon me,  
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the tree;  
But since they will take them, I think I'll go too;  
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."



His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,  
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;  
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan;  
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

---

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,  
Asleep at the dawn of the day,  
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,  
So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.  
I dream'd that, on ocean afloat,  
Far hence to the westward I sail'd,  
While the billows high lifted the boat,  
And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw;  
Such at least was the form that she wore,  
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe  
Ne'er taught me by woman before.  
She sat, and a shield at her side  
Shed light, like a sun on the waves,  
And, smiling divinely, she cried—  
"I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain  
The sweetest that ear ever heard,  
She sung of the slave's broken chain  
Wherever her glory appear'd.  
Some clouds, which had over us hung,  
Fled, chased by her melody clear,  
And methought while she liberty sung,  
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,  
To a slave-culter'd island we came,  
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—  
Oppression his terrible name.  
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,  
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,  
And stood looking out for his prey  
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land  
That goddess-like woman he view'd,  
The scourge he let fall from his hand,  
With blood of his subjects imbrued.  
I saw him both sicken and die,  
And the moment the monster expired,  
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,  
From thousands with rapture inspired.



But ah ! if in vain I have studied an art  
 So gainful to me, all boasting apart,  
 I think it will break my compassionate heart,  
 Which nobody, &c.

For oh ! how it enters my soul like an awl ;  
 This pity, which some people self-pity call,  
 Is sure the most heart-piercing pity of all,  
 Which nobody, &c.

So this is my song, as I told you before ;  
 Come, buy off my stock, for I must no more  
 Carry Cæsars and Pompeys to sugar-cane shore,  
 Which nobody, &c.

---

EPIGRAM.

To purify their wine, some people bleed  
 A lamb into the barrel, and succeed ;  
 No nostrum, planters say, is half so good  
 To make fine sugar, as a negro's blood.  
 Now lambs and negroes both are harmless things,  
 And hence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs.  
 'Tis in the blood of innocence alone —  
 Good cause why planters never try their own.

---

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.*

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,  
 To laugh it would be wrong,  
 The troubles of a worthy priest,  
 The burthen of my song.

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.

He then is full of frights and fears,  
 As one at point to die,  
 And long before the day appears  
 He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,  
 Along the miry road,  
 Each heart as heavy as a log,  
 To make their payments good.

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.

Now all unwelcome at his gates  
The clumsy swains alight,  
With rueful faces and bald pates ;—  
He trembles at the sight.

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.

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.

“ 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 ? ”

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.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,  
One spits upon the floor,  
Yet not to give offence or grieve,  
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull  
And lumpish still as ever ;  
Like barrels with their bellies full,  
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.  
“ Come, neighbours, we must wag ”—  
The money chinks, down drop their chins,  
Each lugging out his bag.

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.

Quoth one, “ A rarer man than you  
In pulpit none shall hear ;  
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,  
You sell it plaguy dear.”

Oh why were farmers made so coarse,  
 Or clergy made so fine?  
 A kick that scarce would move a horse,  
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;  
 'Twould cost him, I daresay,  
 Less trouble taking twice the sum  
 Without the clowns that pay.

---

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.,

*On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren  
 Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.*

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,  
 Legends prolix delivers in the ears  
 (Attentive when thou readest) of England's peers,  
 Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

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.

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*.

---

THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs  
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,  
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,  
 I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,  
 And high in pedigree,  
 (Two nymphs adorn'd with every grace  
 That spaniel found for me,)



Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,  
 Now starting into sight,  
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads  
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd  
 His lilies newly blown;  
 Their beauties I intent survey'd,  
 And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought  
 To steer it close to land;  
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,  
 Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains  
 With fix'd considerate face,  
 And puzzling set his puppy brains  
 To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,  
 Dispersing all his dream,  
 I thence withdrew, and follow'd long  
 The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd;  
 Beau, trotting far before,  
 The floating wreath again discern'd,  
 And plunging, left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd  
 Impatient swim to meet  
 My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd  
 The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight the world, I cried,  
 Shall hear of this thy deed:  
 My dog shall mortify the pride  
 Of man's superior breed:

But chief myself I will enjoin,  
 Awake at duty's call,  
 To shew a love as prompt as thine  
 To Him who gives me all.

---

MOTTO FOR A CLOCK.

QUÆ lenta accedit, quam velox præterit hora!  
 Ut capias, patiens esto, sed esto vigil!

Slow comes the hour; its passing speed how great!  
 Waiting to seize it—vigilantly wait!

## ON MRS MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.\*

*(June 1788.)*

THE birds put off their every hue,  
 To dress a room for Montagu.  
 The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,  
 His rainbows and his starry eyes;  
 The pheasant, plumes which round infold  
 His mantling neck with downy gold;  
 The cock his arched tail's azure show;  
 And, river-blanch'd, the swan his snow.  
 All tribes beside of Indian name,  
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,  
 Where rises and where sets the day,  
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,  
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,  
 Proud to advance it all they can.  
 This plumage neither dashing shower,  
 Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,  
 Shall drench again or discompose,  
 But, screen'd from every storm that blows,  
 It boasts a splendour ever new,  
 Safe with protecting Montagu.  
 To the same patroness resort,  
 Secure of favour at her court,  
 Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought  
 Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,  
 Which, though new-born, with vigour move  
 Like Pallas, springing arm'd from Jove;  
 Imagination scattering round  
 Wild roses over furrow'd ground,  
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,  
 And teach Philosophy a smile;  
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,  
 Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,  
 The gem, though luminous before,  
 Obtrude on human notice more,  
 Like sunbeams on the golden height  
 Of some tall temple playing bright;  
 Well tutor'd learning, from his books  
 Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty looks,  
 Their order on his shelves exact,  
 Not more harmonious or compact  
 Than that to which he keeps confined  
 The various treasures of his mind;  
 All these to Montagu's repair,  
 Ambitious of a shelter there.

\* Mrs Montagu, born in October 1720, was the daughter of Mr Robinson of West Layton in Yorkshire.

There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,  
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,  
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar  
 Around their flight who highest soar,)  
 And in her eye, and by her aid,  
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway  
 With yon bright regent of the day;  
 The Plume and Poet both, we know,  
 Their lustre to his influence owe;  
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,  
 Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

---

ON THE DEATH OF MRS THROCKMORTON'S  
 BULLFINCH.\*

YE Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red  
 With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,  
 Oh, share Maria's grief!  
 Her favourite, even in his cage,  
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)  
 Assassined by a thief.

Where Renus strays his vines among,  
 The egg was laid from which he sprung;  
 And though by nature mute,  
 Or only with a whistle bless'd,  
 Well-taught he all the sounds express'd  
 Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll  
 Were brighter than the sleekest mole,  
 His bosom of the hue  
 With which Aurora decks the skies,  
 When piping winds shall soon arise  
 To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,  
 Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,  
 No cat had leave to dwell;  
 And Bully's cage supported stood  
 On props of smoothest shaven wood,  
 Large-built and latticed well.

\* "Weston has not been without its tragedies since you left us. Mrs Throckmorton's piping bullfinch has been eaten by a rat, and the villain left nothing but poor Bully's beak behind him. It will be a wonder if this event does not, at some convenient time, employ my versifying passion. Did ever fair lady, from the Lesbia of Catullus to the present day, lose her bird, and find no poet to commemorate the loss?"—*To Mr Rose, September 1788.*

Well-latticed,—but the grate, alas!  
 Not rough with wire of steel or brass,  
     For Bully's plumage sake,  
 But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,  
 With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,  
     The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole : all seem'd secure :  
 When, led by instinct sharp and sure,  
     Subsistence to provide,  
 A beast forth sallied on the scout,  
 Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,  
     And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,  
 Its ample area 'gan explore ;  
     And something in the wind  
 Conjectured, sniffing round and round,  
 Better than all the books he found,  
     Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,  
 A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest ;  
     In sleep he seem'd to view  
 A rat fast clinging to the cage,  
 And, screaming at the sad presage,  
     Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,  
 Right to his mark the monster went,—  
     Ah, Muse ! forbear to speak  
 Minute the horrors that ensued ;  
 His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—  
     He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh, had he made that too his prey !  
 That beak whence issued many a lay  
     Of such mellifluous tone,  
 Might have repaid him well, I wot,  
 For silencing so sweet a throat,  
     Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn—  
 So, when by Bacchanalians torn,  
     On Thracian Hebrus' side,  
 The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,  
 His head alone remain'd to tell  
     The cruel death he died.

AN EPISTLE TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY  
IN FRANCE.

MADAM,—

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays  
Is to congratulate and not to praise.  
To give the creature the Creator's due  
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.  
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,  
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,  
A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,  
Spurious, and only current with the blind.  
The path of sorrow, and that path alone  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown :  
No traveller ever reach'd that blest abode,  
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.  
The world may dance along the flowery plain,  
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain ;  
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,  
With unshod feet they yet securely tread ;  
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,  
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.  
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,  
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,  
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,  
A life of ease would make them harder still,  
In pity to the souls his grace design'd  
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,  
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,  
And said, "Go spend them in the vale of tears!"  
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!  
O salutary streams that murmur there!  
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,  
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.  
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,  
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,  
An envious world will interpose its frown,  
To mar delights superior to its own,  
And many a pang experienced still within,  
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin :  
But ills of every shape and every name,  
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim :  
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,  
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.  
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast  
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!  
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,  
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;



Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain  
 Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain ;  
 Thy tears all issue from a source divine,  
 And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.  
 So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,  
 And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

---

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,  
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,  
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,  
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,  
 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,  
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,  
 Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,  
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.  
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,  
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;  
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,  
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;  
 And where the land slopes to its watery bourn  
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;  
 Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,  
 And horrid brambles intertwine below ;  
 A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,  
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.  
 Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,  
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;  
 Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,  
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;  
 But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack ;  
 Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,  
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats  
 With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,  
 For which, alas ! my destiny severe,  
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.  
 The sun, accomplishing his early march,  
 His lamp now planted on heaven's topmast arch,  
 When, exercise and air my only aim,  
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,  
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound  
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found  
 Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang  
 All Kilwick and all Dingederry\* rang.

\* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

Sheep grazed the field ; some with soft bosom press'd  
 The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest ;  
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,  
 Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.  
 All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,  
 To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,  
 'Gan make his instrument of music speak,  
 And from within the wood that crash was heard,  
 Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,  
 The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,  
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,  
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain, [again ;  
 Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round  
 But recollecting, with a sudden thought,  
 That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,  
 They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,  
 And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustom'd long,  
 Perceives in everything that lives a tongue ;  
 Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees  
 Have speech for him, and understood with ease ;  
 After long drought, when rains abundant fall,  
 He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all ;  
 Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,  
 How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;  
 But, with precision nicer still, the mind  
 He scans of every locomotive kind ;  
 Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,  
 That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame ;  
 The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears  
 Have all articulation in his ears ;  
 He spells them true by intuition's light,  
 And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,  
 To win due credence to what follows next.

A while they mused ; surveying every face,  
 Thou hadst supposed them of superior race ;  
 Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,  
 Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,  
 That sage they seem'd as lawyers o'er a doubt,  
 Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;  
 Or academic tutors, teaching youths,  
 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths ;  
 When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,  
 A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd :  
 " Friends ! we have lived too long. I never heard  
 Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.  
 Could I believe that winds for ages pent

In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,  
 And from their prison-house below arise,  
 With all these hideous howlings to the skies,  
 I could be much composed, nor should appear,  
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.  
 Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd  
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold.  
 Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,  
 I could expound the melancholy tone;  
 Should deem it by our old companion made,  
 The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,  
 And, being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,  
 Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.  
 But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,  
 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear.  
 Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,  
 And fang'd with brass the demons are abroad;  
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit  
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit."

Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,  
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe:  
 "How! leap into the pit our life to save?  
 To save our life leap all into the grave?  
 For can we find it less? Contemplate first  
 The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:  
 Or should the brambles interposed our fall  
 In part abate, that happiness were small;  
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see  
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.  
 Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,  
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,  
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues  
 Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,  
 Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,  
 We have at least commodious standing here.  
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast  
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,  
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels  
 By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,  
 Through mere good fortune, took a different course.  
 The flock grew calm again, and I, the road  
 Following, that led me to my own abode,  
 Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found  
 Such cause of terror in an empty sound,  
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

## MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,  
 Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

## LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life  
 Half so delightful as a wife,  
 When friendship, love, and peace combine  
 To stamp the marriage-bond divine?  
 The stream of pure and genuine love  
 Derives its current from above;  
 And earth a second Eden shows,  
 Where'er the healing water flows  
 But ah, if from the dikes and drains  
 Of sensual nature's feverish veins,  
 Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,  
 Impregnated with ooze and mud,  
 Descending fast on every side  
 Once mingles with the sacred tide,  
 Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!  
 The banks that wore a smiling green,  
 With rank defilement overspread,  
 Bewail their flowery beauties dead;  
 The stream polluted, dark, and dull,  
 Diffused into a Stygian pool,  
 Through life's last melancholy years  
 Is fed with overflowing tears,  
 Complaints supply the zephyr's part,  
 And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

---

 ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.\*

I RANSACK'D for a theme of song,  
 Much ancient chronicle, and long;  
 I read of bright embattled fields,  
 Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,  
 Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast  
 Prowess to dissipate a host;  
 Through tomes of fable and of dream  
 I sought an eligible theme,  
 But none I found, or found them shared  
 Already by some happier bard.  
 To modern times, with truth to guide  
 My busy search, I next applied;

\* The king's recovery was announced on the 27th Feb. 1789. In a letter to Mr King, Cowper says that this poem, which he had written on the occasion, was to be presented to the queen, "by some kind body or another, I know not whom."

Here cities won, and fleets dispersed,  
 Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,  
 Deeds of unperishing renown,  
 Our fathers' triumphs and our own.

Thus as the bee, from bank to bower,  
 Assiduous sips at every flower,  
 But rests on none till that be found  
 Where most nectareous sweets abound,  
 So I, from theme to theme display'd  
 In many a page historic stray'd,  
 Siege after siege, fight after fight,  
 Contemplating with small delight,  
 (For feats of sanguinary hue  
 Not always glitter in my view,)  
 Till, settling on the current year,  
 I found the far-sought treasure near.  
 A theme for poetry divine,  
 A theme to ennoble even mine,  
 In memorable eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be  
 An era cherish'd long by me.  
 Which joyful I will oft record,  
 And thankful at my frugal board ;  
 For then the clouds of eighty-eight,  
 That threaten'd England's trembling state  
 With loss of what she least could spare,  
 Her sovereign's tutelary care,  
 One breath of heaven, that cried—Restore !  
 Chased, never to assemble more ;  
 And for the richest crown on earth,  
 If valued by its wearer's worth,  
 The symbol of a righteous reign  
 Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd  
 Our queen's long agitated breast ;  
 Such joy and peace as can be known  
 By sufferers like herself alone,  
 Who losing, or supposing lost,  
 The good on earth they valued most,  
 For that dear sorrow's sake forego  
 All hope of happiness below.  
 Then suddenly regain the prize,  
 And flash thanksgivings to the skies !

O Queen of Albion, queen of isles !  
 Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,  
 The eyes, that never saw thee, shine  
 With joy not unallied to thine,  
 Transports not chargeable with art  
 Illume the land's remotest part,



And strangers to the air of courts,  
 Both in their toils and at their sports,  
 The happiness of answer'd prayers,  
 That gilds thy features, shew in theirs.

If they who on thy state attend,  
 Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,  
 'Tis but the natural effect  
 Of grandeur that insures respect;  
 But she is something more than queen  
 Who is beloved where never seen.

---

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH OF MARCH 1789.

WHEN, long sequester'd from his throne,  
 George took his seat again,  
 By right of worth, not blood alone,  
 Entitled here to reign;

Then loyalty, with all his lamps  
 New trimm'd, a gallant show,  
 Chasing the darkness and the damps,  
 Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell of streets or squares  
 Which form'd the chief display,  
 These most resembling cluster'd stars,  
 Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the dome, the spires,  
 And rockets flew, self-driven,  
 To hang their momentary fires  
 Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,  
 The ocean serves on high  
 Up-spouted by a whale in air,  
 To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world  
 In one procession join'd,  
 And all the banners been unfurl'd  
 That heralds e'er design'd;

For no such sight had England's queen  
 Forsaken her retreat,  
 Where, George recover'd made a scene  
 Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,  
A witness undescried,  
How much the object of her love  
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er  
In aid of her design,—  
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before  
To veil a deed of thine.

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,  
Resolved to be unknown,  
And gratify no curious eyes  
That night except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,  
And hears the million hum;  
As all by instinct, like the bees,  
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft portray'd  
On many a splendid wall,  
Emblems of health and heavenly aid,  
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,  
So difficult to spell,  
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,  
The night his city fell.

Soon, watery grew her eyes and dim,  
But with a joyful tear,  
None else, except in prayer for him,  
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part  
Like those in fable feign'd,  
And seem'd by some magician's art  
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,  
Had been exerted none,  
To raise such wonders in her view,  
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirit cheer'd,  
And through the cumbrous throng,  
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,  
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene  
The sea-maid rides the waves,  
And fearless of the billowy scene  
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes  
 She view'd the sparkling show ;  
 One Georgian star adorns the skies,  
 She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night  
 Like that, once seen, suffice,  
 Heaven grant us no such future sight,  
 Such previous woe the price !

---

THE COCK-FIGHTER'S GARLAND.\*

MUSE—hide his name of whom I sing,  
 Lest his surviving house thou bring  
 For his sake into scorn,  
 Nor speak the school from which he drew  
 The much or little that he knew,  
 Nor place where he was born.

That such a man once was, may seem  
 Worthy of record, (if the theme  
 Perchance may credit win,)  
 For proof to man, what Man may prove,  
 If grace depart, and demons move  
 The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild  
 Disclaims him, Man he must be styled)  
 Wanted no good below,  
 Gentle he was, if gentle birth  
 Could make him such ; and he had worth,  
 If wealth can worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest  
 He shone superior at the feast,

\* Written on reading the following in the obituary of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1789:—"At Tottenham, John Ardesoif, Esq., a young man of large fortune, and in the splendour of his carriages and horses rivalled by few country gentlemen. His table was that of hospitality, where it may be said, he sacrificed too much to conviviality ; but, if he had his foibles, he had his merits also, that far outweighed them. Mr A. was very fond of cock-fighting, and had a favourite cock upon which he had won many profitable matches. The last bet he laid upon this cock he lost, which so enraged him that he had the bird tied to a spit and roasted alive before a large fire. The screams of the miserable animal were so affecting, that some gentlemen who were present attempted to interfere, which so enraged Mr A., that he seized a poker, and with the most furious vehemence declared, that he would kill the first man who interposed ; but, in the midst of his passionate asseverations, he fell down dead upon the spot. Such, we are assured, were the circumstances which attended the death of this great pillar of humanity."

And qualities of mind,  
Illustrious in the eyes of those  
Whose gay society he chose  
Possess'd of every kind.

Methinks I see him powder'd red,  
With bushy locks his well-dress'd head  
Wing'd broad on either side,  
The mossy rosebud not so sweet ;  
His steeds superb, his carriage neat  
As luxury could provide.

Can such be cruel? Such can be  
Cruel as hell, and so was he ;  
A tyrant entertain'd  
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight  
Was to encourage mortal fight  
'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

One feather'd champion he possess'd,  
His darling far beyond the rest,  
Which never knew disgrace,  
Nor e'er had fought, but he made flow  
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,  
The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced, at last, when, on a day,  
He push'd him to a desperate fray,  
His courage droop'd, he fled.  
The master storm'd, the prize was lost,  
And, instant, frantic at the cost,  
He doom'd his favourite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit  
Flew to the kitchen, snatch'd the spit,  
And, "bring me cord," he cried ;  
The cord was brought, and, at his word,  
To that dire implement the bird  
Alive and struggling, tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,  
And all the terrors of a tale  
That can be, shall be, sunk.—  
Led by the sufferer's screams aright  
His shock'd companions view the sight  
And him with fury drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate  
For the old warrior at the grate :  
He, deaf to pity's call,  
Whirled round him, rapid as a wheel,  
His culinary club of steel,  
Death menacing on all.

But vengeance hung not far remote,  
 For while he stretch'd his clamorous throat,  
     And heaven and earth defied,  
 Big with a curse too closely pent  
 That struggled vainly for a vent,  
     He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,  
 To point the judgment of the skies;  
     But judgments plain as this,  
 That, sent for man's instruction, bring  
 A written label on their wing,  
     'Tis hard to read amiss.

---

ON THE BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY FROM  
 SEA-BATHING IN THE YEAR 1789.

O SOVEREIGN of an isle renown'd  
 For undisputed sway  
 Wherever o'er yon gulf profound  
     Her navies wing their way,  
 With juster claims she builds at length  
     Her empire on the sea,  
 And well may boast the waves her strength  
     Which strength restored to Thee.

---

H Y M N,

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.\*

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,  
 In heaven Thy dwelling place,  
 From infants made the public care,  
 And taught to seek Thy face!

Thanks for Thy Word, and for Thy Day;  
 And grant us, we implore,  
 Never to waste in sinful play  
 Thy holy Sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but oh! impart  
 To each desires sincere,  
 That we may listen with our heart,  
 And learn as well as hear.

\* Written at the request of the Vicar of Olney, to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the children of the Sunday School.



For if vain thoughts the minds engage  
 Of older far than we,  
 What hope that at our heedless age  
 Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if Thou our spirits take  
 Under Thy gracious sway,  
 Who canst the wisest wiser make,  
 And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss Thy word bestows,  
 A sun that ne'er declines;  
 And be Thy mercies shower'd on those  
 Who placed us where it shines.

---

ON THE RECEIPT OF A HAMPER.\*

(IN THE MANNER OF HOMER.)

THE straw-stuff'd hamper with his ruthless steel  
 He open'd, cutting sheer the inserted cords,  
 Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came  
 The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat,  
 Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green  
 Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd  
 Drop after drop odorous, by the art  
 Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

---

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go!—thou art all unfit to share  
 The pleasures of this place  
 With such as its old tenants are,  
 Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,  
 Aware of wintry storms;  
 And woodpeckers explore the sides  
 Of rugged oaks for worms.

\* "My dear Friend—The hamper is come, and come safe; and the contents I can affirm, on my own knowledge, are excellent. It chanced that another hamper and a box came by the same conveyance, all which I unpacked and expounded in the hall, my cousin sitting meantime on the stairs, spectatress of the business; we diverted ourselves with imagining the manner in which Homer would have described the scene. Detailed in his circumstantial way, it would have furnished materials for a paragraph of considerable length in the *Odyssey*."—*To Mr Rose*, Oct. 4, 1789.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn  
 With frictions of her fleece ;  
 And here I wander eve and morn,  
 Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah !—I could pity the exiled  
 From this secure retreat ;—  
 I would not lose it to be styled  
 The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight ;  
 Thy pleasure is to shew  
 Thy magnanimity in fight,  
 Thy prowess,—therefore, go !

I care not whether east or north,  
 So I no more may find thee ;  
 The angry muse thus sings thee forth,  
 And claps the gate behind thee.

---

VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF DR LLOYD,  
 SPOKEN AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION NEXT AFTER HIS  
 DECEASE.

OUR good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,  
 Whose social converse was itself a feast.  
 O ye of riper years, who recollect  
 How once ye loved and eyed him with respect,  
 Both in the firmness of his better day,  
 While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,  
 And when impair'd by time, and glad to rest,  
 Yet still with looks in mild complacence drest,  
 He took his annual seat, and mingled here  
 His sprightly vein with yours,—now drop a tear.  
 In morals blameless as in manners meek,  
 He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,  
 But, happy in whatever state below,  
 And richer than the rich in being so,  
 Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed  
 At length from one,\* as made him rich indeed.  
 Hence, then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here !  
 Go, garnish merit in a higher sphere,  
 The brows of those, whose more exalted lot  
 He could congratulate, but envied not.  
 Light lie the turf, good senior, on thy breast !  
 And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest.

\* He was the father of Robert Lloyd, and usher and under-master at Westminster for nearly fifty years. He retired from his occupation in his seventieth year, with a pension from the king.

Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,  
And not a stone now chronicles thy name.

ABIIT senex ! Periit senex amabilis !  
Quo non fuit jucundior.  
Lugete vos, ætas quibus maturior  
Senem colendum præstitit,  
Seu quando, viribus valentioribus  
Firmoque fretus pectore,  
Florentiori vos juventute excolens  
Curâ fovebat patriâ ;  
Seu quando fractus, jamque donatus rude,  
Vultu sed usque blandulo,  
Miscere gaudebat suas facetias  
His annuis leporibus.  
Vixit probus, purâque simplex indole,  
Blandisque comis moribus,  
Et dives æquâ mente,—charus omnibus,  
Unius auctus munere.  
Ite, tituli ! Meritis beatioribus  
Aptate laudes debitas !  
Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens  
Fortuna plus arriserat.  
Placide senex, levi quiescas cespite,  
Etsi superbum nec vivo tibi  
Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo  
Lapis notatus nomine.

---

TO MRS THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE  
"AD LIBRUM SUUM." \*

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd  
What honour awaited his ode  
To his own little volume address'd,  
The honour which you have bestow'd,—  
Who have traced it in characters here,  
So elegant, even, and neat,  
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer  
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.  
And sneer if you please, he had said,  
A nymph shall hereafter arise,

\* "You must know that two odes by Horace have been lately discovered at Rome; I wanted them transcribed into the blank leaves of a little Horace of mine, and Mrs Throckmorton performed that service for me; in a blank leaf, therefore, of the same book I wrote the following."—*To Lady Hesketh, Feb. 9, 1790.*

Who shall give me, when you are all dead,  
 The glory your malice denies;  
 Shall dignity give to my lay,  
 Although but a mere bagatelle;  
 And even a poet shall say,  
 Nothing ever was written so well.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT  
 OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM.\*

OH that those lips had language! Life has pass'd  
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"  
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
 (Blest be the art that can immortalise  
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
 To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.  
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!  
 Who bidst me honour with an artless song,  
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long,

\* The picture was received by Cowper on the 25th February 1790. It was on this occasion he wrote the affecting letter to Mrs Bodham, beginning, "My dearest Rose, whom I thought withered and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive!" The expression of his emotions on receiving the picture of his mother are as touching in the letter as in the poem. "The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought, in the days of my childhood, much to resemble my mother, and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed a competent judge, can trace both her and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little I would hope both of his and her—, I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to you, I will even speak out, and say *good nature*. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, that whatever I am, I love you all." The Dean of St Paul's alluded to was Donne, the poet.

I will obey, not willingly alone,  
 But gladly, as the precept were her own ;  
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?  
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?  
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;  
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
 Ah, that maternal smile !—it answers—Yes.  
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !  
 But was it such ?—It was.—Where thou art gone  
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
 The parting words shall pass my lips no more !  
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,  
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived ;  
 By expectation every day beguiled,  
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.  
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,  
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot,  
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,\*  
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor ;  
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
 Drew me to school along the public way,  
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd  
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capp'd,  
 'Tis now become a history little known,  
 That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.  
 Short-lived possession ! But the record fair,  
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced  
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid ;  
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;  
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd

\* The rectory at Great Berkhamstead, where he was born.



By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd :  
 All this, and more endearing still than all,  
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
 Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,  
 That humour interposed too often makes ;  
 All this still legible in memory's page,  
 And still to be so to my latest age,  
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;  
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
 Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin,  
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)  
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?  
 I would not trust my heart ;—the dear delight  
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—  
 But no—what here we call our life is such,  
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,  
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)  
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,  
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that shew  
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
 While airs impregnated with incense play  
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;  
 So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore,  
 " Where tempests never beat nor billows roar ; " \*  
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide  
 Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.  
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
 Always from port withheld, always distress'd,—  
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,  
 Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,  
 And day by day some current's thwarting force  
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.  
 Yet, oh, the thought, that thou art safe, and he !  
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
 My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;  
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—

\* Garth.

The son of parents pass'd into the skies.  
 And now, farewell!—Time unrevok'd has run  
 His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.  
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;  
 To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,  
 Without the sin of violating thine;  
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free,  
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—  
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

---

INSCRIPTION FOR A STONE

ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT CHILLINGTON,  
 THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ., 1790.

OTHER stones the era tell,  
 When some feeble mortal fell;  
 I stand here to date the birth  
 Of these hardy sons of Earth.  
 Which shall longest brave the sky,  
 Storm and frost—these oaks or I?  
 Pass an age or two away,  
 I must moulder and decay;  
 But the years that crumble me  
 Shall invigorate the tree,  
 Spread its branch, dilate its size,  
 Lift its summit to the skies.  
 Cherish honour, virtue, truth,  
 So shalt thou prolong thy youth.  
 Wanting these, however fast  
 Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,  
 He is lifeless even now,  
 Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

---

ANOTHER,

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME  
 PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

READER! behold a monument  
 That asks no sigh or tear,  
 Though it perpetuate the event  
 Of a great burial here.

## TO MRS KING,\*

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR, A PATCHWORK COUNTER-  
 PANE OF HER OWN MAKING. AUGUST, 1790.

THE bard, if e'er he feel at all,  
 Must sure be quicken'd by a call  
 Both on his heart and head,  
 To pay with tuneful thanks the care  
 And kindness of a lady fair  
 Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,  
 On Ida's barren top sublime,  
 (As Homer's epic shews,)  
 Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,  
 Without the aid of sun or showers,  
 For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,  
 Is that which in the scorching day  
 Receives the weary swain,  
 Who, laying his long scythe aside,  
 Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,  
 Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!  
 Looms numberless have groan'd for me!  
 Should every maiden come  
 To scramble for the patch that bears  
 The impress of the robe she wears,  
 The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!  
 This bright display of every hue  
 All in a moment fled!  
 As if a storm should strip the bowers  
 Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers,—  
 Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle Fair  
 Who will not come to peck me bare  
 As bird of borrow'd feather,  
 And thanks to one above them all,  
 The gentle fair of Pertenhall,  
 Who put the whole together.

\* Mrs King was the wife of a clergyman, the rector of Pertenhall, Kimbolton. She had been intimate with Cowper's brother, and opened a correspondence with the poet in consequence of the delight she had derived from the perusal of his works.

## STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS  
OF MILTON. ANNO 1790.\*

“ME too, perchance, in future days,  
The sculptured stone shall shew,  
With Paphian myrtle or with bays  
Parnassian on my brow.

“But I, or ere that season come,  
Escaped from every care,  
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,  
And sleep scurely there.” †

So sang, in Roman tone and style,  
The youthful bard, ere long  
Ordain'd to grace his native isle  
With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,  
Hearing the deed unblest,  
Of wretches who have dared profane  
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones  
Where Milton's ashes lay,  
That trembled not to grasp his bones  
And steal his dust away! ‡

\* The disgraceful outrage alluded to took place on the 3d and 4th August, 1790, during the progress of some repairs in the church of St Giles, Cripplegate. There was a tradition in the parish that the poet was buried under the spot where the clerk's desk had formerly stood in the chancel, in the same grave with his father, and curiosity being excited on the subject, the vestry clerk, churchwardens, and others, opened the grave, in which they found a leaden coffin lying over a wooden one, supposed to be that of Milton's father. The ground was immediately closed, but opened again the next morning, the overseers having in the meantime caroused over the discovery, and resolved to turn it to account. Cutting open the leaden coffin, they found a body in its shroud, and, believing it to be that of the poet, they extracted the teeth, cut off the hair, which was six inches long, and combed and tied together, and then left the scattered remains to the grave-diggers, who were permitted to exhibit them for money to the public. Mr Philip Neve, of Furnival's Inn, who published an account of the transaction, was strongly convinced that the body was that of Milton, although the hair and other circumstances favoured the opinion that it was the body of a woman.

† Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus  
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri  
Fronde comas—At ego secura pace quiescam.

*Milton in Manso.*

‡ Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear  
To dig the dust inclosed here.  
Blest be the man that spares these stones,  
And curst be he that moves my bones.

*Shakspeare's Epitaph.*

O ill requited bard ! neglect  
 Thy living worth repaid,  
 And blind idolatrous respect  
 As much affronts the dead.

---

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE J. THORNTON, ESQ.

[November, 1790.]

POETS attempt the noblest task they can,  
 Praising the Author of all good in man,  
 And, next, commemorating Worthies lost,  
 The dead in whom that good abounded most.  
 Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more  
 Famed for thy probity from shore to shore ;  
 Thee, Thornton ! worthy in some page to shine,  
 As honest and more eloquent than mine,  
 I mourn ; or, since thrice happy thou must be,  
 The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.  
 Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed ;  
 It were to weep that goodness has its meed,  
 That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,  
 And glory for the virtuous, when they die.  
 What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,  
 Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,  
 Sweet as the privilege of healing woe  
 By virtue suffer'd combating below ?  
 That privilege was thine ; Heaven gave thee means  
 To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,  
 Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn  
 As midnight, and despairing of a morn.  
 Thou hadst an industry in doing good,  
 Restless as his who toils and sweats for food ;  
 Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth  
 By rust unperishable or by stealth ;  
 And if the genuine worth of gold depend  
 On application to its noblest end,  
 Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,  
 Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.  
 And, though God made thee of a nature prone  
 To distribution boundless of thy own,  
 And still by motives of religious force  
 Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,  
 Yet was thy liberality discreet,  
 Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat ;  
 And though in act unwearied, secret still,  
 As in some solitude the summer rill  
 Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,  
 And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.



Such was thy charity; no sudden start,  
 After long sleep, of passion in the heart,  
 But steadfast principle, and in its kind,  
 Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,  
 Traced easily to its true source above,  
 To Him, whose works bespeak His nature, love.  
 Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make  
 This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;  
 That the incredulous themselves may see  
 Its use and power exemplified in thee.

---

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM,

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM.

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,  
 Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.  
 Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit  
 Undique privatas patriciasque domos.  
 Nequicquàm conata suâ, fœdissima sperat  
 Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.  
 Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,  
 Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION.

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,  
 France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,  
 To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,  
 Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.  
 Her sons, too weak to vanquish us alone,  
 She hires the worst and basest of our own.  
 Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,  
 We always spare a coward on his knees.

---

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.\*

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,  
 Of numerous charms possess'd,  
 A warm dispute once chanced to wage,  
 Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,  
 Had both alike been mild:  
 But one, although her smile was sweet,  
 Frown'd oftener than she smiled.

\* The "nymphs" of this poem are the months of May and June. It was written in May, 1791, when the season was unusually severe.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,  
 Would raise her voice and roar,  
 And shake with fury to the ground  
 The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,  
 From all such frenzy clear,  
 Her frowns were seldom known to last,  
 And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song  
 The nymphs referr'd the cause,  
 Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,  
 And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,  
 The flippant and the scold,  
 And though she changed her mood so oft,  
 That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,  
 Or so resolved to err,—  
 In short, the charms her sister had  
 They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the god whom fondly they  
 Their great inspirer call,  
 Was heard, one genial summer's day,  
 To reprimand them all :

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,  
 " My favourite nymph to slight,  
 Adorning May, that peevish maid,  
 With June's undoubted right,

"The minx shall, for your folly's sake,  
 Still prove herself a shrew,  
 Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,  
 And pinch your noses blue."

---

#### YARDLEY OAK.

[There is some interest attached to the history of this piece. It was written in 1791, left unfinished, and thrown aside when Cowper became engrossed by the project of a new edition of Milton. None of his friends were aware of its existence, until it was discovered by Hayley amongst his papers after his death, with the following memorandum :—

YARDLEY OAK IN GIRTH, FEET 22, INCHES 6½.  
 THE OAK AT YARDLEY LODGE, FEET 28, INCHES 5.

Yardley oak stood in Yardley Chase, where the Earl of Northampton had a seat. It stood in an open part of the Chase, with only one or two others near it, so that it could be seen to advantage. When Hayley visited it with Cowper, it was perfectly sound. The larger oak, at Yardley Lodge, a pollard,

was in a state of decay, and almost hollow, in 1791. It stood half-way on the road to the former from Weston. "This latter oak," says Cowper, in a letter to Mr Rose, "has been known by the name of Judith many ages, and is said to have been an oak at the time of the Conquest." It has been suggested that the tree may have derived its name from having been planted by the Countess Judith, niece to the Conqueror, who, on her marriage with the English Earl Waltheof, received the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon as her dower.]

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all  
That once lived here, thy brethren, at my birth,  
(Since which I number threescore winters past,)  
A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,  
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,  
Relics of ages! could a mind, imbued  
With truth from heaven, created thing adore,  
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.

It seems idolatry, with some excuse,  
When our forefather Druids in their oaks  
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet  
Unpurified by an authentic act  
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,  
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom  
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste  
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.

Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball  
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,  
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd  
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down  
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs  
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.  
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains  
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil  
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,  
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared  
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,  
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,  
Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search  
Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,  
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!

Thou fellest mature; and, in the loamy clod  
Swelling with vegetative force instinct  
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,  
Now stars; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact;  
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,  
And, all the elements thy puny growth  
Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.

Who lived when thou wast such? Oh, couldst thou speak,  
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees  
Oracular, I would not curious ask

The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth  
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.

By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,  
The clock of history, facts and events  
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts  
Recovering, and misstated setting aright—  
Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;  
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave  
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs  
O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks  
That grazed it, stood beneath that ample cope  
Uncrowded, yet safe shelter'd from the storm.  
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived  
Thy popularity, and art become  
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing  
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd  
Of treeship—first a seedling hid in grass;  
Then twig; then sapling; and, as century roll'd  
Slow after century, a giant bulk  
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root  
Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd  
With prominent wens globose,—till at the last  
The rottenness, which Time is charged to inflict  
On other mighty ones, found also thee.

What exhibitions various hath the world  
Witness'd of mutability in all  
That we account most durable below!  
Change is the diet, on which all subsist,  
Created changeable, and change at last  
Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat  
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam  
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds,—  
Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,  
Invigorate by turns the springs of life  
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,  
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,  
Fine passing thought, e'en in their coarsest works,  
Delight in agitation, yet sustain  
The force, that agitates not unimpair'd;  
But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause  
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.

Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still  
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth  
From almost nullity into a state  
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,  
Slow, into such magnificent decay.  
Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly



Could shake thee to the root—and time has been  
 When tempests could not. At thy firmest age  
 Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,  
 That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the deck  
 Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,  
 The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present  
 To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,  
 Warp'd into tough knee-timber, many a load! \*  
 But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days  
 Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply  
 The bottomless demands of contest, waged  
 For senatorial honours. Thus to Time  
 The task was left to whittle thee away  
 With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,  
 Noiseless, an atom and an atom more,  
 Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,  
 Achieved a labour, which had, far and wide,  
 By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.

Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self  
 Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems  
 A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,  
 Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,  
 Thou temptest none, but rather much forbid'st  
 The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.  
 Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,  
 A quarry of stout spurs, and knotted fangs,  
 Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp  
 The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet  
 Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,  
 Though all the superstructure, by the tooth  
 Pulverised of venality, a shell  
 Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off  
 Long since, and rovers of the forest wild  
 With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left  
 A splinter'd stump bleach'd to a snowy white;  
 And some memorial none where once they grew.  
 Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth  
 Proof not contemptible of what she can,  
 Even where death predominates. The spring  
 Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force  
 Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,  
 So much thy juniors, who their birth received  
 Half a millennium since the date of thine.

But since, although well qualified by age

\* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.—C.



To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice  
 May be expected from thee, seated here  
 On thy distorted root, with hearers none,  
 Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform  
 Myself the oracle, and will discourse  
 In my own ear such matter as I may.

One man alone, the father of us all,  
 Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,  
 With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,  
 On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,  
 Nor owed articulation to his ear;  
 But, moulded by his Maker into man  
 At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd  
 All creatures, with precision understood  
 Their purport, uses, properties, assign'd  
 To each his name significant, and, fill'd  
 With love and wisdom, render back to Heaven  
 In praise harmonious the first air he drew.  
 He was excused the penalties of dull  
 Minority. No tutor charged his hand  
 With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind  
 With problems. History, not wanted yet,  
 Lean'd on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,  
 Eventful, should supply her with a theme. . . .\*

\* An anecdote in reference to Yardley Oak is related of Mr Whitbread, which may be appropriately inserted here. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Cowper's poetry, and being desirous of procuring a relic of the tree celebrated in these noble lines, Mr Bull, of Newport-Pagnel, undertook to procure it for him; but some delay having occurred, Mr Whitbread remonstrated with him in the following verses, preserved by Mr Grimshawe:—

“ Send me the precious bit of oak,  
 Which your own hand so fondly took  
 From off the consecrated tree,  
 A relic dear to you and me.  
 To many 'twould a bauble prove  
 Not worth the keeping;—those who love  
 The teeming, grand, poetic mind,  
 Which God thought fit in chains to bind  
 Of dreadful, dark, despairing gloom—  
 Yet left within such ample room  
 For coruscations strong and bright,  
 Such beams of everlasting light  
 As make men envy, love and dread,  
 The structure of that wondrous head—  
 Must prize a bit of Judith's stem  
 That brought to light that wondrous gem—  
 The fragment which, in verse sublime,  
 Records her honours to all time.”

## EPITAPH ON MRS M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,  
 But happiest they who win the world to come :  
 Believers have a silent field to fight,  
 And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.  
 They in some nook, where little known they dwell,  
 Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell ;  
 Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,  
 And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

## SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTHDAY.

DEEM not, sweet rose, that bloomest 'midst many a thorn,  
 Thy friend, though to a cloister's shade consign'd,  
 Can e'er forget the charms he left behind,  
 Or pass unheeded this auspicious morn !  
 In happier days to brighter prospects born,  
 Oh tell thy thoughtless sex, the virtuous mind,  
 Like thee, content in every state may find,  
 And look on Folly's pageantry with scorn ;  
 To steer with nicest art betwixt the extreme  
 Of idle mirth, and affectation coy ;  
 To blend good sense with elegance and ease ;  
 To bid Affliction's eye no longer stream ;  
 Is thine ; best gift, the unfailing source of joy,  
 The guide to pleasures which can never cease !

## THE RETIRED CAT.

[1791.]

A POET'S cat,\* sedate and grave  
 As poet well could wish to have,  
 Was much addicted to inquire  
 For nooks to which she might retire,  
 And where, secure as mouse in chink,  
 She might repose, or sit and think.  
 I know not where she caught the trick,—

\* Lady Hesketh enumerates amongst the domesticated animals Cowper had collected about him, "that he had, at one time, five rabbits, three hares, two guinea-pigs, a magpie, a jay, and a starling ; besides two goldfinches, two canary birds, and two dogs. It is amazing how the three hares can find room to gambol and frolic (as they certainly do) in his small parlour ;" and she adds, "I forgot to enumerate a squirrel, which he had at the same time, and which used to play with one of the hares continually." To these may be added the favourite cat of the poem.

Nature perhaps herself had cast her  
 In such a mould philosophique,  
 Or else she learn'd it of her master.  
 Sometimes ascending debonnair,  
 An apple tree, or lofty pear,  
 Lodged with convenience in the fork,  
 She watch'd the gardener at his work;  
 Sometimes her ease and solace sought  
 In an old empty watering-pot,  
 There, wanting nothing, save a fan,  
 To seem some nymph in her sedan  
 Apparell'd in exactest sort,  
 And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change it seems has place  
 Not only in our wiser race:  
 Cats also feel, as well as we,  
 That passion's force, and so did she.  
 Her climbing, she began to find,  
 Exposed her too much to the wind,  
 And the old utensil of tin  
 Was cold and comfortless within;  
 She therefore wish'd instead of those  
 Some place of more serene repose,  
 Where neither cold might come, nor air  
 Too rudely wanton with her hair,  
 And sought it in the likeliest mode  
 Within her master's snug abode.

A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined  
 With linen of the softest kind,  
 With such as merchants introduce  
 From India, for the ladies' use,  
 A drawer impending o'er the rest,  
 Half open in the topmost chest,  
 Of depth enough and none to spare,  
 Invited her to slumber there;  
 Puss with delight beyond expression  
 Survey'd the scene and took possession.  
 Recumbent at her ease ere long,  
 And lull'd by her own humdrum song,  
 She left the cares of life behind,  
 And slept as she would sleep her last,  
 When in came, housewifely inclined,  
 The chambermaid, and shut it fast,  
 By no malignity impell'd,  
 But all unconscious whom it held.

Awaken'd by the shock, cried Puss,  
 "Was ever cat attended thus!  
 The open drawer was left, I see,  
 Merely to prove a nest for me,

For soon as I was well composed,  
Then came the maid and it was closed.  
How smooth these 'kerchiefs and how sweet!  
Oh what a delicate retreat!  
I will resign myself to rest  
Till Sol declining in the west,  
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,  
Susan will come and let me out."

The evening came, the sun descended,  
And Puss remain'd still unattended.  
The night roll'd tardily away,  
(With her indeed 'twas never day ;)  
The sprightly morn her course renew'd,  
The evening gray again ensued,  
And Puss came into mind no more  
Than if entomb'd the day before.  
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,  
She now presaged approaching doom,  
Nor slept a single wink, or purr'd,  
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.

That night, by chance, the poet watching,  
Heard an inexplicable scratching ;  
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,  
And to himself he said—" What's that ?"  
He drew the curtain at his side,  
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied.  
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd  
Something imprison'd in the chest,  
And, doubtful what, with prudent care  
Resolved it should continue there.  
At length, a voice which well he knew,  
A long and melancholy mew,  
Saluting his poetic ears,  
Consoled him, and dispell'd his fears :  
He left his bed, he trod the floor,  
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,  
The lowest first, and without stop  
The rest in order to the top.  
For 'tis a truth well known to most,  
That whatsoever thing is lost,  
We seek it, ere it come to light,  
In every cranny but the right.  
Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete  
As erst with airy self-conceit,  
Nor in her own fond apprehension  
A theme for all the world's attention,  
But modest, sober, cured of all  
Her notions hyperbolical,  
And wishing for a place of rest

Anything rather than a chest.  
Then stepp'd the poet into bed  
With this reflection in his head:

## MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense  
Of your own worth and consequence.  
The man who dreams himself so great,  
And his importance of such weight,  
That all around in all that's done,  
Must move and act for him alone,  
Will learn in school of tribulation  
The folly of his expectation.

## ON THE NEGLECT OF HOMER.

COULD Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,  
And tune his harp at Rhedicina's door,  
The rich old vixen would exclaim, (I fear,)  
"Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."\*

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.†

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear,  
From yonder wither'd spray,  
This foremost morn of all the year,  
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud  
Of such a favour shewn,  
Am I selected from the crowd,  
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,  
For that I also long

\* These lines were occasioned by the failure of Mr Throckmorton to obtain subscribers for the translation of Homer at Oxford. "It seems not a little extraordinary," observes Cowper, in a letter to Mr Throckmorton, "that persons so nobly patronised themselves on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it." It is only just to add, however, that while Mr Throckmorton had to complain of being repulsed at Oxford, Mr Johnson was reaping a rich harvest of names at Cambridge.

† 1792. "You talk of primroses that you pulled at Candlemas-day; but what think you of me that heard a nightingale on New-Year's Day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune; good, indeed, for if it were at all an omen it could not be an unfavourable one."—*To Mr Johnson*, March 11, 1792.



Have practised in the groves like thee,  
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force  
Of some divine command,  
Commission'd to presage a course  
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long  
And joyless year have I,  
As thou to-day, put forth my song  
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,  
Who only need'st to sing  
To make even January charm,  
And every season Spring.

---

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

OF MISS PATTY MORE'S, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.\*

[February 1792.]

IN vain to live from age to age  
While modern bards endeavour,  
I write my name in Patty's page,  
And gain my point for ever.

---

EPITAPH ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST,

A FAVOURITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS.

[March 1792.]

THESE are not dewdrops, these are tears,  
And tears by Sally shed,  
For absent Robin, who she fears,  
With too much cause, is dead.

\* The album was a collection of autographs, for which the owner requested a contribution from Cowper. The quatrain was written in a great hurry, and sent originally as follows:—

“In vain to live from age to age  
We modern bards endeavour—  
But write in Patty's book one page,  
You gain your point for ever.”

The punctuation occasioned some difficulty; he afterwards suggested a full stop at the end of the second line; or, if it should be preferred, a semicolon. Finally, the lines were altered as they are given above, on the suggestion of Lady Hesketh.

One morn he came not to her hand  
 As he was wont to come,  
 And, on her finger perch'd, to stand  
 Picking his breakfast crumb.

Alarm'd, she call'd him and perplex'd  
 She sought him, but in vain;  
 That day he came not, nor the next,  
 Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,  
 Though where he fell, or how,  
 None knows, so secret was his doom,  
 Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died  
 In social Robin's stead,  
 Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,  
 Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold,  
 Nor spiritlessly tame;  
 Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,  
 But always in a flame.

---

#### ON A MISTAKE IN THE TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

COWPER had sinn'd with some excuse,  
 If, bound in rhyming tethers,  
 He had committed this abuse  
 Of changing ewes for wethers.

But, male for female is a trope,  
 A rather bold misnomer,  
 That would have startled even Pope,  
 When he translated Homer.\*

\* "I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. First, from a sensible little man, curate of a neighbouring village, [the Rev. John Buchanan;] then from Walter Bagot; then from Henry Cowper; and now from you. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirised myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dozed with laudanum."—*To Mr Hill*, April 15, 1792.

## SONNET TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.\*

[April 1792.]

THY country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,  
 Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd  
 Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the inthrall'd  
 From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.  
 Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,  
 Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.

Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear  
 Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;  
 Hope smiles, joy springs, and, though cold caution pause  
 And weave delay, the better hour is near  
 That shall remunerate thy toils severe  
 By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love  
 From all the just on earth, and all the blest above.†

## TO DR AUSTEN, OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.‡

[May 1792.]

AUSTEN! accept a grateful verse from me,  
 The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.  
 Loved by the muses, thy ingenious mind  
 Pleasing requital in my verse may find;  
 Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,  
 Immortalising names which else had died:  
 And oh! could I command the glittering wealth  
 With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;  
 Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,  
 Were in the power of verse like mine to give,  
 I would not recompense his arts with less,  
 Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend! I love thee, though unknown,  
 And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

\* The object of this sonnet was to refute a malicious calumny circulated in the neighbourhood of Weston, that, although Cowper had pretended to declaim against the slave trade in the *Task*, he was secretly a friend to it.

† These lines originally stood thus:—

“Then let them scoff—two prizes thou hast won:  
 Freedom for captives, and thy God's—Well done.”

Cowper subsequently altered them as they are given in the text.

‡ In May 1792, Mrs Unwin was seized with a second attack of paralysis, and Hayley, happening to be on a visit at Weston at the time, forwarded a statement of the case to his friend Dr Austen, whose advice and opinion were thus gratefully acknowledged by Cowper. Dr Austen, equally distinguished by his skill and benevolence, died a few months afterwards.

## TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.\*

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind  
 While young, humane, conversable, and kind;  
 Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,  
 Now grown a villain, and the worst of men:  
 But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd  
 And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

## LINES ADDRESSED TO DR DARWIN,†

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two poets,‡ (poets by report  
 Not oft so well agree,)  
 Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!  
 Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,  
 Who oft themselves have known  
 The pangs of a poetic birth  
 By labours of their own.

We therefore pleased extol thy song,  
 Though various yet complete,  
 Rich in embellishment, as strong  
 And learnèd as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;  
 Though, could our hearts repine  
 At any poet's happier lays,  
 They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit  
 Of friendship's closest tie,  
 Can gaze on even Darwin's wit  
 With an unjaundiced eye:

\* Written for insertion in the newspapers when Warren Hastings was under impeachment.

† Written at the request of Hayley, who, at the same time, supplied a similar tribute. "I have, in pursuit of your idea to compliment Darwin," writes Cowper, "put a few stanzas together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another." As might be expected, the "compliment" was strained and far-fetched, and stretched almost to burlesque. So true a lover of nature and natural poetry could not sympathise with the muse of the *Botanic Garden*, although he was willing to oblige Hayley at the cost of a good-natured compromise of his judgment.

‡ Alluding to the poem by Mr Hayley, which accompanied these lines. Both poems were inserted in subsequent editions of the *Botanic Garden*.

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,  
And howsoever known,  
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,  
Unworthy of his own.

---

CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON.\*

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—  
And meet perhaps never again ;  
The sun of that moment is set,  
And seems to have risen in vain.  
Catharina has fled like a dream,  
(So vanishes pleasure, alas !)  
But has left a regret and esteem  
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,  
Catharina, Maria, and I,  
Our progress was often delay'd  
By the nightingale warbling nigh.  
We paused under many a tree,  
And much she was charm'd with a tone,  
Less sweet to Maria and me,  
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,  
And gave them a grace so divine,  
As only her musical tongue  
Could infuse into numbers of mine.  
The longer I heard, I esteem'd  
The work of my fancy the more,  
And e'en to myself never seem'd  
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed  
In number the days of the year,  
Catharina, did nothing impede,  
Would feel herself happier here ;  
For the close-woven arches of limes  
On the banks of our river, I know,  
Are sweeter to her many times  
Than aught that the city can show.

\* This lady was afterwards married to Mr George Throckmorton Courtenay, the brother of Sir John Throckmorton, upon which occasion the Second Part was written. She subsequently became Lady Throckmorton, by the death of her brother-in-law.



So it is, when the mind is endued  
 With a well-judging taste from above,  
 Then, whether embellish'd or rude,  
 'Tis nature alone that we love.  
 The achievements of art may amuse,  
 May even our wonder excite,  
 But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse  
 A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess  
 Catharina alone can rejoice,  
 May it still be her lot to possess  
 The scene of her sensible choice !  
 To inhabit a mansion remote  
 From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,  
 And by Philomel's annual note  
 To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,  
 To wing all her moments at home ;  
 And with scenes that new rapture inspire,  
 As oft as it suits her to roam ;  
 She will have just the life she prefers,  
 With little to hope or to fear,  
 And ours would be pleasant as hers,  
 Might we view her enjoying it here.

## THE SECOND PART.

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE COURTENAY, ESQ.

[June 1792.]

Believe it or not, as you choose,  
 The doctrine is certainly true,  
 That the future is known to the muse,  
 And poets are oracles too.  
 I did but express a desire  
 To see Catharina at home,  
 At the side of my friend George's fire,  
 And lo—she is actually come !

Such prophecy some may despise,  
 But the wish of a poet and friend  
 Perhaps is approved in the skies,  
 And therefore attains to its end.  
 'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth  
 From a bosom effectually warm'd  
 With the talents, the graces, and worth  
 Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria \* would leave us, I knew,  
 To the grief and regret of us all,  
 But less to our grief, could we view  
 Catharina the Queen of the Hall.  
 And therefore I wish'd as I did,  
 And therefore this union of hands,  
 Not a whisper was heard to forbid,  
 But all cry, Amen—to the banna.

Since therefore I seem to incur  
 No danger of wishing in vain  
 When making good wishes for her,  
 I will e'en to my wishes again ;  
 With one I have made her a wife,  
 And now I will try with another,  
 Which I cannot suppress for my life,  
 How soon I can make her a mother.

---

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

[June 1792.]

HAYLEY—thy tenderness fraternal shewn  
 In our first interview, delightful guest !  
 To Mary, and me for her dear sake distress'd,  
 Such as it is has made my heart thy own,  
 Though heedless now of new engagements grown ;  
 For threescore winters make a wintry breast,  
 And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest  
 Of friendship more, except with God alone.  
 But thou hast won me ; nor is God my foe,  
 Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,  
 Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,  
 My brother, by whose sympathy I know  
 Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,  
 Not more to admire the Bard than love the Man.

---

EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

[August 1792.]

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,  
 Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim ;  
 No sycophant, although of spaniel race,  
 And though no hound, a martyr to the chase.

\* Lady Throckmorton.

Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice !  
 Your haunts no longer echo to his voice ;  
 This record of his fate exulting view,  
 He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.  
 " Yes,"—the indignant shade of Fop replies—  
 " And worn with vain pursuit, man also dies."

SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.,

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS,

*Drawn at Eartham in the 61st year of my age, and in the months of  
 August and September 1792.\**

[October 1792.]

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace  
 On chart or canvas, not the form alone  
 And semblance, but however faintly shown  
 The mind's impression too on every face ;  
 With strokes that time ought never to erase,  
 Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own  
 The subject worthless, I have never known  
 The artist shining with superior grace.  
 But this I mark,—that symptoms none of woe  
 In thy incomparable work appear.  
 Well—I am satisfied it should be so,  
 Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear ;  
 For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see  
 When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee ?

\* "Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all men, with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible."—*Letter to Lady Hesketh (from Eartham), August 1792.* "Here comes something. . . . It is the debt long unpaid, the compliment due to Romney; and if it has your approbation, I will send it, or you may send it for me. I know not why, but I said to myself, it shall not be a sonnet; accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half-a-dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so."—*To Hayley, October 1792.* The drawing is now in the possession of Mr Johnson's widow.

The only remaining authentic portraits of Cowper are an oil painting by Abbot, now in the possession of the Rev. W. Cowper Johnson, rector of Yaxham, in Norfolk, eldest son of Cowper's "Johnnie of Norfolk;" and a drawing by the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, one of the artist's earliest sketches. Abbot's portrait is an excellent likeness, although it represents the poet (out of compliment to his cousin) in a dress he never wore—a green coat, yellow waistcoat, and breeches, the costume of the Hesketh Archery Club. Steel engravings were made from Sir Thomas Lawrence's drawing, and given to the nearest of kin after Cowper's decease. The original is supposed to have passed into the hands of Mr Rose, Cowper's friend, who took Sir Thomas to Weston Underwood. There is an oil portrait of Cowper at Lord Cowper's, at Penshangar, in Herts, dressed in a gay morning gown, and capped with Lady Hesketh's gift. This portrait, ascribed to Jackson, R. A., seems to have been composed from the portraits by Abbot and Lawrence.

## AN EPITAPH

ON A POINTER BELONGING TO SIR JOHN THROCKMORTON.

HERE lies one who never drew  
 Blood himself, yet may slew ;  
 Gave the gun its aim, and figure  
 Made in field, yet ne'er pull'd trigger,  
 Arm'd men have gladly made  
 Him their guide, and him obey'd ;  
 At his signified desire  
 Would advance, present, and fire.  
 Stout he was, and large of limb,  
 Scores have fled at sight of him ;  
 And to all this fame he rose  
 Only following his nose.  
 Neptune was he call'd ; not he  
 Who controls the boisterous sea,  
 But of happier command,  
 Neptune of the furrow'd land ;  
 And, your wonder vain to shorten,  
 Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.

## ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

[January 1793.]

IN language warm as could be breathed or penn'd  
 Thy picture speaks the original, my friend,  
 Not by those looks that indicate thy mind,  
 They only speak thee friend of all mankind ;  
 Expression here more soothing still I see,  
 That friend of all a partial friend to me.

## EPITAPH ON MR CHESTER, OF CHICHELEY.

[April 1793.]

TEARS flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,  
 Till all who knew him follow to the skies.  
 Tears therefore fall where Chester's ashes sleep ;  
 Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants weep ;—  
 And justly—few shall ever him transcend  
 As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

## TO MY COUSIN ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE MADE BY HERSELF.

[May 1793.]

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,  
 When I was young, and thou no more  
 Than plaything for a nurse,  
 I danced and fondled on my knee,  
 A kitten both in size and glee,—  
 I thank thee for my purse.  
 Gold pays the worth of all things here;  
 But not of love;—that gem's too dear  
 For richest rogues to win it;  
 I, therefore, as a proof of love,  
 Esteem thy present far above  
 The best things kept within it.

## TO MRS UNWIN.

[May 1793.]

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,  
 Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd they drew,  
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new  
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,  
 That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,  
 I may record thy worth with honour due,  
 In verse as musical as thou art true,  
 And that immortalises whom it sings.  
 But, thou hast little need. There is a book  
 By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,  
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,  
 A chronicle of actions just and bright;  
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,  
 And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

## TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER.

[May 1793.]

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!  
 When I behold the fruit of thy regard,  
 The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,  
 I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.  
 Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be,  
 Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward  
 With some applause my bold attempt and hard,  
 Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.



The grief is this, that, sunk in Homer's mine,  
 I lose my precious years now soon to fail,  
 Handling his gold, which, howso'er it shine,  
 Proves dross when balanced in the Christian scale.  
 Be wiser thou;—like our forefather Donne,  
 Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

---

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,\*

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET WHEN NO RAIN HAD  
 FALLEN THERE.

IF Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,  
 While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,  
 Might fitly represent the church, endow'd  
 With heavenly gifts to heathens not allow'd;  
 In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,  
 Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.  
 Heaven grant us half the omen,—may we see  
 Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

---

INSCRIPTION FOR A HERMITAGE IN THE  
 AUTHOR'S GARDEN.

[May 1793.]

THIS cabin, Mary, in my sight appears, •  
 Built as it has been in our waning years,  
 A rest afforded to our weary feet,  
 Preliminary to—the last retreat. †

\* Mr Johnson, to whom the preceding sonnet was addressed.

† The poet was disappointed in the object for which this inscription was written, by the ruinous munificence of the carpenter he employed to erect his hermitage. He contemplated merely a rustic shed, and the village architect ran him up a costly pavilion. Cowper, in a letter to Hayley, complains of this expensive compliment to his taste: "Is not this vexatious? I threaten to inscribe it thus:—

'Beware of building! I intended  
 Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.'

In a subsequent letter, he says:—

"Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint,  
 Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,  
 That building, and building, a man may be driven  
 At last out of doors, and have no house to live in."

"Besides, my dearest brother, they have not only built for me what I did not want, but have ruined a noble tetrastic by doing so. I had written one which I designed for a hermitage, and it will by no means suit the fine and pompous affair which they have made instead of one."

INSCRIPTION FOR A MOSS-HOUSE IN THE  
SHRUBBERY AT WESTON.

HERE, free from riot's hated noise,  
Be mine, the calmer, purer joys  
A friend or book bestows ;  
Far from the storms that shake the great,  
Contentment's gale shall fan my seat,  
And sweeten my repose.

THE FOUR AGES.\*

(A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM.)

"I COULD be well content, allow'd the use  
Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd  
From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,  
To recommence life's trial, in the hope  
Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"

Thus while grey evening lull'd the wind, and call'd  
Fresh odours from the shrubbery at my side,  
Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,  
And held accustom'd conference with my heart;  
When from within it thus a voice replied :

"Couldst thou in truth? and art thou taught at length  
This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?  
Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,  
Time wasted, violated laws, abuse  
Of talents, judgment, mercies, better far  
Than opportunity vouchsafed to err  
With less excuse, and, haply, worse effect?"

\* The subject indicated in this fragment was suggested in 1791, by the Rev. Mr Buchanan, who sketched the design of a poem intended to embrace the four stages of human life—infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, and recommended it to Cowper as being peculiarly suited to his powers. Cowper entered zealously into the project, and frequently alluded to it in his correspondence as an undertaking to which he looked forward with pleasure. But he was at this time engrossed by his last labours on Homer, and his contemplated edition of Milton, and was obliged to postpone it indefinitely. In 1793, he writes, "The *Four Ages* is a subject that delights me when I think of it; but I am ready to fear that all my ages will be exhausted before I shall be at leisure to write upon it." This fragment, apparently intended as a memorandum for an introduction, was all he accomplished towards the poem. In March 1799, when his mind was sinking under the influence of disease, Mr Johnson, endeavouring gently to draw him back into literary occupation, placed before him the paper containing this broken passage. But, after altering a little and adding a few lines, Cowper relinquished the task, observing that "it was too great a work for him to attempt in his present situation."

I heard, and acquiesced : then to and fro  
 Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,  
 My gravelly bounds, from self to human kind  
 I pass'd; and next consider'd, what is man?

Knows he his origin? Can he ascend  
 By reminiscence to his earliest date?  
 Slept he in Adam? And in those from him  
 Through numerous generations, till he found  
 At length his destined moment to be born?  
 Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?  
 Deep mysteries both! which schoolmen must have toil'd  
 To unriddle, and have left them mysteries still.

It is an evil incident to man,  
 And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves  
 Truths useful and attainable with ease,  
 To search forbidden deeps, where mystery lies  
 Not to be solved, and useless, if it might.  
 Mysteries are food for angels; they digest  
 With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,  
 While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean  
 His manna from the ground, or starve and die.

---

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S BOWER,

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

THRIVE, gentle plant! and weave a bower  
 For Mary and for me,  
 And deck with many a splendid flower,  
 Thy foliage large and free.

Thou camest from Eartham, and wilt shade  
 (If truly I divine),  
 Some future day the illustrious head  
 Of him who made thee mine.

Should Daphne shew a jealous frown,  
 And Envy seize the bay,  
 Affirming none so fit to crown  
 Such honour'd brows as they,

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,  
 And with convincing power;  
 For why should not the Virgin's friend  
 Be crown'd with Virgin's Bower?

## TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.\*

[June 1793.]

DEAR architect of fine chateaux in air,  
 Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,  
 Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,  
 For back of royal elephant to bear;

Oh for permission from the skies to share,  
 Much to my own, though little to thy good,  
 With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)  
 A partnership of literary ware!

But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth  
 To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;  
 Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth!  
 But what is commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,  
 Which they who need them use, and then despise.

## A TALE.†

[June 1793.]

IN Scotland's realm, where trees are few,  
 Nor even shrubs abound;  
 But where, however bleak the view,  
 Some better things are found;

\* Hayley proposed at this time a literary partnership to Cowper; but what the work was to be does not appear. In these lines, Cowper pleads his occupations—Homer and Milton—as a reason for declining to engage in the project. He is still more explicit in the letter that accompanied them. “I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. I am so made up—I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition, in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but on a general view of the matter I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness which has been my effectual and almost fatal hindrance on many other important occasions, and which I could feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. He adds, that he could not attempt anything in concert with any man, even his own father or brother were they alive, unless it should please God to give him another nature. There is a scrap of verse in one of these letters to Hayley which should not be lost. It is complaining of the heat, which disables him from writing:

“Ah! brother poet! send me of your shade,  
 And bid the zephyrs hasten to my aid!  
 Or, like a worm unearth'd at noon, I go,  
 Despatch'd by sunshine, to the shades below.”

† This tale is founded on an article which appeared in the *Buckinghamshire Herald*, Saturday, June 1, 1793:—“Glasgow, May 23. In a block, or fley, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw where is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the ves lay

For husband there and wife may boast  
 Their union undefiled,  
 And false ones are as rare almost  
 As hedgerows in the wild;  
 In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare  
 The history chanced of late—  
 The history of a wedded pair,  
 A chaffinch and his mate.  
 The spring drew near, each felt a breast  
 With genial instinct fill'd;  
 They pair'd, and would have built a nest,  
 But found not where to build.  
 The heaths uncover'd and the moors  
 Except with snow and sleet,  
 Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores  
 Could yield them no retreat.  
 Long time a breeding-place they sought,  
 Till both grew vex'd and tired;  
 At length a ship arriving brought  
 The good so long desired.  
 A ship?—could such a restless thing  
 Afford them place of rest?  
 Or was the merchant charged to bring  
 The homeless birds a nest?  
 Hush!—silent hearers profit most—  
 This racer of the sea  
 Proved kinder to them than the coast,  
 It served them with a tree.  
 But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,  
 The tree they call a mast,  
 And had a hollow with a wheel  
 Through which the tackle pass'd.  
 Within that cavity aloft  
 Their roofless home they fix'd,  
 Form'd with materials neat and soft,  
 Bents, wool, and feathers mix'd.  
 Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,  
 With russet specks bedight;  
 The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,  
 And lessens to the sight.

at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food."



The mother-bird is gone to sea,  
 As she had changed her kind ;  
 But goes the male ? Far wiser, he  
 Is doubtless left behind.

No—soon as from ashore he saw  
 The wingèd mansion move,  
 He flew to reach it, by a law  
 Of never-failing love ;

Then perching at his consort's side,  
 Was briskly borne along,  
 The billows and the blast defied,  
 And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight  
 His feather'd shipmates eyes,  
 Scarce less exulting in the sight  
 Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,  
 And from a chance so new  
 Each some approaching good divines,  
 And may his hopes be true !

Hail, honour'd land ! a desert where  
 Not even birds can hide,  
 Yet parent of this loving pair  
 Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign  
 Your matrimonial plan,  
 Were not afraid to plough the brine  
 In company with man ;

For whose lean country much disdain  
 We English often shew,  
 Yet from a richer nothing gain  
 But wantonness and woe ;

Be it your fortune, year by year,  
 The same resource to prove,  
 And may ye, sometimes landing here,  
 Instruct us how to love !

---

ON A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU, KILLING A  
 YOUNG BIRD.

[July 1793.]

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,  
 Well fed, and at his ease,  
 Should wiser be than to pursue  
 Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,  
Which flew not till to-day,  
Against my orders, whom you heard  
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat,  
And ease a doggish pain,  
For him, though chased with furious heat,  
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,  
Or one whom blood allures,  
But innocent was all his sport  
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog ! what remedy remains,  
Since, teach you all I can,  
I see you, after all my pains,  
So much resemble man ?

---

BEAU'S REPLY.

SIR, when I flew to seize the bird  
In spite of your command,  
A louder voice than yours I heard,  
And harder to withstand.

You cried—Forbear !—but in my breast  
A mightier cried—Proceed !—  
'Twas Nature, sir, whose strong behest  
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as Nature I respect,  
I ventured once to break  
(As you perhaps may recollect)  
Her precept for your sake ;

And when your linnet on a day,  
Passing his prison door,  
Had flutter'd all his strength away,  
And panting press'd the floor.

Well knowing him a sacred thing,  
Not destined to my tooth,  
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,  
And licked the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse  
My disobedience now,  
Nor some reproof yourself refuse  
From your aggrieved bow-wow :

If killing birds be such a crime,  
 (Which I can hardly see,)  
 What think you, Sir, of killing time  
 With verse address'd to me?

---

TO THE SPANISH ADMIRAL, COUNT GRAVINA,  
 ON HIS TRANSLATING THE AUTHOR'S SONG ON A ROSE INTO  
 ITALIAN VERSE.

My Rose, Gravina, blooms anew,  
 And steep'd not now in rain,  
 But in Castalian streams by you,  
 Will never fade again.

---

TO MARY.\*

THE twentieth year is well nigh past  
 Since first our sky was overcast;—  
 Ah would that this might be the last!  
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,  
 I see thee daily weaker grow;—  
 'Twas my distress that brought thee low,  
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,  
 For my sake restless heretofore,  
 Now rust disused, and shine no more,  
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil  
 The same kind office for me still,  
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will,  
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,  
 And all thy threads with magic art  
 Have wound themselves about this heart,  
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem  
 Like language utter'd in a dream:  
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,  
My Mary!

\* Written in the autumn of 1793, the last lines composed by Cowper previously to his removal from Weston.

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,  
 Are still more lovely in my sight  
 Than golden beams of orient light,  
 My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,  
 What sight worth seeing could I see?  
 The sun would rise in vain for me,  
 My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,  
 Thy hands their little force resign;  
 Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,  
 My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,  
 That now at every step thou movest,  
 Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,  
 My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,  
 In wintry age to feel no chill,  
 With me is to be lovely still,  
 My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,  
 How oft the sadness that I show  
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,  
 My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast  
 With much resemblance of the past,  
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,  
 My Mary!

---

ON RECEIVING HEYNE'S VIRGIL

FROM MR HAYLEY.

[October 1793.]

I SHOULD have deem'd it once an effort vain  
 To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,  
 But from that error now behold me free,  
 Since I received him as a gift from thee.

---

## ANSWER

TO STANZAS ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH, BY MISS CATHARINE FANSHAWE, IN RETURNING A POEM OF MR COWPER'S, LENT TO HER ON CONDITION SHE SHOULD NEITHER SHEW IT, NOR TAKE A COPY.\*

To be remember'd thus is fame,  
And in the first degree;  
And did the few like her the same,  
The press might sleep for me.

So Homer, in the memory stored  
Of many a Grecian belle,  
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,  
But never lodged so well.

---

 INSCRIPTION FOR THE TOMB OF MR HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think : a monitory rhyme  
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.  
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;  
Seems it to say—" Health here has long to reign ?"  
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye  
That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?  
Yet fear. Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,  
Anticipates a day it never sees ;  
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud  
Exclaims, " Prepare thee for an early shroud."

\* The following are the stanzas in which Miss Fanshawe excuses herself for violating Lady Hesketh's injunctions:—

" What wonder ! if my wavering hand  
Had dared to disobey,  
When Hesketh gave a harsh command,  
And Cowper led astray ?  
Then take this tempting gift of thine,  
By pen uncopied yet ;  
But canst thou memory confine,  
Or teach me to forget ?  
More lasting than the touch of art  
The characters remain,  
When written by a feeling heart  
On tablets of the brain."

---



MONTES GLACIALES, IN OCEANO GERMANICO  
NATANTES.\*

March 12, 1799.

EN, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata remotis,  
Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras !  
Non equidem priscae sæclum rediisse videtur  
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes  
Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vix leviora  
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti  
In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant.  
Quid verò hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu ?  
Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro  
Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,  
Baccâ cæruleâ, et flammâ imitante pyropo.  
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus  
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu  
Ingenti finxere sibi diademata reges ?  
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos  
Mercatorum oculos : prius et quàm littora Gangis  
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.  
Ortos unde putemus ? An illos Ves'vius atrox  
Protulit, ignivomisve eiecit faucibus Ætna ?  
Luce micant propriâ, Phœbive, per aëra purum  
Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent ?  
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis  
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,  
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est  
Multâ onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis.  
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma ferè omnes  
Contristat menses, portentâ hæc horrida nobis  
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo  
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona, solutæ  
Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,  
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese  
Mirum cœpit opus ; glacieque ab origine rerum

\* In March 1799, Cowper completed the revisal of his Homer. It was the last continuous labour in which his failing energies permitted him to engage. Mr Johnson, aware from experience of the salutary influence of literary occupation in checking the inroads of the melancholy that was now rapidly clouding his mind, proposed to him at supper on the night of the 11th of March several subjects that appeared easy of execution. To these proposals Cowper replied, that "he had just thought of six Latin verses, and that if he could compose anything, it must be in pursuing that composition." The next morning he wrote the first six or seven lines of the *Montes Glaciales*, and subsequently completed the poem as it now stands. The translation that follows was executed on the 19th, at the request of Miss Perowne. The subject was suggested by a paragraph in the newspapers describing the disruption of enormous blocks and masses of ice, which had been seen drifting in the German Ocean.

In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tandem  
 Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.  
 Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset  
 Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,  
 Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,  
 Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum  
 Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,  
 Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,  
 Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,  
 Insula, in Ægæo fluitâsse erratica ponto.  
 Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum  
 Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.  
 Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam  
 Decidua lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.  
 At vos, erroneos horrendi, et caligine digni  
 Cimmericâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,  
 Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri  
 Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum!  
 Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni lenitè austro  
 Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas  
 Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

---

ON THE ICE ISLANDS SEEN FLOATING IN THE  
 GERMAN OCEAN.

*March 19, 1799*

WHAT portents, from what distant region, ride,  
 Unseen till now in ours, the astonish'd tide?  
 In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves  
 Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves;  
 But now, descending whence of late they stood,  
 Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood;  
 Dire times were they, full charged with human woes;  
 And these, scarce less calamitous than those.  
 What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!  
 Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;  
 And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,  
 And all around the ruby's fiery glow.  
 Come they from India, where the burning earth,  
 All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;  
 And where the costly gems, that beam around  
 The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?  
 No. Never such a countless dazzling store  
 Had left unseen the Ganges' peopled shore;  
 Rapacious hands, and ever watchful eyes,  
 Should sooner far have marked and seized the prize.  
 Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come

From Ves'vius', or from Etna's burning womb?  
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display  
The borrow'd splendours of a cloudless day?  
With borrow'd beams they shine. The gales that breathe  
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,  
Have borne them nearer: and the nearer sight,  
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.  
Their lofty summits crested high they shew,  
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow.  
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,  
Bleak winter well-nigh saddens all the year,  
Their infant growth began. He bade arise  
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.  
Oft as dissolved by transient suns, the snow  
Left the tall cliff to join the flood below;  
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast  
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.  
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,  
And long successive ages roll'd the while,  
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand  
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.  
Thus stood, and, unremovable by skill  
Or force of man, had stood the structure still,  
But that, though firmly fix'd, supplanted yet  
By pressure of its own enormous weight,  
It left the shelving beach—and with a sound  
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,  
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,  
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,  
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old  
How Delos swam the Ægean deep have told.  
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore  
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crown'd with laurel, wore,  
Even under wintry skies, a summer smile;  
And Delos was Apollo's favourite isle.  
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you  
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.  
Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,  
But, scornful, turn'd his glorious eyes away.  
Hence! Seek your home, nor longer rashly dare  
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air;  
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,  
In no congenial gulf for ever lost!

## THE CASTAWAY.\*

March 20, 1799.

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,  
 The Atlantic billows roar'd,  
 When such a destined wretch as I,  
 Wash'd headlong from on board,  
 Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,  
 His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast  
 Than he with whom he went,  
 Nor ever ship left Albion's coast  
 With warmer wishes sent.  
 He loved them both, but both in vain;  
 Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine  
 Expert to swim, he lay;  
 Nor soon he felt his strength decline,  
 Or courage die away;  
 But waged with death a lasting strife,  
 Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd  
 To check the vessel's course,  
 But so the furious blast prevail'd,  
 That pitiless perforce  
 They left their outcast mate behind,  
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;  
 And, such as storms allow,  
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,  
 Delay'd not to bestow:  
 But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,  
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

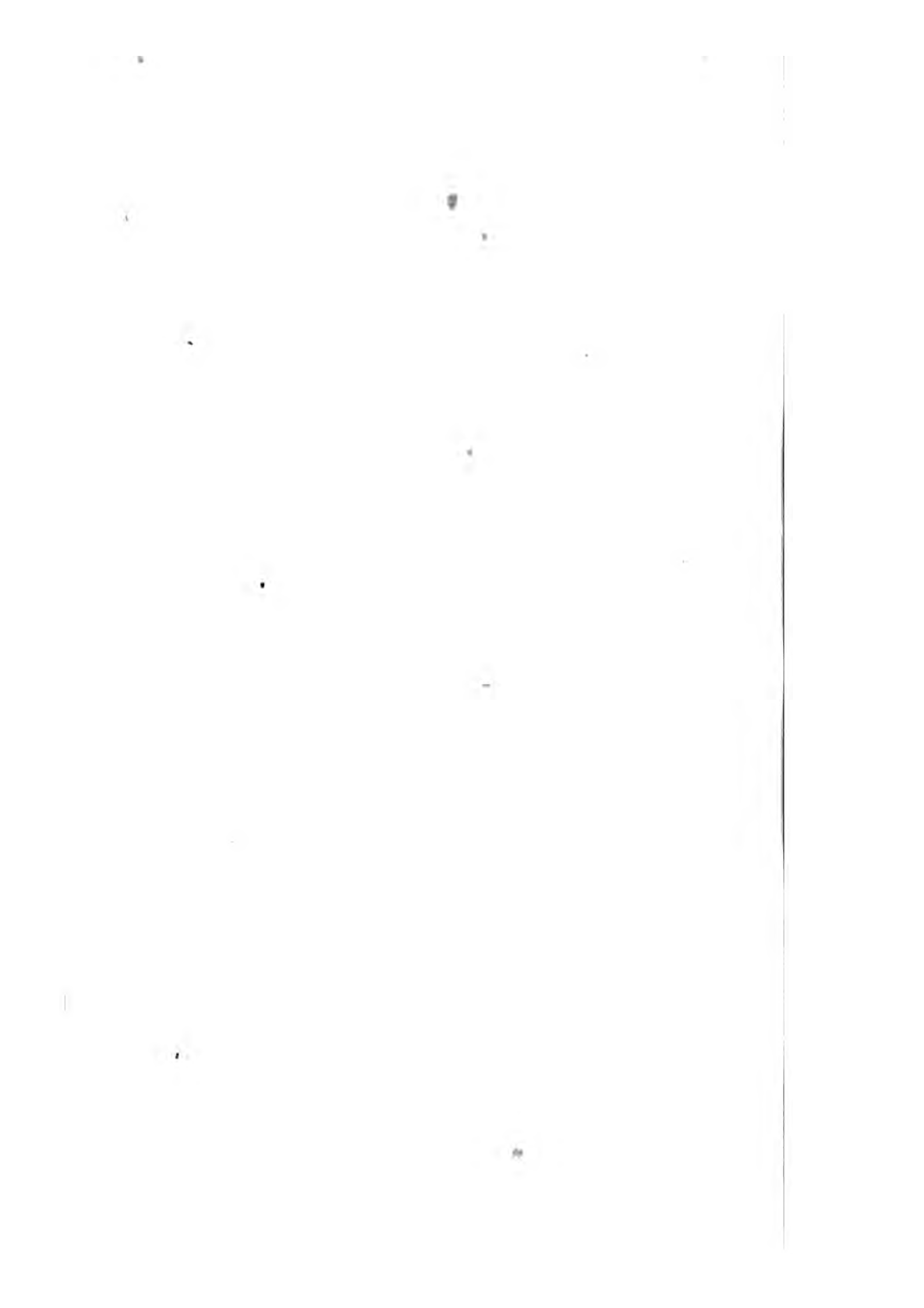
Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he  
 Their haste himself condemn,  
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,  
 Alone could rescue them;

\* This was the last original poem written by Cowper. It was composed on the 20th March, 1799, the day after he made the translation of the *Montes Glaciotes*. It is founded on an anecdote related in Anson's Voyage, which had long lingered in his memory, many years having elapsed since he had seen the book. In the following August he translated the *Castaway* into Latin verse; but the translation, if it be still preserved, has not been published. This was his final literary effort, with the exception of Latin versions of three of Gay's Fables, and a remodelling of a passage in Homer, descriptive of the piece of ancient sculpture called the Cretan Dance, to which he applied himself at intervals in January 1800.

Yet bitter felt it still to die  
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.  
He long survives, who lives an hour  
In ocean, self-upheld :  
And so long he, with unspent power,  
His destiny repell'd :  
And ever, as the minutes flew,  
Entreated help, or cried—" Adieu !"  
At length, his transient respite past,  
His comrades, who before  
Had heard his voice in every blast,  
Could catch the sound no more :  
For then, by toil subdued, he drank  
The stifling wave, and then he sank.  
No poet wept him ; but the page  
Of narrative sincere,  
That tells his name, his worth, his age,  
Is wet with Anson's tear :  
And tears by bards or heroes shed  
Alike immortalise the dead.  
I therefore purpose not, or dream,  
Descanting on his fate,  
To give the melancholy theme  
A more enduring date :  
But misery still delights to trace  
Its semblance in another's case.  
No voice divine the storm allay'd,  
No light propitious shone,  
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,  
We perish'd, each alone :  
But I beneath a rougher sea,  
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

THE END.





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