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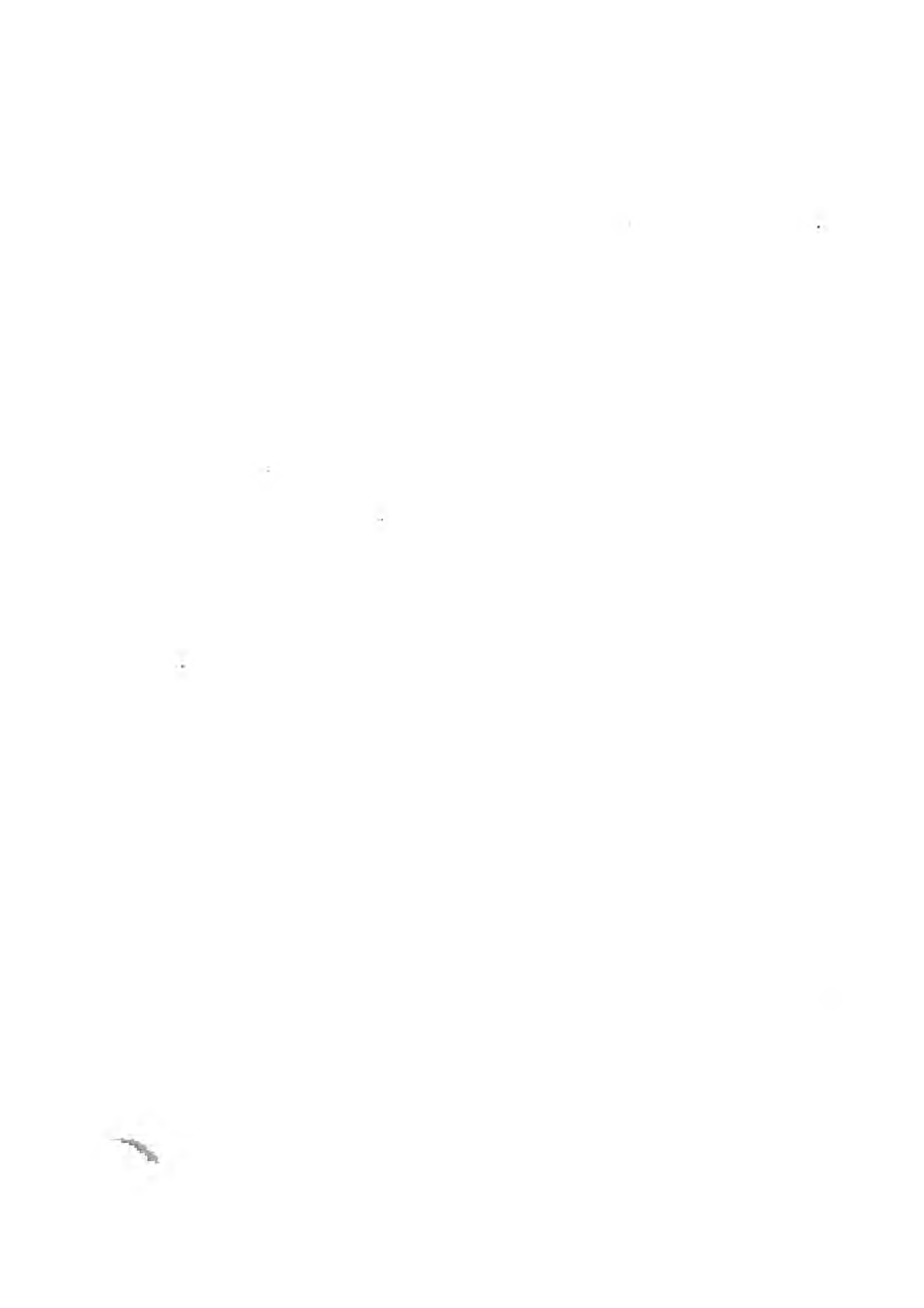
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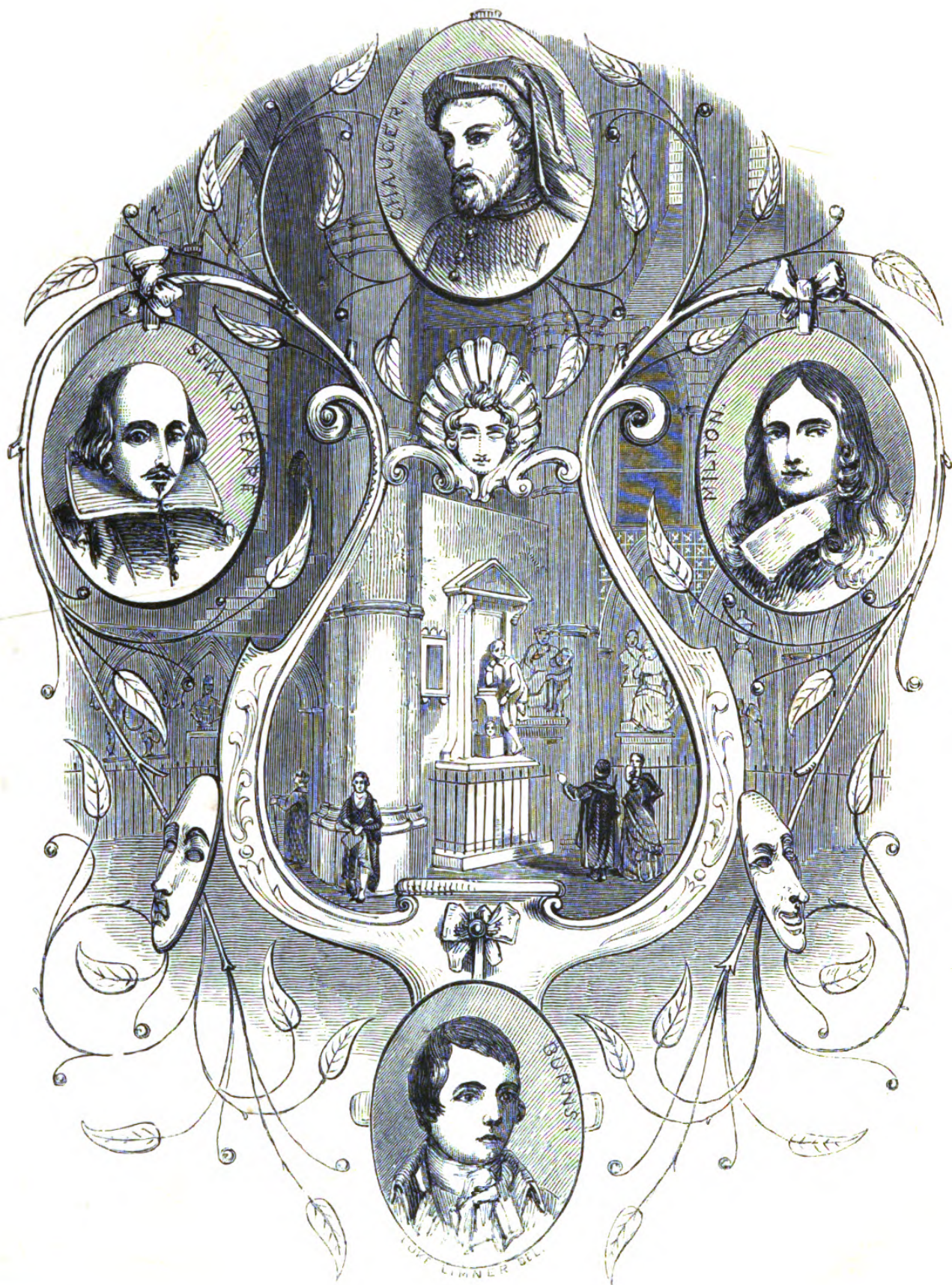
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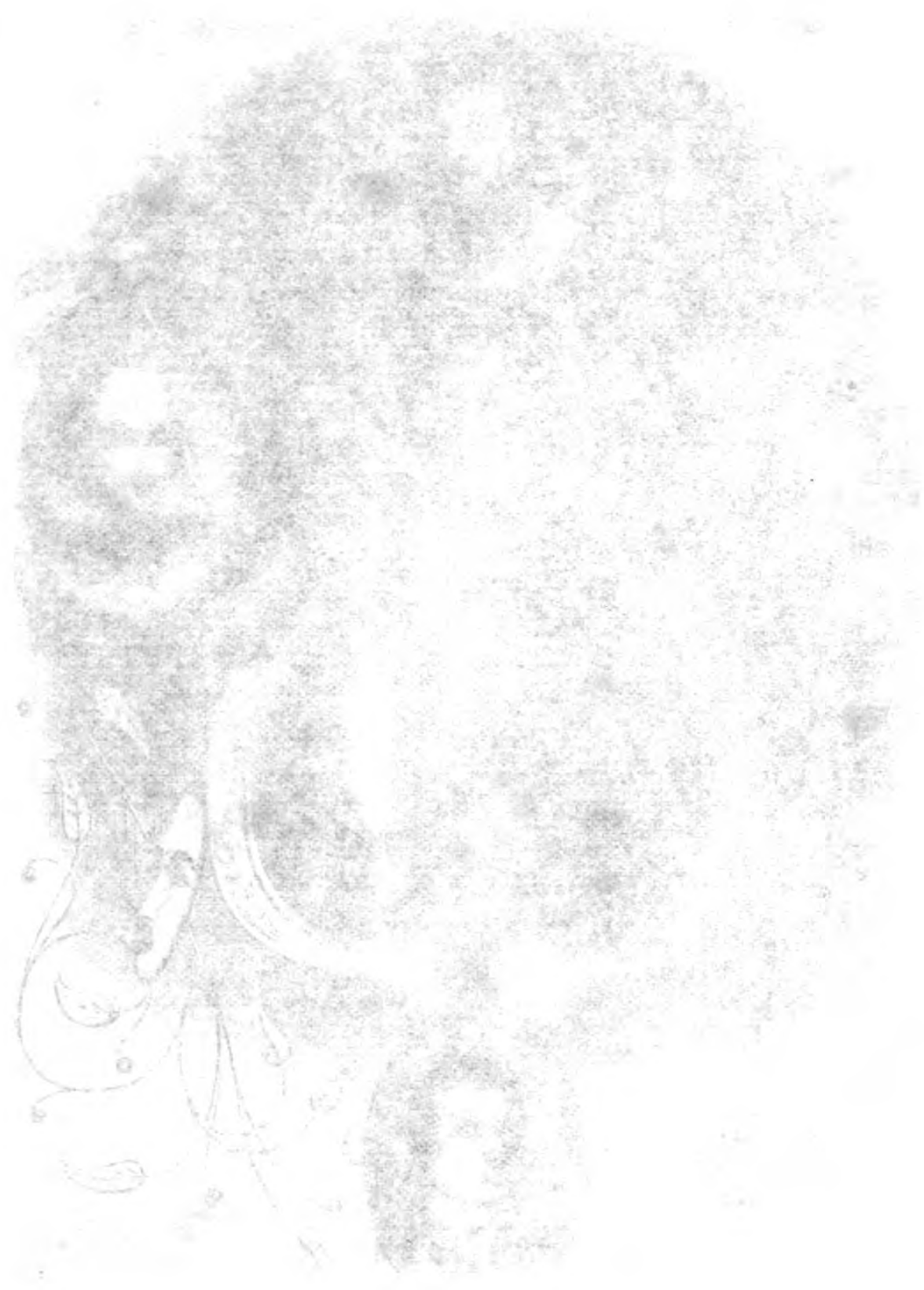
JANUARY 18, 1907

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

1906



THE BOOK
OF
BRITISH POESY,
ANCIENT AND MODERN:

BEING
Select Extracts from our best Poets,
ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

— — — — —
WITH
AN ESSAY ON BRITISH POETRY.

BY THE
REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN, A.M.

— — — — —
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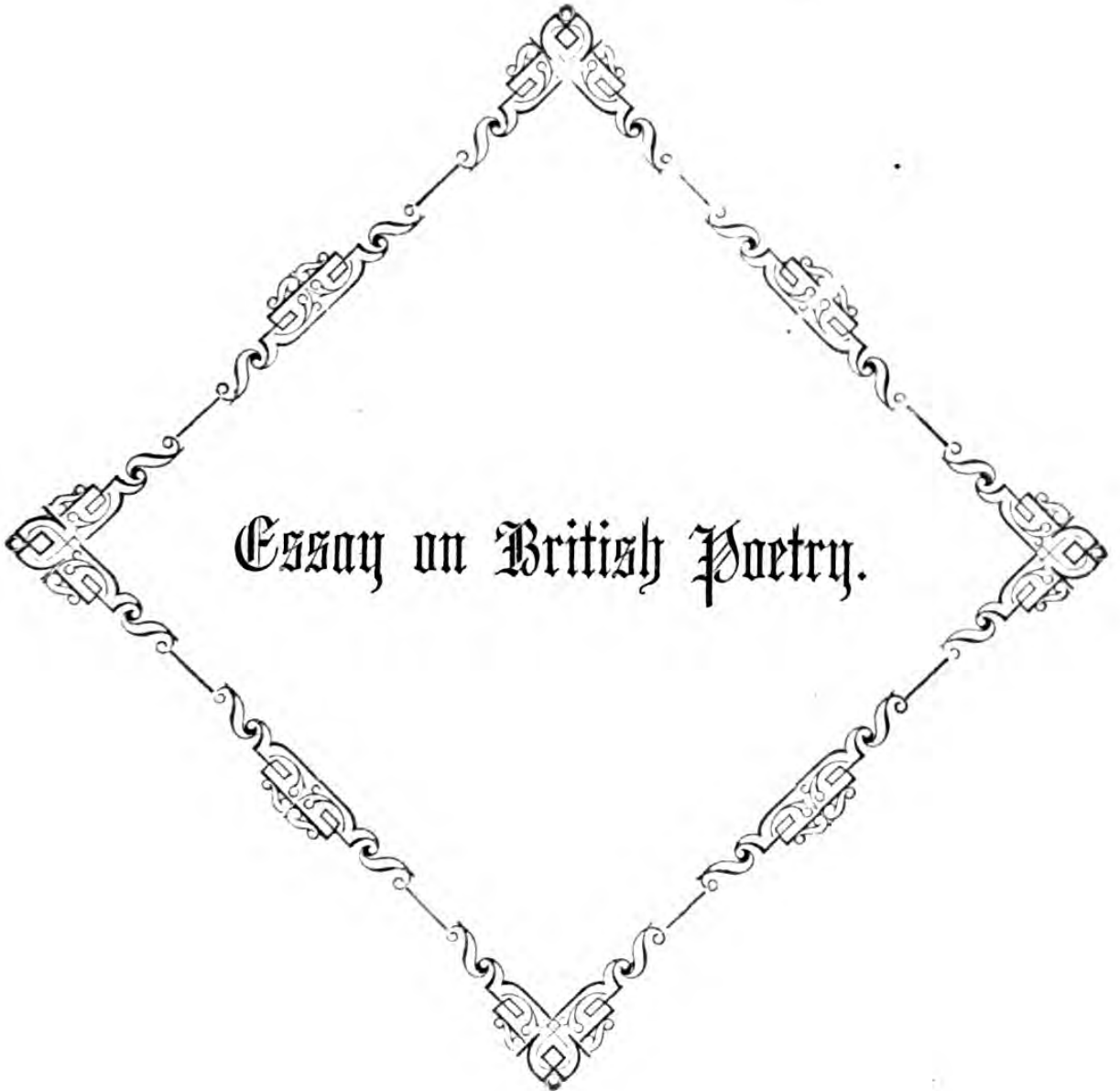
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Essay on British Poetry.



ESSAY.

THERE are two aspects, under one or other of which men are generally disposed to regard Poetry—as the foam, or as the flower of things. This may appear only a pretty alliteration; but it seems to us to be the apt expression of a truth of considerable magnitude. Many look on Poetry with a feeling of easy and agreeable contempt, as a species of ingenious trifling—as a light surf, neither air nor water, pleasant to look at or to toy with, but prized only by fools, or maniacs, or love-sick girls, and expressive of nothing but the transient, the shallow, or the fantastic in the mind of man. And as if to meet, to measure, and to strengthen such a notion of poetry, a large class of verse-writers have appealed to man's trifling and temporary emotions, and have stood all the day idle in the market-place, blowing beautiful bubbles, without the earnestness or the satisfaction of children doing the same. Vain the task of issuing such light and airy nothings! Vainer that of criticising them, as they catch a false radiance from the condescending Sun. But vainest of all it were to proceed to register, to classify, and to compare them, and to call this the history of Poetry.

Poetry, on the contrary, seems to us a profound, as well as a true thing. It is a flower; but its root is deep, and hid in the darkness of nature. It stands not for itself alone, but represents the wisdom, the ingenuity, the valour, the virtue, the creed, the intellectual and moral progress of the age when it appears. It is the breathing essence and perfumed marrow

of its period. As Woman at first was taken out of the Man,— was formed not of rude clay, but of the finished portion of a finished man,— so Poetry is the express and beautiful image of the refinement and the strength of humanity. A volume of poems is of little value, unless it form a distinct chapter, or at the least a foot-note, in the real history of the world. And a Poet is a mere worker in gauze and frippery, if he be not filled, and if he do not replenish his verse, with the very gravest and deepest spirit, and with the brightest illumination too, of his century or age.

To write Poetry thus, appears a serious thing. Serious too is the task of criticising it. But most responsible of all must be the work of writing its history, inasmuch as that should not be a mere catalogue of names, or an enumeration of the merits of insulated and individual works, but should include a view of the various influences which in various ages have acted upon poetry, the relation which it bore to the period of its production, and the limited or full expression it gave to the deepest feelings and thoughts of the highest minds. Hence we have few good histories even of particular portions of Poetical Literature, and none, so far as we know, of Poetry as a whole, and from the beginning. Of English Poetry, we have Warton's History, Johnson's and Campbell's Prefaces, and other contributions too numerous to mention; but these may all be reckoned rather essays towards a history, than complete or satisfactory histories. Till Mr. Macauley, or some one similarly qualified, undertake the History of British Poetry, or, better still, of British Literature, we must be contented with such rapid and discursive views of the subject as are proposed in the following Essay.

So far as our Literature has hitherto gone, its history may be likened to that of such a summer day as often occurs in our climate, in which there is first a dim dawn, spotted with stripes of brightness — then a clear sunrise — afterwards an overcast sky, till noon is near — then a glorious meridian, and then an afternoon chequered by thunder showers and glimpses of sunlight, by dull clouds and bright rainbows. Thus English Poetry breaks faintly and dubiously in Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, Robert De Brunne, and Robert Langland. Then springs up Chaucer, like a Morning Sun, clear, though not hot. Then there extends a dark “chasm,” as Campbell calls it, between Chaucer and Spenser, unbroken by one name of real greatness. Then, under Elizabeth, our poetry reaches its brilliant Noonday. And ever since, we have had a tract of irregular and fluctuating glory. The Evening — far and fair we hope it to be! Let us touch on some of the salient points of our poetic story. And first of Chaucer.

Chaucer has been, and may justly be called the English Homer; and this in many respects. First, he was the earliest of our great poets, as Homer of the Greeks. Secondly, there were a wholeness and a largeness about him, which made him a literature in himself, and the strength of his genius, as in Homer, shot his works at once beyond “all ages.” We never shall see another Iliad, nor another series of “Canterbury Tales.” Each in his *own path* remains inimitable and alone. Thirdly, the works of both smell of the “prime.” They are fresh and forcible transcripts of an age which had the dew of its youth lying on it, and where all was unhackneyed and virgin. Again, both unite to great strength a certain simplicity and childlikeness and garrulousness not less delightful and characteristic. And again, the power of both was divided, almost equally,

between descriptions of nature, and discriminations of character. But Homer paints nature and man with a bold, strong brush. Chaucer is more minute in his touches. Homer is full of martial fire. Chaucer has more of poetic fancy. Homer is never fantastic. Chaucer often. Homer is always serious. Chaucer has a vein of arch and deep humour. Homer is strongest when painting sublime circumstances, or impersonating sublime beings. Chaucer, although capable of the heroic and the richly-fanciful, as in Palamon and Arcite, and the Flower and the Leaf, walks habitually along the outline of the Picturesque.

The difference between those two great originals lies as much in their respective ages as in themselves. Homer was the man of his age, — when there were “giants in those days,” — when the memory of greater giants still was extant, — when men had no trust on earth, and no faith in Heaven, but Valour, for their only kings were heroes living, and their only gods were heroes dead, — when all shades of character were just varieties of prowess, and when Nature herself appeared, to their eyes, with her “garments dyed in blood.” Chaucer, too, was the man of his age; but it was an age of a very different stamp — less monotonous and intense — but with a greater variety of characters, and with a thousand diversities of the humorous, the odd, and the picturesque in the English people, beginning to peep out through the fast loosening and rending veil of superstition. Chaucer’s age, well observes a critic, was “one in which the differences of rank and profession were strongly distinguished, and in which the broken masses of society gave out their deepest shadows and strongest colouring, by the morning light of civilization.”

After all who have since arisen, Chaucer is probably yet

the most thoroughly English of Poets. His clearness, his freshness, his simple pathos, his rugged strength, his freedom from cant, his practical good sense, his racy humour ; the cast of his imagination, which is usually literal and severe ; in one word, his manliness, declare him every inch an Englishman — John Bull's first and best Laureate.

The blank between Chaucer and Spenser may perhaps best be filled by characterising briefly our early Scottish Bards. Characteristically, they have made powerful but irregular RAIDS into the region of song. We have first the curious metrical romance of Sir Tristrem. In the fourteenth century, Barbour has sung the deeds of the Bruce, with more regard to the truth of history than to the harmony or beauty of verse, but still with vigour, earnestness, and patriotism, which constitute his poem altogether a worthy act of continuous hero-worship. Harry the Minstrel — "blind" by birth, it is said — certainly blind to historical facts, but full of fire and admiration for his hero (the noble Wallace, whose name can still make the eye of a true Scotchman glisten, and his heart swell, and is found "like a wild-flower everywhere" through broad Caledonia) — may be called a chopping bastard of Homer. A description in his poem, that of Fawdoun's ghost appearing to Wallace, fulfils one test of true power, it can never be forgotten by any who have felt its thrill of horror. Scotland, too, can boast of one of the few kings who have wooed the Muses. James the First had not perhaps a very powerful intellect ; but he had in his head a genuine poetic eye, which was equally piercing when applied to the scenery of England, as seen from his prison-cell ; to female loveliness, as watched at the same strange post of observation ; and to the quaint and queer humours of

his own country, when witnessed at "Christis Kirk of the Green," from a monarch's seat. We have sometimes regretted that Sir Walter Scott never introduced the Poet Stewart into one of his novels. We have only instead Washington Irving's slight and sketchy, though very pleasing paper, entitled "A Royal Poet." Gavin Douglas is well known, both as an original poet of considerable merit, especially in his pictures of nature, and as a *con amore* translator of Virgil. Dunbar has written one poem which the world will not willingly let die, the "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins through Hell." The very title of this is a stroke of genius, and the execution is not inferior. It is the first example of that style of mingled horror and ribaldry, of the darkly imaginative, and the boldly comic, which Burns has pushed to its extreme, in his "Address to the Deil," and his "Death and Dr. Hornbook." It reminds us more of these than of Collins' "Ode to the Passions," to which Campbell compares it.

Sir David Lyndsay, of the Mount, was the Chaucer of Scotland, in strong painting of manners, and manly freedom of spirit, but has far less of the *mens divinator*. Indeed we can hardly allow him the name of a poet at all. He was, *intus et in cute*, a satirist, keen, coarse, unsparing; and, by the bold political and religious use he made of his powers, became the rude pioneer to a rude Reformation.

George Buchanan wrote in Latin, but has disguised under its flowing vesture a highly poetical and a genuinely Scottish soul, full of pawkiness, shrewdness, a love of coarse jokes, a fierce *odium theologicum*, and a very slender respect for constituted authorities. Only four Scotchmen since can be named in literature along with Buchanan. These are Adam Smith, Hume, Burns, and Scott.

Returning to England, we are not tempted to tarry, even by the names of Wyatt, Gascoigne, Surrey, and Sidney. We pass at once to "Mulla's shore," and to its immortal bard, the poet of the Faery Queen. If ever a poem were entitled to the name Creation, it is this. It rises on us like a New World, or like the scenery of Dreams. The characters are new, the mythology is new, the manners are new, the scenery is new; the very sun, moon, and stars are not our old friends. It is a warm, luxurious atmosphere too, that is breathing around. The Poet seems a strong man, "loosely dight," his helmet off, his armour unloosed, his eye half shut, his tongue moving slowly and eloquently in his dream; and all his readers feel as if they had partaken of some strange narcotic—the opium of the gods. Some critics have accused Spenser of want of distinctness and of strength. The first charge, even though it were true, were irrelevant, for who ever desiderated distinctness in a dream? But Spenser is the sculptor of sleep; his visions are "palpable to feeling as to sight." Listen to the following stanza, describing Duessa and Night, riding into the Infernal Regions.

By that same way the direful dames do drive
Their mournful chariot, full of *rusty blood*,
And down to Pluto's house are become belive;
Which passing through, on every side them stood
The trembling ghosts, with sad amazed mood,
Chattering their *iron* teeth, and staring wide
With *stony* eyes; and all the hellish brood
Of fiends infernal, flocked on every side,
To gaze on earthly wight, that with the Night durst ride.

A great country, swathed in the bright mist of September,

may seem fluctuating and feeble as a summer sea, but within the mist there are broad lands and sharp rocks, lofty mountains and strong cataracts. It is the same with the Faery Queen. Its allegorical beauty and richness only disguise, they do not destroy, the strength and depth, the originality and the grandeur, which are inclosed. Spenser is one of the "Giant Angels" slumbering and dreaming in the "vales of heaven;" but his terrible panoply is only slackened, not laid aside, and he has but to be roused, to start up into his native valour and power.

Campbell compares Bunyan to Spenser, with a sort of mis-giving. This was thirty years ago. It requires now no great courage to say that Bunyan was an inarticulate and undressed Spenser. He had all his creative imagination; he had more than his power of forming and discriminating character; he had besides a certain simple Scriptural energy, peculiar to himself. He has made his story immeasurably more interesting than that of the Faery Queen. What he wanted was fancy, of which, with all his preternatural vividness of imagination, he had not an atom, and that flowing, flexible, musical, yet clear and nervous speech, which has since in Spenser been the wonder, the pride, and the despair of the literary world.

Alas! for the Laureate of the Faery Queen! His noble face glares upon us as he flees in the light of his blazing roof-tree, under which, doubly, alas! one of his little ones was burnt to death! Deep were the shadows which closed over his after story. But he was "buried near the tomb of Chaucer, and the most celebrated poets of the day (Shakspeare probably among the number) threw tributary verses into his grave."

Sir Walter Raleigh has left little poetry, — (the “Soul’s Errand” is not his,) — and that little is of trifling worth. His life was the poem. He himself may be likened to one of the great Spanish galleons he loved to grapple with, with their rich cargoes, their stately carriage upon the waters, and the romantic adventure in which they seemed to be rigged. Puck speaks of putting “a girdle round about the globe in forty minutes :” it was fit that the most accomplished man of his time — the Humboldt of the sixteenth century — should die, while employed in weaving a broad golden baldric around the earth, to be called “the History of the World.” We all know how cruelly this glorious task was interrupted.

Shakspeare accomplished, in another vehicle, the journey in which Raleigh was cut off. He ran, on the wings of fancy, the “great circuit, and was still at home.” Raleigh turned over the voluminous pages of an Atlas. Shakspeare carried a pocket map. Raleigh looked around ; Shakspeare within. It was a saying of Marlborough, that Shakspeare’s Historical Plays were the best history of England. We may extend it into the wider truth, that Shakspeare’s Dramas are the best history of the world.

Hence his want of personal interest and distinct character. Had he been a narrower man, we could have classified him easily, however subtle or profound. But a vital force, which, like the spirit of nature, passes from volcanoes to snows, from summer to winter, and is equally at home in peasants, princes, and ghosts, disdains classification ; and such was the soul of Shakspeare.

“O Cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice ?”

Munificent and modest benefactor, he knocked at the door of the human family by night, threw in inestimable wealth, fled, and the sound of his feet, dying away in the distance, is all the tidings he has given of himself!

Sylvester is less known for his own writings, than as the translator of the Works and Weeks of Du Bartas, a work to which Milton is somewhat indebted, and which is an unequal but wonderful mass of seed-poetry, — in this somewhat resembling Festus, — the chaos of a hundred poetic worlds! Giles and Phineas Fletcher were brothers in genius, as well as by birth. Both were pious, both allegorists, both imitated Spenser. Giles had more imagination and taste, Phineas more fancy and quaintness. The “Temptation and Victory of Christ,” by the one, soars at times into Epic majesty. The “Purple Island” of the other is a maze of elaborate intricacies and divine errors, through which we are drawn irresistibly, yet reluctantly, by the continual perfume, the frequent gleams of light, and the perpetual promises of more. Drayton, Donne, Withers, Quarles, Cowley, and Herbert, all belong to what Dr. Johnson called the “metaphysical,” or elaborately ingenious school of poetry. They twist their gold into the most formal and fantastic chains; they cut up their gardens, trees, and hedges into the most singular shapes; but how rich the “greenery” of the gardens, and how pure and massive the gold! “Holy” George Herbert’s “Temple” is quiet and cool, as the temple of Jerusalem on the evening after the buyers and sellers were expelled.

The Dramatists, succeeding or contemporaneous with Shakspeare, were all poets, and not mere playwrights. Campbell has not done them justice, whether as poets or dramatists.

His delicate nostril is too soon disgusted at their faults of coarseness and inequality. Their obscenity he does not indeed condemn with sufficient strength; but their counterbalancing merits are coldly panegyriized. Lamb, Hazlitt, and American Lowell have alone adequately praised Marlowe, with his mighty line, his "hunger and thirst after *unrighteousness*;" Ben Jonson, with that slow deep sneer sculptured on his lip, that ripe scholarship, and that rough hirsute manhood; Webster, prince of the trembling line, which divides the horrible from the terrific; Ford's exquisite, though fantastic pathos; Beaumont and Fletcher's romantic fancy, counteracted by foul abominations, at which human nature, even in commentators, stands aghast; Massinger's rich passion and imagination; Heywood's plain, prolific muse; Shirley's beautiful imagery; and George Chapman's high, haughty, and loud-sounding strains.

Between this thick cluster and that of the Poets and Playwrights of Charles the Second's reign, stands up one man, disconnected with and disdainful of both, like a solitary star between two nebulae. It is Milton. Alone, indeed, and superior he was, not so much in genius as in artistic unity, and in moral consecration. All the poets (except Spenser and Shakspeare) who preceded him in England, more or less frittered away their powers in slight and occasional efforts. Even Spenser's great work was left a fragment, and perhaps could never have been rendered a compact or regular whole. But Milton built a book, as distinctly *one* as St. Peter's. Many of the poets who went before him prostituted as well as trifled with their genius. Milton held it as a trust from the Taskmaster, and studied to give him back his own with usury.

Waller is one of those names which, if they survive their century, it is in disgrace. Once thought a great poet, he is now remembered partly on account of his treachery as a politician, and partly from Pope's one epithet, "smooth," applied to his verse. He had also, we believe, considerable wit in conversation. Butler, though called a poet by courtesy, had nearly as little real claim to the title as Waller himself. He had neither fancy nor imagination. He was altogether destitute of the constructive faculty. Hudibras, as a tale, has no interest, and little humour. But his sense and his wit were unique and unequalled. His wit, however, is "dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage," and his sense is sharper than profound. His works discover a vast amount of *useless* learning. Hudibras, in short, is the wittiest and the prosiest of books, and is now seldom read but in extracts. Dryden's name, even, is waxing fainter in our literary sky. No one work of his can be said to be now popular. His Plays are universally ignored. His Satires were all on temporary subjects. His Fables were chiefly imitated from former authors. His Prefaces, once canons of criticism, are seldom read. His translation of Virgil survives, simply because it is the best we have. But a passage or two of his prose, such as his character of Shakspeare, two or three of his Odes, and five or six excerpts from his *Annus Mirabilis*, *Hind and Panther*, and *Absalom and Achitophel*, shall live for ever. "Glorious John" did not often write for immortality, but for bread and reputation. He squandered powers all but the highest, and has reaped what he sowed.

Prior is the author of some elegant trifles, and one dull effort called "Solomon." Gay trifles still more gracefully in

his "Trivia" and "Fables." His "Beggar's Opera" has touches of genius, but its chief merit lies in the successful impudence of its plan. A little daring went then a great way. Addison is too timid when he has fine things to say, and too bold when he has merely commonplace thoughts to embellish. His Saturday Spectators are immeasurably more poetical than his "Campaign." He can draw a Roger de Coverley better than an angel. He was said by Pope to

"hint a fault, and hesitate dislike."

More truly, he might be said to hint and stammer out the most exquisite thoughts, and then blush and tremble at the "sound he himself had made." But when he has Latin to cloak up his tameness, or heroic rhyme to lend stilts to his platitudes, he rolls out his verse with a forced boldness and an ignoble rage. On the whole a poor poet, he is the most delightful writer of prose in the world. He is the only writer who could bear, nay demand, a microscopic examination, not indeed in his grammatical construction, but in his delicate shades of meaning, and his bashful, retiring graces. Swift was a poisoned Butler. His arrows were no sharper than those of the author of Hudibras, but they were dipped in viper's blood. Man the Species, not Man the Puritan, became his mark. He had, too, what Butler wanted, the constructive and tale-telling faculty, and used it like a demon. In brooding over his one idea, that man was a Yahoo, he became a Yahoo himself. Savage follows; seeming to be what Swift in reality was. Surely the man was nothing more than a good-natured, easy-minded sensualist, who, with the triple stain of illegitimacy, homicide, and confirmed black-guardism, contrived to live so long, and enjoy himself so much. His merit as a poet has shrunk up into that of

three or four vigorous lines. Johnson's life has preserved him, like a blindworm in a bottle of spirits. Allan Ramsay carried in his mean nature a beautiful vein of poetical feeling, as distinct as the bag of honey in the bee, from all around it in his idiosyncrasy. He was not personally a poet, but he *had* poetry, as he had other articles and essences in his shop. It was very different with his countryman, Thomson of the Seasons, who could not, says Johnson, "see two candles burning but with a poetical eye." Alert or lazy, writing the description of the torrid zone, or eating peaches from the wall, with his hands in both pockets, he had always a fine sense of the ideal and the beautiful, — when he rose (which was seldom), it was to the music of rhyme — when he reclined, it was to the lullaby of lumbering blank verse. Young was one of the most original poets of that century : his poetry came from a fierce fissure in his own heart. His "Night Thoughts" are worthy of the subject, being vast, obscure, waste, indefinite, dark, yet with divine lights shining amid the gloom. Collins and Shenstone seem somehow Siamese Twins; the one of whom has a real burning sorrow, which makes him howl; while the other, intact, must yet wail in sympathy. Collins, in his madness, "had one book, but it was the best;" he has written another, inferior in *sincerity* only to the Bible, and with a lyrical power, and music, and sadness, which secure it immortality. Shenstone's Ballads and Schoolmistress are still *sweet*, but can scarcely be said to be alive. Pope was the most artificial of true poets. He resembled one of those affected persons who have an eye, but who must be fashionable, and use an eye-glass. As a rhetorician, rhymester, wit, and in expressions of moral indignation, and in point, and in light consuming sarcasm, he has few superiors. But he was a poet too, had he

but trusted to the Pythian God. He did not; and the god revenged himself by giving him (in the *sight* of *his* faithful votaries, such as Coleridge and Keats,) the ears of Midas. Inferior to Dryden in natural ease and energy, Pope had a subtler power, a more determined purpose, and a more elaborate polish.

Akenside and Gray had every thing but the poetic afflatus. They worshiped it; they knew where its source lay; they carefully cultivated their powers; but Apollo never acknowledged their ostentatious signals. He chose rather to descend upon two of different nations, who hated each other, but both of whom he loved—an Irishman and a Highlander—Goldsmith and Macpherson. Both were genuine poets, although Goldsmith was always best when he rode in the rut of Pope, and Macpherson when he impersonated the shade of Ossian.

Johnson, who played with the first, and abused the second, had less genuine poetic gift than either. His power lay elsewhere—in pointed moral declamations, in strong one-sided criticism, in sorrowful eloquence, in clever talk, or in burning vehemence of abuse. He saw what Poetry was not, but had only a faint conception of what it was. Through many a noble work he stalked, like the conquerors who made a solitude and called it peace; so he decimated and desolated its beauties, and then called it a poem.

Bursting out of all critical influences, we see Chatterton,

“The marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul, that perished in his pride.”

A portent, not a poet, was Chatterton, glorying in his prema-

turity of vice and power, possessing all faculties in shorthand, except original genius and moral sense; who, had a French revolution been then toward, might have become a Danton, or even a Napoleon; but of whom, we are forced to say, on the whole, Good for the world of man, if not for the world of letters, that his short, jagged, eccentric life was "rounded" so soon with "a sleep," — its first and last full stop!

Turning now to Scotland, we find no great, but many an interesting name. There is Blair of the "Grave," who has, alas! no monument, and hardly a tombstone, in Athelstaneford Church-yard! Bruce sang one strain, that to "The Cuckoo," which has answered a craving in the universal human heart, and ought to mingle his name for ever with the cry from the "engulphed navel" of the wood which that strange bird sends. His other poems—paraded by a late biographer—are in general trash. Logan, though not the author of "The Cuckoo," was a much cleverer person than poor Bruce, as his "Sermons," his "Defence of Hastings," and other productions, testify. Falconer wrote the "Shipwreck," but the sea had its revenge by drowning the poet. Robert Fergusson wrote with fluency and force, in "ancient hamely jingle." He painted manners faithfully, but barely, and never caught, as Burns did afterwards, the "invisible spirit" of poetry, which hovers over all things. Beattie was a genuine minstrel, but the minstrel of a late age, and with more culture than fire. The "Harp" he seizes has hung long unused, and the strains he produces are as reluctant as they are sweet. Mild, pensive contemplation of the outward aspects of nature is Beattie's chief power. He has not dived into its inner spirit, nor does he apprehend that

symbolical relation it has to the mind and the history of man. But if he is not profound, he has not the affectation so common in the present day of pretending to be. He is content to be himself—a true poet, of moderate dimensions and strength. It was otherwise in his prose, where he was ambitious of being a philosopher, and became only a florid and feeble declaimer. His “Essay on Truth” is a tissue of *false* pretension, from beginning to end.

Beattie was a professor; Burns a ploughman. But there are other Gods besides circumstances, and they were kinder to the rustic than to the learned bard! On poor Burns they shed, need we say, their richest influences and gifts. One thing, however, he had not, an enacted sense of the responsibility connected with them. Hence he became the reckless spendthrift of enormous, and, since Shakspeare, unequalled native wealth of mind. A consciousness of this wicked waste united, with a profound belief in the existence of a day of reckoning, (he “believed and trembled,”) to render him latterly the most miserable of men. We hear often of Byron’s wretchedness; but Byron never had had the moral sensibility or the religious training of Burns. A blacker heart—we mean in point of misery, not of malice—than that of Burns, during his sojourn in Dumfries, did not exist on earth, nor a brighter intellect. The most fearful object in the universe, says somewhere Dr. Harris, “is an *unclean spirit*.” It is a composition of sounds and thoughts, as dreadfully dissimilar as life—death; light—darkness for a season; heaven—hell. Such an “unclean spirit,” we fear, became the great, rich, natively-noble, but tainted and self-tormented soul of Robert Burns. Peace, nevertheless, to his burning dust! And let us remember that during his sojourn at the Brow, in his

last illness, he was seldom seen without that "glorious book," (so he had called it long before,) the Bible, in his hands.

Our space in this Essay has been sternly limited, and we have now so nearly filled it, that we can hardly enter in among the poets of the nineteenth century. We close by saying a word of Cowper and Grahame; the one an Englishman, the other a Scotchman; the one a layman, the other a clergyman; the one possessing, besides genius, many intellectual gifts, of wit, humour, satire, and eloquence; the other, with nothing but a fine poetic vein, true, sweet, and limited as an inland stream; but both resembling each other in devoted piety, in patriotism, in goodness of heart, in simplicity of character, and in melancholy disposition, which in the one only, however, deepened into derangement. The names of William Cowper and James Grahame are drawn together by sweet and holy affinity, and for spirit, and for felicity of natural description, if not for variety and vigour of mind, the "Task" and the "Sabbath" might be bound up together.

On the old principle of "*Ex pede Herculem*," as characteristic, though necessarily not full, specimens of the various ages of British Poetry, we cordially commend the following volume to all lovers of their country's Muse.

GEORGE GILFILLAN.

DUNDEE, 18TH NOVEMBER, 1850.



THE

Book of British Poetry.



SECTION I.

Earliest Period to Age of Shakspeare.



ROBERT MANNING.

This author is among the earliest of whom we have any authentic remains. He lived about the middle of the thirteenth century; and his writings present an interesting specimen of the common Anglo-Saxon language of his times.

PRAISE OF GOOD WOMEN.

NOTHING is to man so dear
As woman's love in good mannér.
A good woman is man's bliss,
Where her love right and stedfast is.
There is no solace under heaven,
Of all that a man may neven,¹
That should a man so much glew,²
As a good woman that loveth true :
Ne dearer is none in God's hurd,³
Than a chaste woman with lovely wurd.

¹ Know.

² Delight.

³ Family.

FABULOUS ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST HIGHWAYS
IN ENGLAND.

BELIN well held his honour,
And wisely was good governour.
He loved peace at his might ;
Peaceable men he held to right.
His lond Britain he yode¹ throughout,
And ilk country beheld about,
Beheld the woods, water, and fen,
No passage was maked for men,
No high street through countrie
Ne to borough ne city.
Through muris, hills, and vallies,
He made brigs and causeways,
High street for common passage,
Brigs o'er waters did he stage.
The first he made he called it Fosse ;
Throughout the land it goes to Scoss.
It begins at Tottenness,
And ends unto Catheness.

¹ Went.

Another street ordained he,
And goes to Wales to Saint Davy.

Two causeways o'er the lond o-bread,¹
That men o'er-thort in passage yede.
When they were made as he chese,
He commanded till all have peace ;
All should have peace and freedame,
That in his streets yede or came.
And if were any of his
That fordid² his franchise,
Forfeited should be all his thing,
His body taken to the king.

¹ Breadthways.

² Broke, destroyed.



RICHARD ROLLE, D.D.

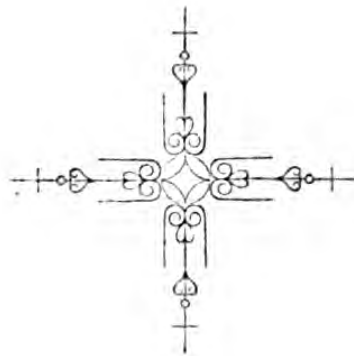
This author lived about the year 1340, residing in Yorkshire, near
Doncaster.

WHAT IS IN HEAVEN.

THER is lyf withoute ony deth,
And ther is youthe without ony elde ;¹
And ther is alle manner welthe to welde :
And ther is rest without ony travaille ;
And ther is pees without ony strife,
And ther is alle manner lykinge of lyf : —
And ther is bright somer ever to se,
And ther is nevere wynter in that countrie : —
And ther is more worshipe and honour,
Than evere hade kynge other emperour.

¹ Age.

And ther is grete melodie of aungeles songe,
And ther is preysing hem amonge.
And ther is alle manner frendshipe that may be,
And ther is evere perfect love and charite ;
And ther is wisdom without folye,
And ther is honeste without vileneye.
Al these a man may joyes of hevене call :
Ac yutte the most sovereyn joye of alle
Is the sight of Goddes bright face,
In wham resteth alle mannere grace.



ROBERT LANGLAND.

This author also flourished about the middle of the fourteenth century. His "Vision of Pierce Ploughman" was highly popular in his time, and is a valuable index to the progress of literature and the state of public opinion then existing. The following are extracts from the work.

ON COVETOUSNESS.

AND then came Covetise, can I him not describe,
So hungrily and hollow Sir Hervey him looked ;
He was beetle-browed, and babberlipped also,
With two bleared een as a blind hag,
And as a leathern purse lolled his cheeks,
Well syder than his chin,¹ they shriveled for eld :
And as a bondman of his bacon his beard was bedrivelled,
With an hood on his head and a lousy hat above.
And in a tawny tabard of twelve winter age,
Al so-torn and baudy, and full of lice creeping ;
But if that a louse could have loupen the better,
She should not have walked on the welt, it was so threadbare.

¹ Hanging wider than his chin.

ON THE PRIESTHOOD.

Ac now is Religion a rider, a roamer about,
 A leader of lovedays,¹ and a lond-buyer,
 A pricker on a palfrey from manor to manor.
 An heap of hounds [behind him] as he a lord were :
 And but if his knave² kneel that shall his cope bring,
 He loured on him, and asketh him who taught him courtesy ?
 Little had lords to done to give lond from her heirs
 To religious, that have no ruth though it rain on her altars.
 In many places there they be parsons by hemself at ease ;
 Of the poor have they no pity : and that is her charity !
 And they letten hem as lords, her lands lie so broad.
 Ac there shall come a King, and confess you, Religious,
 And beat you, as the Bible telleth, for breaking of your rule,
 And amend monials,³ monks, and canons,
 And put hem to her penance —

.
 And then shall the Abbot of Abingdon, and all his issue for
 ever
 Have a knock of a King, and incurable the wound.

¹ Loveday is a day appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.

² A male servant.

³ Nuns.

STORY OF
KING ESTMERE.

This fine old romantic legend is obtained from the Percy Reliques. No author has been assigned for it ; but it bears evident marks of great antiquity, and has been placed by the most competent authorities at the same period as the two foregoing authors.

HEARKEN to me, gentlemen,
Come and you shall heare ;
Ile tell you of two of the boldest brethren,
That ever born y-were.

The tone¹ of them was Adler yonge,
The tother was kyng Estmere ;
The were as bolde men in their deedes,
As any were farr and neare.

As they were drinking ale and wine
Within kyng Estmeres halle :
Whan will ye marry a wyfe, brothèr,
A wyfe to gladden us all ?

¹ One.

Then bespake him king Estmere,
And answered him hastilee :
I knowe not that ladye in any lande,
That is able¹ to marry with mee.

Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother,
Men call her bright and sheene ;²
If I were kyng here in your stead,
That ladye sholde be queene.

Sayes, Reade³ me, reade me, deare brother,
Throughout merrye England,
Where we might find a messenger
Betweene us two to sende.

Sayes, You shal ryde yourselfe, brothèr,
Ile beare you companèe ;
Many throughe fals messengers are deceivde,
And I feare lest soe shold wee.

Thus the renisht them to ryde
Of twoe good renisht steedes,
And when they came to kyng Adlands halle,
Of red golde shone their weedes.

¹ Fit, suitable.

² Shining.

³ Advise.

And whan the came to kyng Adlands halle
Before the goodlye yate,
Ther they found good kyng Adlånd
Rearing himselfe theratt.

Nowe Christ thee save, good kyng Adlånd ;
Nowe Christ thee save and see.
Sayd, you be welcome, kyng Estmere,
Right hartilye unto mee.

You have a daughter, sayd Adler yonge,
Men call her bright and sheene,
My brother wold marrye her to his wiffe,
Of England to be queene.

Yesterdaye was at my deare daughter
Syr Bremor the kyng of Spayne ;
And then shee nicked him of naye,
I feare sheele do youe the same.

The kyng of Spain is a foule paynim,
And 'leeveth on Mahound ;
And pitye it were that fayre ladyè
Shold marrye a heathen hound.

But grant to me, sayes kyng Estmere,
For my love I you praye,
That I may see your daughter deare
Before I go hence awaye.

Although itt is seven yeare and more
Syth my daughter was in halle,
Shee shall come downe once for your sake
To glad my guestès all.

Downe then came that mayden fayre,
With ladyes lacede in pall,
And halfe a hondred of bolde knightes,
To bring her from bowre to hall ;
And eke as manye gentle squieres,
To waite upon them all.

The talents of golde, were on her head sette,
Hunge lowe downe to her knee ;
And everye rynge on her smalle fingèr,
Shone of the chrystall free.

Sayes, Christ you save, my deare madàme ;
Sayes, Christ you save and see.
Sayes, You be welcome, kyng Estmere,
Right welcome unto mee.

And iff you love me, as you saye,
So well and hartilèe,
All that ever you are comen about
Soone sped now itt may bee.

Then bespake her father deare :
My daughter, I saye naye ;
Remember well the kyng of Spayne,
What he sayd yesterdaye.

He wold pull downe my halles and castles,
And reave me of my lyfe :
And ever I feare that paynim kyng,
Iff I reave him of his wyfe.

Your castles and your towres, father,
Are stronglye built aboute ;
And therefore of that foule paynim
Wee neede not stand in doubt.

Plyght me your troth, nowe, kyng Estmère,
By heaven and your righte hand,
That you will marrye me to your wyfe,
And make me queene of your land.

Then kyng Estmere he plyght his troth
By heaven and his righte hand,
That he wold marrye her to his wyfe,
And make her queene of his land.

And he tooke leave of that ladye fayre,
To goe to his owne countree,
To fetch him dukes and lordes and knightes,
That marryed the might bee.

They had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle forthe of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With kempès¹ many a one.

But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With manye a grimme baròne,
Tone day to marrye kyng Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carrye her home.

Then shee sent after kyng Estmère
In all the spede might bee,
That he must either returne and fighte,
Or go home and lose his ladyè.

One whyle then the page he went,
Another whyle he ranne ;
Till he had oretaken kyng Estmere
I-wis, he never blanne.²

Tydinges, tydinges, kyng Estmere !
What tydinges nowe, my boye ?
O tydinges I can tell to you,
That will you sore annoye.

¹ Soldiers.

² Stopped.

You had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle out of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne
With kempès many a one ;

But in did come the kyng of Spayne
With many a grimme baròne,
Tone daye to marrye kyng Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carrye her home.

That ladye fayre she greetes you well,
And ever-more well by mee :
You must either turne againe and fighte,
Or goe home and lose your ladyè.

Sayes, Reade me, reade me, deare brothèr,
My reade shall ryde at thee,
Whiche waye we best may turne and fighte,
To save this fayre ladyè.

Now hearken to me, sayes Adler yonge,
And your reade must rise at me,
I quicklye will devise a waye
To sette thy ladye free.

My mother was a westerne woman,
And learned in gramaryè,
And when I learned at the schole,
Something shee taught itt mee.

There groweth an hearbe within this felde,
And iff it were but knowne,
His color, which is whyte and redd,
Itt will make blacke and browne :

His color, which is browne and blacke,
Itt will make redd and whyte ;
That sworde is not in all Englande,
Upon his coate will byte.

And you shal be a harper, brother,
Out of the north countree ;
And Ile be your boye, so faine of fighte,
To beare your harpe by your knee.

And you shall be the best harpèr,
That ever tooke harpe in hand ;
And I will be the best singèr,
That ever sung in this land.

Itt shal be written in our forheads
All and in gramaryè,
That we towe are the boldest men,
That are in all Christentyè.

And thus they renisht them to ryde,
On towe good renish steedes ;
And whan they came to kyng Adlands hall,
Of redd gold shone their weedes.

And whan the came to kyng Adlands hall
Untill the fayre hall yate,
There they found a proud portèr
Rearing himselfe theratt.

Sayes, Christ thee save, thou proud portèr ;
Sayes, Christ thee save and see.
Nowe you be welcome, sayd the portèr,
Of what land soever ye bee.

We been harpers, sayd Adler yonge,
Come out of the northe countrèe ;
We beene come hither untill this place,
This proud weddinge for to see.

Sayd, And your color were white and redd,
As it is blacke and browne,
Ild saye king Estmere and his brother
Were comen untill this towne.

Then they pulled out a ryng of gold,
Layd itt on the porters arme :
And ever we will thee, proud portèr,
Thow wilt saye us no harme.

Sore he looked on kyng Estmère,
And sore he handled the ryng,
Then opened to them the fayre hall yates,
He lett for no kind of thyng.

Kyng Estmere he light off his steede
Up att the fayre hall board ;
The frothe, that came from his brydle bitte,
Light on kyng Bremors beard.

Sayes, Stable thou steede, thou proud harpèr,
Goe stable him in the stalle ;
Itt doth not beseeme a proud harpèr
To stable him in a kyngs halle.

My ladd he is so lither, he sayd,
He will do nought that 's meete ;
And aye that I cold but find the man,
Were able him to beate.

Thou speakst proud wordes, sayd the Paynim kyng,
Thou harper here to mee ;
There is a man within this halle,
That will beate thy lad and thee.

O lett that man come downe, he sayd,
A sight of him wolde I see ;
And whan hee hath beaten well my ladd,
Then he shall beate of mee.

Downe then came the kemperye man,
And looked him in the eare ;
For all the golde, that was under heaven,
He durst not neigh him neare.

And how nowe, kempe, sayd the kyng of Spayne,
And how what aileth thee?
He sayes, Itt is written in his forehead
All and in gramaryè,
That for all the gold that is under heaven,
I dare not neigh him nye.¹

Kyng Estmere then pulled forth his harpe,
And playd theron so sweete :
Upstarte the ladye from the kyng,
As hee sate at the meate.

Nowe stay thy harpe, thou proud harpèr,
Now stay thy harpe, I say ;
For an thou playest as thou beginnest,
Thou'lt till my bride awaye.

He strucke upon his harpe agayne,
And playd both fayre and free ;
The ladye was so pleasde theratt,
She laught loud laughters three.

Nowe sell me thy harpe, sayd the kyng of Spayne,
Thy harpe and stryngs eche one,
And as many gold nobles thou shalt have,
As there be stryngs thereon.

¹ Approach.

And what wold ye doe with my harpe, he sayd,
Iff I did sell it yee?
To playe my wiffe and me a FITT,
When abed together we bee.

Now sell me, syr kyng, thy bryde soe gay,
As shee sitts laced in pall,
And as many gold nobles I will give,
As there be rings in the hall.

And what wold ye doe with my bryde so gay,
Iff I did sell her yee?
More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye
To lye by mee than thee.

Hee played agayne both loud and shrille,
And Adler he did syng,
“ O ladye, this is thy owne true love ;
Noe harper but a kyng.

“ O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
As playnlye thou mayest see ;
And Ile rid thee of that foule paynim,
Who partes thy love and thee.”

The ladye louked, the ladye blushte,
And blushte and lookt agayne,
While Adler he hath drawne his brande,
And hath sir Bremor slayne.

Up then rose the kemperye men,
And loud they gan to crye :
Ah ! traytors, yee have slayne our kyng,
And therefore yee shall dye.

Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde,
And swith¹ he drew his brand ;
And Estmere he, and Adler yonge
Right stiffe in stour can stand.

And aye their swordes soe sore can byte,
Throughe help of gramaryè,
That soone they have slayne the kemperye men,
Or forst them forth to flee.

Kyng Estmere tooke that fayre ladye
And marryed her to his wyfe,
And brought her home to merrye England
With her to leade his lyfe.

¹ Quickly.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

BORN 1328, DIED 1400.

Chaucer is justly regarded as the Father of English Poetry. His writings are numerous; but the "Canterbury Tales" is the production by which his name is best known. The following are pieces.

CHARACTER OF THE KNIGHT.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he first began
To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre ;
And, thereto, hadde he ridden, none more ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in Hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.

— Though that he was worthy, he was wise ;

And of his port, as meke as is a mayde :
 He never yet no vilainie ne sayde,
 In all his lif, unto no manere wight,
 He was a veray parfit gentil knight.

But, for to tellen you of his araie, —
 His horse was good, but he ne was not gaie.
 Of fustian he wered a gipon¹
 Alle besmatred with his habergeon,
 For he was late ycome fro his viage,
 And wente for to don his pilgrimage.

THE NUN.

THERE was also a Nonne, a Prioress,
 That of hire smiling was full simple and coy ;
 Hire gretest othe n'as but by Seint Eloy ;
 And she was cleped² Madame Eglentine.
 Ful wel she sange the service devine,
 Entuned in hire nose ful swetely ;
 And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,³
 After the scole at Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.

¹ A short cassock.

² Called.

³ Neatly.

At mete was she wele ytaughte withalle ;
 She lette no morsel from her lippes falle,
 Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
 That no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
 In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest.¹
 Hire over-lippe wiped she so clene,
 That in hire cuppe was no ferthing² sene
 Of grese, whan she dronken hadde hire draught.
 Ful semely after hire mete she raught.³
 And sikerly she was of grete disport,
 And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
 And peined⁴ hire to contrefeten⁵ chere
 Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne⁶ of reverence.

But for to speken of hire conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
 Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
 Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
 With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede,
 But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,

¹ Her pleasure.² Smallest spot.³ Rose.⁴ Took pains.⁵ To imitate.⁶ Worthy.

Or if men smote it with a yerde¹ smerte :²
And all was conscience and tendre herte.

Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was ;
Hire nose tretis ;³ hire eyen grey as glas ;
Hire mouth ful smale, and thereto soft and red ;
But sikerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe ;
For hardily she was not undergrowe.⁴

Ful fetise⁵ was hire cloke, as I was ware.
Of smale corall aboute hire arm she bare
A pair of bedes, gauded all with grene ;
And thereon heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On whiche was first ywriten a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.
Another Nonne also with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapelleine, and Preestes thre.

¹ Rod.² Smartly.³ Straight.⁴ Of low stature.⁵ Neat.

THE MONK.

A MONK ther was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved venerie ;
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable ;
And when he rode, men mighte his bridel here
Gingeling, in a whistling wind, as clere
And eke as loude as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.

The reule of Seint Maure and of Seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith that hunters ben not holy men ;
Ne that a monk, whan he is rekkeles,
Is like to a fish that is waterles ;
(That is to say, a monk out of his cloistre ;)
This ilke text he held not worth an oistre.
Therefore he was a prickasoure¹ a right :
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as fowl of flight :
Of pricking, and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust ; for no cost wolde he spare.

¹ A hard rider.

THE FRANKLIN, OR COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

A FRANKLEIN was in this compaignie ;
White was his berd as is the dayesie.
Of his complexion he was sanguin.
Wel loved he by the morwe¹ a sop in win.
To liven in delit was ever his wone.²
For he was Epicures owen sone,
That held opinion, that plein delit
Was veraily felicite parfite.
An housholder, and that a grete was he ;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His brede, his ale, was alway after on ;
A better envyned man was no wher non.
Withouten bake mete never was his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of all deintees that men coud of thinke,
After the sondry sesons of the yere,
So changed he his mete and his soupere.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe ;
And many a breme, and many a luce, in stewe.

¹ Morning.² Wont, custom.

Wo was his coke if but his sauce were
 Poinant and sharpe, and redy all his gere.
 His table, dormant¹ in his halle, alway
 Stode redy covered alle the longe day.

At sessions ther was he lord and sire ;
 Ful often time he was knight of the shire.
 An anelace² and a gipciere³ all of silk
 Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
 A shereve hadde he ben and a countour.
 Was no wher swiche a worthy vavasour.⁴

 THE GOOD WIFE OF BATH.

A GOOD Wif was ther of beside Bathe ;
 But she was som del defe, and that was scathe.
 Of cloth making she hadde swiche an haunt,
 She passed hem of Ipres, and of Gaunt.
 In all the parish, wif ne was ther non
 That to the offering before hire shulde gon —
 And if ther did, certain so wroth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.

¹ Fixed.² Dagger.³ Purse.⁴ Landlord.

Hire coverchiefs weren ful fine of ground,
(I dorste swere they weyeden a pound),
That on the Sondag were upon hire hede :
Hire hosen weren of fine scarlet rede,
Ful streite yteyed, and shoon ful moist and newe.
Bold was hire face, and fayre and rede of hew.
She was a worthy woman alle hire live :
Housbondes, at the chirche dore, had she had five,
Withouten other compaignie in youthe,
But therof nedeth not to speke as nouthe.
And thries hadde she ben at Jerusaleme ;
She had passed many a strange streme :
At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint James, and at Coloine :
She coude moche of wandering by the way,
Gat-tothed was she, sothly for to say.
Upon an ambler esily she sat,
Ywimpled wel ; and on hire hede an hat
As brode as is a bokeler, or a targe ;
A fore-mantel about hire hippes large ;
And on hire fete a pair of sporres sharpe.
In felawship, wel coud she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she knew perchance ;
For, of that arte, she coude the olde dance.

THE MILLER.

THE Miller was a stout carl for the nones,
Ful bigge was he of braun, and eke of bones ;
That proved wel ; for over all ther he came,
At wrastling he wold bere away the ram.
He was short shuldered, brode, a thikke gnarre,¹
Ther n'as no dore, that he n'olde heve of barre,
Or breke it at a renning with his hede.
His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,
And therto brode, as though it were a spade :
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A wert, and theron stode a tufte of heres,
Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres :
His nose-thirles blacke were and wide.
A swerd and bokeler bare he by his side.
His mouth as wide was as a forneis :
He was a jangler, and a goliardeis,²
And that was most of sinne and harlotries.
Wel coude he stelen corne and tollen thries.
And yet he had a thomb of gold parde.
A white cote and a blew hode wered he.
A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,
And therwithall he brought us out of toune.

¹ A knot in a tree.² A jolly man.

THE GOOD PARSON.

A TRUE good man there was there of religion,
Pious and poor — the parson of a town.
But rich he was in holy thought and work ;
And thereto a right learned man ; a clerk
That Christ's pure gospel would sincerely preach,
And his parishioners devoutly teach.
Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
As proven oft ; to all who lack'd a friend.
Loth for his tithes to ban or to contend,
At every need much rather was he found
Unto his poor parishioners around
Of his own substance and his dues to give :
Content on little, for himself, to live.

Wide was his cure ; the houses far asunder,
Yet never fail'd he, or for rain or thunder,
Whenever sickness or mischance might call,
The most remote to visit, great or small,
And, staff in hand, on foot, the storm to brave.

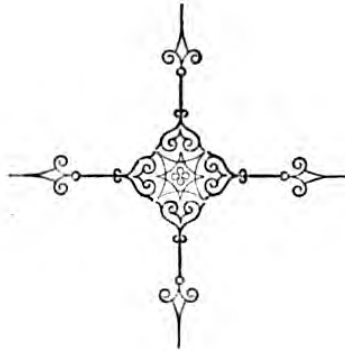
This noble ensample to his flock he gave,
That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught.
The word of life he from the gospel caught ;
And well this comment added he thereto,
If that gold rusteth what should iron do ?
And if the priest be foul on whom we trust,
What wonder if the unletter'd layman lust ?
And shame it were in him the flock should keep,
To see a sullied shepherd, and clean sheep.
For sure a priest the sample ought to give
By his own cleanness how his sheep should live.

He never set his benefice to hire,
Leaving his flock acomber'd in the mire,
And ran to London cogging at St. Poul's,
To seek himself a chauntry for souls,
Or with a brotherhood to be enroll'd ;
But dwelt at home, and guarded well his fold,
So that it should not by the wolf miscarry.
He was a shepherd, and no mercenary.

Tho holy in himself, and virtuous,
He still to sinful men was mild and piteous :
Not of reproach imperious or malign ;
But in his teaching soothing and benign.

To draw them on to heaven, by reason fair
And good example, was his daily care.
But were there one perverse and obstinate,
Were he of lofty or of low estate,
Him would he sharply with reproof astound.
A better priest is no where to be found.

He waited not on pomp or reverence,
Nor made himself a spiced conscience.
The lore of Christ and his apostles twelve
He taught : but, first, he followed it himselfe.



ROBERT BARBOUR.

A Scottish poet of the time of Chaucer. His poem of "The Bruce" is well known, being a complete history of the life of Robert the Bruce.

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.

WHEN this was said
 The Scottismen commonally
 Kneelit all doun, to God to pray.
 And a short prayer there made they
 To God, to help them in that ficht.
 And when the English king had sight
 Of them kneeland, he said, in hy,
 "Yon folk kneel to ask mercy."
 Sir Ingram¹ said, "Ye say sooth now —
 They ask mercy, but not of you ;
 For their trespass to God they cry :
 I tell you a thing sickerly,
 That yon men will all win or die ;
 For doubt of deid² they sall not flee."

¹ Sir Ingram D'Umphraville.

² Fear of death.

APOSTROPHE TO FREEDOM,

A! FREDOME is a nobill thing !
Fredome mayse man to haiff liking !
Fredome all solace to man giffis !
He levys at ese that frely levys !
A noble hart may haiff nane ese,
Na ellys nocht that may him plese,
Gyff fredome failythe : for fre liking
Is yearnyt our all othir thing
Na he, that ay hase levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,
That is cowplyt to foule thyrdome.
Bot gyff he had assayit it,
Than all perquer he suld it wyt ;
And suld think fredome mar to pryse
Than all the gold in warld that is.

ANDREW WYNTOUN.

Another Scottish poet, who lived shortly after Barbour. The following contains many thoughts that still interest the minds of our race.

INTERVIEW OF ST. SERF WITH SATHANAS.

WHILE St. Serf, intil a stead,
Lay after matins in his bed,
The devil came, in foul intent
For til found him with argument,
And said, " St. Serf, by thy werk
I ken thou art a cunning clerk."
St. Serf said, " Gif I sae be,
Foul wretch, what is that for thee ?"
The devil said, " This questiòn
I ask in our collatiòn —
Say where was God, wit ye oucht,
Before that heaven and erd was wrought ?"
St. Serf said, " In himself steadless,
His Godhead hampered never was."

The devil then askit, "What cause he had
To make the creatures that he made?"
To that St. Serf answered there,
"Of creatures made he was makèr.
A maker might he never be,
But gif creatures made had he."
The devil askit him, "Why God of noucht
His werkis all full gude had wroucht?"
St. Serf answered, "That Goddis will
Was never to make his werkis ill,
And as envious he had been seen,
Gif noucht but he full gude had been."
St. Serf the devil askit than,
"Where God made Adam, the first man?"
"In Ebron Adam formit was,"
St. Serf said. And til him Sathanas,
"Where was he, eft that, for his vice,
He was put out of Paradise?"
St. Serf said, "Where he was made."
The devil askit, "How lang he bade
In Paradise, after his sin?"
"Seven hours," Serf said, "bade he therein."
"When was Eve made?" said Sathanas.
"In Paradise," Serf said, "she was."

.

The devil askit, " Why that ye
Men, are quite delivered free,
Through Christ's passion precious bought,
And we devils sae are noucht ?"
St. Serf said, " For that ye
Fell through your awn iniquity ;
And through ourselves we never fell,
But through your fellow false counsell."

Then saw the devil that he could noucht,
With all the wiles that he wrought,
Overcome St. Serf. He said than
He kenned him for a wise man.
Forthy there he gave him quit,
For he wan at him na profit.
St. Serf said, " Thou wretch, gae
Frae this stead, and 'noy nae mae
Into this stead, I bid ye."
Suddenly then passed he ;
Frae that stead he held his way,
And never was seen there to this day.

BLIND HARRY.

Little is known of this poet, but that he was blind. The popular "Life of Wallace," in rhyme, which has still so large a circulation, is the work which has handed down his name to posterity.

THE DEATH OF WALLACE.

ON Wednesday the false Southron furth brocht
To martyr him, as they before had wrocht.¹
Of men in arms led him a full great rout.
With a bauld sprite guid Wallace blent about :
A priest he asked, for God that died on tree.
King Edward then commanded his clergý,
And said, " I charge you, upon loss of life,
Nane be sae bauld yon tyrant for to shrive.
He has reigned long in contrar my highness."
A blyth bishop soon, present in that place ;

¹ Contrived.

Of Canterbury he then was righteous lord ;
 Again' the king he made this richt record,
 And said, " Myself shall hear his confession,
 If I have nicht in contrar of thy crown.
 An thou through force will stop me of this thing,
 I vow to God, who is my righteous king,
 That all England I shall her interdite,
 And make it known thou art a heretic.
 The sacrament of kirk I shall him give :
 Syne take thy choice, to starve¹ or let him live.
 It were mair weil, in worship of thy crown,
 To keep sic ane in life in thy bandoun,
 Than all the land and good that thou hast reived,
 But cowardice thee ay fra honour dreived.
 Thou has thy life rougin² in wrangeous deed ;
 That shall be seen on thee or on thy seed."
 The king gart³ charge they should the bishop ta,
 But sad lords counsellit to let him ga.
 All Englishmen said that his desire was richt
 To Wallace then he rakit in their sicht
 And sadly heard his confession till ane end :
 Humbly to God his sprite he there commend
 Lowly him served with hearty devotion
 Upon his knees and said ane orison.

¹ The necessary consequence of an interdict.

² Spent.

³ Caused.

A psalter-book Wallace had on him ever
Fra his childheid — fra it wald nocht dissever ;
Better he trowit in wyage¹ for to speed.
But then he was displayed of his weed.²
This grace he asked at Lord Clifford, that knicht,
To let him have his psalter-book in sicht.
He gart a priest it open before him hald,
While they till him had done all that they wald.
Stedfast he read for ought they did him there ;
Feil³ Southrons said that Wallace felt na sair.
Guid devotion, sae, was his beginning,
Conteined therewith, and fair was his ending.
While speech and sprite at anis all can fare
To lasting bliss, we trow, for evermair.

¹ Expedition — his journey to the other world.

² Clothes.

³ Many.



THE ANCIENT BALLAD OF
CHEVY CHASE.

The author of this celebrated ballad is supposed to have been RICHARD SHEALE, who lived about 1400 to 1450. The present version is taken from a much older copy than that in usual circulation, and will be found worthy of a careful perusal.

THE FIRST PART.

THE Persé owt of Northombarlande,
And a vowe to God mayd he,
That he wolde hunte in the mountayns
Off Chyviatt within dayes thre,
In the mauger of doughtè Dogles,
And all that ever with him be.

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
He sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:
Be my feth, sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
I wyll let that hontyng yf that I may.

Then the Persé owt of Banborowe cam,
With him a myghtee meany ;
With fifteen hondrith archares bold ;
The wear chosen out of shyars thre.

This begane on a monday at morn
In Cheviat the hillys so he,
The chyld may rue that ys un-born,
It was the more pitté.

The dryvars thorowe the woodes went
For to reas the dear,
Bomen bickarte uppone the bent
With their browd aras cleare.

Then the wyld thorowe the woodes went
On every syde shear,
Grea-hondes thorowe the greves glent
For to kyll thear dear.

The begane in Chyviat the hyls above
Yerly on a monnyn day ;¹
Be that it drewe to the oware off none
A hondrith fat hartes ded ther lay.

¹ Monday.

The blewe a mort uppone the bent,
The semblyd on sydis shear ;
To the quyrry then the Persè went
To se the bryttlyng off the deare.

He sayd, It was the Duglas promys
This day to met me hear ;
But I wyste he wold faylle verament :
A gret oth the Persè swear.

At the laste a squyar of Northombelonde
Lokyde at his hand full ny,
He was war ath the doughetie Doglas comynge ;
With him a mightè meany,

Both with spear, byll, and brande :
Yt was a myghti sight to se.
Hardyar men both off hart nar hande
Wear not in Cristiantè.

The wear twenty hondrith spear-men good
Withouten any fayle ;
The wear borne a-long be the watter a Twyde,
Yth bownes of Tividale.

Leave off the brytlyng of the dear, he sayde,
And to your bowys tayk good heed ;
For never sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
Had ye never so mickle need.

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede
He rode his men beforne ;
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede ;¹
A bolder barne was never borne.

Tell me what men ye ar, he says,
Or whos men that ye be :
Who gave youe leave to hunt in this
Chyviat chays in the spyt of me ?

The first mane that ever him an answeare mayd,
Yt was the good lord Persè :
We wyll not tell the what men we ar, he says,
Nor whos men that we be ;
But we wyll hount hear in this chays
In the spyte of thyne, and of the.

The fattiste hartes in all Chyviat
We have kyld, and cast to carry them a-way.
Be my troth, sayd the doughtè Dogglas agayn,
Ther-for the ton of us shall de this day.

'Then sayd the doughtè Doglas
Unto the lord Persè :
To kyll all thes giltles men,
A-las ! it wear great pittè.

¹ A red hot coal.

But, Persè, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contre ;
Let all our men uppone a parti stande ;
And do the battell off the and of me.

Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne, sayd the lord Persè,
Who-soever ther-to says nay.
Be my troth, doughtè Doglas, he says,
Thow shalt never se that day.

Nethar in Ynglonde, Skotlonde, nar France,
Nor for no man of a woman born,
But and fortune be my chance,
I dar met him on man for on.

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
Ric. Wytharynton was his nam ;
It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde, he says.
To kyng Herry the fourth for sham.

I wat youe byn great lordes twa,
I am a poor squyar of lande ;
I wyll never se my captayne fyght on a fylde,
And stande my-selffe, and looke on,
But whyll I may my weppone welde
I wyll not fayl both harte and hande.

That day, that day, that dredfull day :
 The first FIT here I fynde.
 And you wyll here any more athe hontyng athe Chyviat
 Yet ys ther mor behynd.

THE SECOND PART.

The Yngglishe men hade ther bowys yebent,
 Ther hartes wete good yenoughe ;
 The first of arros that the shote off,
 Seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

Yet bydys the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,
 A captayne good yenoughe,
 And that was sene verament,
 For he wrought hom both woo and wouche.¹

The Dogglas pertyd his ost in thre,
 Lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde,
 With suar speares off myghttè tre
 That cum in on every syde.

Thrughe our Yngglyshe archery
 Gave many a wounde full wyde ;
 Many a doughete the gard² to dy,
 Which ganyde them no pryde.

¹ Mischief.

² Made.

The Ynglyshe men let thear bowys be,
And pulde owt brandes that wer bright,
It was a hevy syght to se
Bryght swordes on basnites lyght.

Thorowe ryche male, and myne-ye-ple¹
Many sterne the stroke downe streght,
Many a freyke, that was full fre,
Ther undar foot dyd lyght.

At last the Duglas and the Persè met,
Lyk to captayns of myght and mayne ;
The swapte togethar tyll the both swat
With swordes, that wear of fyn myllàn.

Thes worthè freckys² for to fyght
Ther-to the wear full fayne,
Tyll the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprete,
As ever dyd heal or rayne.

Holde the, Persè, said the Doglas,
And i' feth I shall the brynge
Wher thowe shalte have a yerls wagis
Of Jamy our Scottish kynge.

¹ Perhaps many folds.

² Persons.

Thou shalt have thy ransom fre,
I hight the hear this thinge,
For the manfullyste man yet art thoue,
That ever I conqueryd in filde fightyng.

Nay then sayd the lord Persè,
I tolde it thee beforne,
That I wolde never yeldyde be
To no man of a woman born.

With that ther cam an arrowe hastely
Forthe off a mightie wane,
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
In at the brest bane.

Thoroue lyvar and longs bathe
The sharp arrowe ys gane,
That never after in all his lyffe days
He spayke mo wordes but ane,
That was, Fyghte ye, my myrry men, whyllys ye may,
For my lyff days ben gan.

The Persè leanyde on his brande,
And sawe the Duglas de ;
He tooke the dede man be the hande,
And sayd, Wo ys me for the !

To have savyde thy lyffe I wolde have pertyd with
My landes for years thre,
For a better man of hart, nare of hande,
Was not in all the north countrè.

Off all that se a Skottishe knyght,
Was callyd Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,
He sawe the Duglas to the deth was dyght ;
He spendyd a spear a trusti tre ;

He rod uppon a corsiare
Throughe a hondrith archery,
He never styntyde,¹ nar never blane²
Tyll he cam to the good lord Persè.

He set uppone the lord Persè
A dynte, that was full soare ;
With a suar spear of a myghtè tre
Clean thorow the body he the Persè bore,

Athe tother syde, that a man myght se,
A large cloth yard and mare :
Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Cristiantè,
Then that day slain wear thare.

¹ Stayed.

² Stopped.

An archer off Northomberlonde
Say sleane was the lord Persè,
He bar a bende-bow in his hande,
Was made off trusti tre :

An arow, that a cloth yarde was lang,
To th' harde stele halyde he ;
A dynt, that was both sad and soar,
He sat on Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry.

The dynt yt was both sad and soar,
That he of Mongon-byrry sete ;
The swane-fethars, that his arrowe bar,
With his hart blood the wear wete.

Ther was never a freake wone foot wolde fle,
But still in stour dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar, whyll the myght dre,¹
With many a bal-ful brande.

This battell begane in Chyviat
An owar befor the none,
And when even-song bell was rang
The battell was nat half done.

¹ Suffer.

The tooke on on ethar hand
Be the lyght off the mone ;
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
In Chyviat the hillys abone.

Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
Went away but fifti and thre ;
Of twenty hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,
But even five and fifti :

But all wear slayne Cheviat within :
The hade no strengthe to stand on he :
The chyld may rue that ys un-borne,
It was the more pittè.

Thear was slayne withe the lord Persè
Sir John of Agerstone,
Sir Rogar the hinde Hartly,
Sir Wyllyam the bolde Hearone.

Sir Jorg the worthè Lovele
A knyght of great renowen,
Sir Raff the ryche Rugbè
With dyntes wear beaten dowene.

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
That ever he slayne shulde be ;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
He knyled and fought on hys kne.

Ther was slayne with the dougheti Douglas
Sir Hew the Mongon-byrry,
Sir Davye Lwdale, that worthè was,
His sistars son was he ;

Sir Charles a Murrè, in that place,
That never a foot wolde fle ;
Sir Hewe Maxwell, a lorde he was,
With the Douglas dyd he dey.

So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
Off byrch, and hasell so gray ;
Many wedous with wepyng tears,
Cam to fach ther makys¹ a-way.

Tivydale may carpe off care,
Northombarlond may mayk grat mone,
For towe such captayns, as slayne wear thear,
On the march perti shall never be none.

Word ys comen to Edden-burrowe
To Jamy the Skottishe kyng,
That dougheti Douglas, lyff-tenant of the Merches,
He lay slean Chyviot with-in.

¹ Mates.

His handdes dyd he weal and wryng,
He sayd, Alas, and woe ys me !
Such another captayn Skotland within,
He sayd, y-feth shuld never be.

Werde ys commyn to lovly Londone
Till the fourth Harry our kyng,
That lord Persè, leyff-tenante of the Merchis,
He lay slayne Chyviat within.

God have merci on his soll, sayd kyng Harry,
Good lord, yf thy will it be !
I have a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde, he sayd,
As good as ever was he :
But Perse, and I brook my lyffe,
Thy deth well quyte shall be.

As our noble kyng made his a-vowe,
Lyke a noble prince of renowen,
For the deth of the lord Persè,
He dyde the battel of Hombyll-down :

Wher syx and thritte Skottish knyghtes
On a day wear beaten down :
Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,
Over castill, towar, and town.

This was the hontynge off the Cheviat ;
That tear begane this spurn :
Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe,
Call it the Battell of Otterburn.

At Otterburn began this spurne¹
Upon a mōnnyn day :
Ther was the dougghte Doglas slean,
The Persè never went away.

Ther was never a tym on the march partes
Sen the Doglas, and the Persè met,
But yt was marvele, and the rede blude ronne not,
As the reane doys in the stret.

Jhesue Crist our balys bete,²
And to the blys us brynge !
Thus was the hountynge of the Chevyat :
God send us all good endyng !

¹ Kick.

² Remedy our ills.

ROBERT HENRYSON.

 Period about 1450.

CONTENTMENT.

BLISSED be simple life, withouten dreid ;
 Blisled be sober feast in quieté ;
 Wha has eneuch of no more has he neid,
 Though it be little into quantity.
 Grit abundance, and blind prosperity,
 Oft timis make ane evil conclusion ;
 The sweetest life, theirfor, in this country,
 Is of sickerness, with small possession.

 THE GARMENT OF GOOD LADIES.

Would my good lady love me best,
 And work after my will,
 I should a garment goodliest
 Gar make her body till.¹

¹ Make to fit her shape.

Of high honour should be her hood,
 Upon her head to wear,
 Garnished with governance, so good
 Na deeming should her deir.¹

Her sark should be her body next,
 Of chastity so white :
 With shame and dread together mixt,
 The same should be perfyte.

Her kirtle should be of clean constance,
 Lacit with lesum² love ;
 The mailies³ of continuance,
 For never to remove.

Her gown should be of goodliness,
 Well ribbon'd with renown ;
 Purfill'd⁴ with pleasure in ilk place,
 Furrit with fine fashioun.

Her belt should be of benignity,
 About her middle meet ;
 Her mantle of humility,
 To thole⁵ both wind and weit.

¹ Injure.² Lawful.³ Eyelet-holes.⁴ Fringed, or bordered.⁵ Endure.

Her hat should be of fair havìng,
And her tippet of truth ;
Her patelet of good pansìng,¹
Her hals-ribbon of ruth.²

Her sleeves should be of esperance,
To keep her frae despair ;
Her glovis of good governance,
To hide her fingers fair.

Her shoen should be of sickerness,
In sign that she not slide ;
Her hose of honesty, I guess,
I should for her provide.

Would she put on this garment gay,
I durst swear³ by my seill,³
That she wore never green nor gray
That set⁴ her half so weel.

¹ Thinking.

² Her neck-ribbon of pity.

³ Salvation.

⁴ Became.

WILLIAM DUNBAR.

The most celebrated of ancient Scottish poets. He lived about the end of the fifteenth century, and has left behind him many poems of great genius and beauty.

ODE TO GLADNESS.

BE merry, man, and tak not sair in mind
 The wavering of this wretched world of sorrow ;
 To God be humble, to thy friend be kind,
 And with thy neighbours gladly lend and borrow ;
 His chance to-night, it may be thine to-morrow ;
 Be blyth in hearte for any aventure,
 For oft with wise men it has been said aforow,
 Without Gladness availes no Treasure.

Make thee gude cheer of it that God thee sends,
 For world's wrak but welfare¹ nought avails ;
 Nae gude is thine save only that thou spends,
 Remanant all thou bruikes but with bails ;²

¹ World's trash without health.

² Injuries.

Seek to solace when sadness thee assails ;
In dolour lang thy life may not endure,
Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails ;
Without Gladness availes no Treasure.

Follow on pity, flee trouble and debate,
With famous folkis hald thy company :
Be charitable and hum'le in thine estate,
For warldly honour lastes but a cry.
For trouble in earth tak no melancholy ;
Be rich in patience, if thou in gudes be poor ;
Who lives merrily he lives mightily ;
Without Gladness availes no Treasure.

OF DISCRETION IN TAKING.

AFTER Giving I speak of Taking,
But little of ony good forsaking ;
Some takes o'er little authoritie,
And some o'er mickle, and that is glaiking ;¹
In Taking sould Discretion be.

¹ Foolish.

The clerks takes benefices with brawls,
 Some of St. Peter and some of St. Paul's ;
 Tak he the rents, no care has he,
 Suppose the devil tak all their sauls ;
 In Taking sould Discretion be.

Barons taks fra the tenants puir
 All fruit that growis on the fur,
 In mails and gersoms¹ raisit o'er his ;
 And gars them beg fra door to door :
 In Taking sould Discretion be.

Some merchands taks unleesome wine,
 Whilk maks their packs oft time full thin,
 By their succession, as ye may see,
 That ill-won gear 'riches not the kin.
 In Taking sould Discretion be.

Some taks other mennis tacks,²
 And on the puir oppression maks,
 And never remembers that he maun die,
 Till that the gallows gars him rax :³
 In Taking sould Discretion be.

¹ Rents and fines of entry.

² Leases.

⁴ Stretches him.

Some taks by sea, and some by land,
And never fra taking can hauld their hand,
Till he be tyit up to ane tree ;
And syne they gar him understand,
In Taking sould Discretion be.

Some wald tak all his neighbour's gear ;
Had he of man as little fear
As he has dread that God him see ;
To tak then sould he never forbear :
In Taking sould Discretion be.

Some wald tak all this warld on breid ;¹
And yet not satisfied of their need,
Through heart unsatiabie and greedie ;
Some wald tak little, and can not speed :
In Taking should Discretion be.

Great men for taking and oppression,
Are set full famous at the Session,
And puir takers are hangit hie,
Shawit for ever, and their succession :
In Taking sould Discretion be.

¹ Breadth.

EARL OF SURREY.

This accomplished nobleman and true poet was beheaded on Tower Hill
in 1547.

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A HAPPY LIFE.

MARTIAL, the things that do attain
The happy life, be these, I find,
The riches left, not got with pain ;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind,
The equal friend ; no grudge, no strife ;
No charge of rule, nor governance ;
Without disease, the healthful life ;
The household of continuance :
The mean diet, no delicate fare ;
True wisdom joined with simpleness ;
The night discharged of all care ;
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate ;
Such sleeps as may beguile the night ;
Contented with thine own estate,
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

REFLECTIONS IN PRISON.

So cruel prison how could betide, alas !
As proud Windsor ? where I, in lust and joy,
With a king's son, my childish years did pass,
In greater feast than Priam's son of Troy :

Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour !
The large green courts where we were wont to hove,¹
With eyes cast up into the Maiden Tower,
And easy sighs such as folk draw in love.

The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue ;
The dances short, long tales of great delight,
With words and looks that tigers could but rue,
Where each of us did plead the other's right.

¹ Hover ; loiter.

The palm-play, where, despoiled for the game,
With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love,
Have missed the ball and got sight of our dame,
To bait her eyes, which kept the leads above.

The gravel ground, with sleeves tied on the helm
Of foaming horse,¹ with swords and friendly hearts ;
With cheer, as though one should another whelm,
Where we have fought, and chased oft with darts ;

With silver drops the mead yet spread for ruth,
In active games of nimbleness and strength,
Where we did strain, trained with swarms of youth,
Our tender limbs that yet shot up in length :

The secret groves which oft we made resound,
Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise,
Recording oft what grace each one had found,
What hope of speed, what dread of long delays :

The wild forest, the clothed holts with green,
With reins availed² and swift ybreathed horse ;
With cry of hounds and merry blasts between,
Where we did chase the fearful hart of force.

¹ A lover tied the sleeve of his mistress on the head of his horse.

² Dropped.

The wide vales, eke, that harboured us each night,
Wherewith, alas, reviveth in my breast,
The sweet accord such sleeps as yet delight,
The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest :

The secret thoughts imparted with such trust,
The wanton talk, the divers change of play,
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just ;
Wherewith we passed the winter night away.

And with this thought, the blood forsakes the face,
The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue,
The which, as soon as sobbing sighs, alas,
Upsupped have, thus I my plaint renew :

O place of bliss ! renewer of my woes,
Give me accounts, where is my noble fere ;¹
Whom in thy walls thou dost each night enclose ;
To other leef,² but unto me most dear :

Echo, alas ! that doth my sorrow rue,
Returns thereto a hollow sound of plaint.
Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,
In prison pine with bondage and restraint,

And with remembrance of the greater grief
To banish the less, I find my chief relief.

¹ Companion.

² Agreeable.

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

An accomplished scholar and traveller. Lived 1503 to 1541.

BLAME NOT MY LUTE.

BLAME not my Lute ! for he must sound
Of this or that as liketh me ;
For lack of wit the Lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me ;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch my change,
Blame not my Lute !

My Lute, alas ! doth not offend,
Though that per force he must agree
To sound such tunes as I intend,
To sing to them that heareth me ;

Then though my songs be somewhat plain,
And toucheth some that use to feign,
Blame not my Lute !

My Lute and strings may not deny,
But as I strike they must obey ;
Break not them then so wrongfully,
But wreak thyself some other way ;
And though the songs which I indite,
Do quit thy change with rightful spite,
Blame not my Lute !

Spite asketh spite, and changing change,
And falsed faith, must needs be known ;
The faults so great, the case so strange ;
Of right it must abroad be blown :
Then since that by thine own desert
My songs do tell how true thou art,
Blame not my Lute !

Blame but thyself that hast misdome,
And well deserved to have blame ;
Change thou thy way, so evil begone,
And then my Lute shall sound that same ;
But if till then my fingers play,
By thy desert their wonted way,
Blame not my Lute !

Farewell ! unknown ; for though thou break
My strings in spite with great disdain,
Yet have I found out for thy sake,
Strings for to string my Lute again :
And if perchance this silly rhyme
Do make thee blush at any time,
Blame not my Lute !



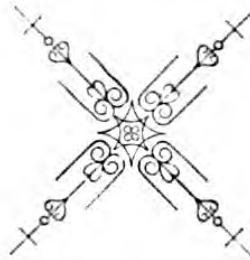
THOMAS TUSSER.

1523 to 1580.

HOUSEWIFELY PHYSIC.

Good huswife provides, ere a sickness do come,
Of sundry good things in her house to have some.
Good *aqua composita*, and vinegar tart,
Rose-water, and treacle, to comfort thine heart.
Cold herbs in her garden, for agues that burn,
That over-strong heat to good temper may turn.
White endive, and succory, with spinach enow ;
All such with good pot-herbs, should follow the plough.
Get water of fumitory, liver to cool,
And others the like, or else lie like a fool.
Conserves of barbary, quinces, and such,
With sirops, that easeth the sickly so much.
Ask *Medicus'* counsel, ere medicine ye take,
And honour that man for necessity's sake.

Though thousands hate physic, because of the cost,
Yet thousands it helpeth, that else should be lost.
Good broth, and good keeping, do much now and than :
Good diet, with wisdom, best comforteth man.
In health, to be stirring shall profit thee best ;
In sickness, hate trouble ; seek quiet and rest.
Remember thy soul ; let no fancy prevail ;
Make ready to God-ward ; let faith never quail :
The sooner thyself thou submittest to God,
The sooner he ceaseth to scourge with his rod.



RICHARD EDWARDS.

But little is known of this poet, except that he was Court Musician,
about the middle of the sixteenth century.

THE FALLING OUT OF FAITHFUL FRIENDS
RENEWING IS OF LOVE.

IN going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,
I heard a wife sing to her child, that long before had wept.
She sighed sore, and sang full sweet, to bring the babe to rest,
That would not cease, but cried still, in sucking at her breast.
She was full weary of her watch, and grieved with her child,
She rocked it, and rated it, until on her it smil'd ;
Then did she say, " Now have I found the proverb true to
prove,
The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love."

Then took I paper, pen, and ink, this proverb for to write,
In register for to remain of such a worthy wight.
As she proceeded thus in song unto her little brat,
Much matter utter'd she of weight in place whereas she sat;
And proved plain, there was no beast, nor creature bearing
 life,
Could well be known to live in love without discòrd and
 strife :

Then kissed she her little babe, and sware by God above,
“ The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love.”

“ I marvel much, pardie,” quoth she, “ for to behold the
 rout,

To see man, woman, boy, and beast, to toss the world about ;
Some kneel, some crouch, some beck, some check, and some
 can smoothly smile,

And some embrace others in arms, and there think many a
 wile.

Some stand aloof at cap and knee, some humble, and some
 stout,

Yet are they never friends indeed until they once fall out.”
Thus ended she her song, and said, before she did remove,
“ The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love.”

SIR DAVID LYNDSEY.

1490 to 1555.

This celebrated writer of satires was a noted author in the times in which he lived; but the coarseness of expression which generally pervades his writings prevents the use of quotation. The following account of a lawsuit, however, may amuse, as shewing that however other sublunary affairs may change, the "law's delays" have maintained the same characteristics from age to age.

A CARMAN'S ACCOUNT OF A LAWSUIT.

MARRY, I lent my gossip my mare, to fetch hame coals,
And he her drounit into the quarry holes;
And I ran to the consistory, for to pleinyie,
And there I happenit amang ane greedie meinyie.¹
They gave me first ane thing they call *citandum*;
Within aucht days I gat but *libellandum*;
Within ane month I gat *ad opponendum*;
In half ane year I gat *inter-loquendum*,

¹ Company.

And syne I gat — how call ye it? — *ad replicandum* ;
Bot I could never ane word yet understand him :
And then they gart me cast out mony placks,
And gart me pay for four-and-twenty acts.
Bot or they came half gate to *concludendum*,
The fiend ane plack was left for to defend him.
Thus they postponed me twa year with their train,
Syne, *hodie ad octo*, bade me come again ;
And then thir rooks they rowpit wonder fast
For sentence, silver, they cryit at the last.
Of *pronunciandum* they made me wonder fain,
But I gat never my gude grey mare again.



THE BALLAD OF
KING LEIR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS.

This ballad is supposed to be the original from which Shakspeare conceived the celebrated Tragedy of King Lear. The author is unknown, but we cannot be wrong in assigning it a date at this period, as soon after we find frequent reference to it.

KING Leir once ruled in this land,
With princely power and peace,
And had all things with hearts content,
That might his joys increase :
Amongst those things that nature gave,
Three daughters fair had he,
So princely seeming beautiful,
As fairer could not be.

So on a time it pleased the king
A question thus to move,
Which of his daughters to his grace
Could shew the dearest love :
For to my age you bring content,
Quoth he, then let me hear
Which of you three, in plighted troth,
The kindest will appear.

To whom the eldest thus began,
Dear father, mind, quoth she,
Before your face, to do you good,
My blood shall rendered be :
And for your sake my bleeding heart
Shall here be cut in twain,
Ere that I see your reverend age
The smallest grief sustain.

And so will I, the second said :
Dear father, for your sake,
The worst of all extremities
I'll gently undertake ;
And serve your highness night and day
With diligence and love ;
That sweet content and quietness,
Discomforts may remove.

In doing so, you glad my soul,
The aged king reply'd ;
But what sayst thou, my youngest girl,
How is thy love ally'd ?
My love (quoth young Cordelia then)
Which to your grace I owe,
Shall be the duty of a child,
And that is all I'll show.

And wilt thou shew no more, quoth he,
Than doth thy duty bind ?
I well perceive thy love is small,
When as no more I find :
Henceforth I banish thee my court,
Thou art no child of mine ;
Nor any part of this my realm,
By favour shall be thine.

Thy elder sisters loves are more
Than well I can demand,
To whom I equally bestow
My kingdome and my land :
My pompal state and all my goods,
That lovingly I may
With those thy sisters be maintained
Until my dying day.

Thus flattering speeches won renown,
By these two sisters here :
The third had causeless banishment,
Yet was her love more dear :
For poor Cordelia patiently
Went wandring up and down,
Unhelp'd, unpity'd, gentle maid,
Through many an English town :

Untill at last in famous France
She gentler fortunes found ;
Though poor and bare, yet she was deem'd
The fairest on the ground :
Where when the king her virtues heard,
And this fair lady seen,
With full consent of all his court
He made his wife and queen.

Her father old king Lear this while
With his two daughters staid,
Forgetful of their promised loves,
Full soon the same decay'd,
And living in queen Ragan's court,
The eldest of the twain,
She took from him his chiefest means,
And most of all his train.

For whereas twenty men were wont
To wait with bended knee :
She gave allowance but to ten,
And after scarce to three :
Nay, one she thought too much for him,
So took she all away,
In hope that in her court, good king,
He would no longer stay.

Am I rewarded thus, quoth he,
In giving all I have
Unto my children, and to beg,
For what I lately gave ?
I'll go unto my Gonorell ;
My second child, I know,
Will be more kind and pitiful,
And will relieve my woe.

Full fast he hies then to her court ;
Where when she heard his moan
Returned him answer, That she griev'd,
That all his means were gone :
But no way could relieve his wants ;
Yet if that he would stay
Within her kitchen, he should have
What scullions gave away.

When he had heard with bitter tears,
He made his answer then ;
In what I did let me be made
Example to all men.
I will return again, quoth he,
Unto my Ragan's court ;
She will not use me thus, I hope,
But in a kinder sort.

Where when he came, she gave command
To drive him thence away :
When he was well within her court
(She said) he would not stay.
Then back again to Gonorell,
The woeful king did hie,
That in her kitchen he might have
What scullion boys set by.

But there of that he was deny'd,
Which she had promised late :
For once refusing, he should not
Come after to her gate.
Thus twixt his daughters, for relief
He wandred up and down ;
Being glad to feed on beggar's food,
That lately wore a crown.

And calling to remembrance then
His youngest daughters words,
That said the duty of a child
Was all that love affords :
But doubting to repair to her,
Whom he had banish'd so,
Grew frantick mad ; for in his mind
He bore the wounds of woe :

Which made him rend his milk-white locks,
And tresses from his head,
And all with blood bestain his cheeks,
With age and honour spread :
To hills and woods and watery founts,
He made his hourly moan,
Till hills and woods and senseless things,
Did seem to sigh and groan.

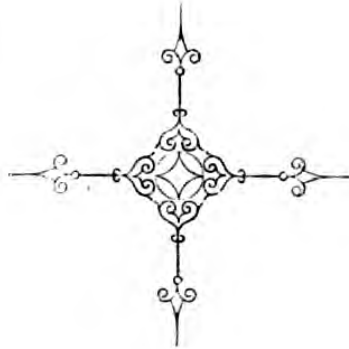
Even thus possest with discontents,
He passed o're to France,
In hopes from fair Cordelia there,
To find some gentler chance.
Most virtuous dame ! which when she heard
Of this her father's grief,
As duty bound, she quickly sent
Him comfort and relief :

And by a train of noble peers,
In brave and gallant sort,
She gave in charge he should be brought
To Aganippus' court ;
Whose royal king, with noble mind
So freely gave consent,
To muster up his knights at arms,
To fame and courage bent.

And so to England came with speed,
To repossesse king Leir,
And drive his daughters from their thrones
By his Cordelia dear :
Where she, true-hearted noble queen,
Was in the battel slain :
Yet he, good king, in his old days,
Possess his crown again.

But when he heard Cordelia's death,
Who died indeed for love
Of her dear father, in whose cause
She did this battel move ;
He swooning fell upon her breast,
From whence he never parted :
But on her bosom left his life,
That was so truly hearted.

The lords and nobles when they saw
The end of these events,
The other sisters unto death
They doomed by consents :
And being dead, their crowns they left
Unto the next of kin :
Thus have you seen the fall of pride,
And disobedient sin.



THOMAS SACKVILLE.

1536 to 1600.

In the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and immediately preceding Shakspeare, we meet with several poets of considerable eminence. Most of them may, indeed, be said to have been contemporaries of his; but as their works were published before Shakspeare became known as an author, we have placed them among the writers antecedent to his time. Among these, Thomas Sackville, ultimately Earl Dorset, and Lord High Treasurer of England, holds no mean place. His most celebrated work is the "Mirroure for Magistrates," the scene of which is laid in the infernal regions; the object being to depict the vices of men receiving the punishment due to their career on earth. The following pieces are from that production.

REMORSE.

AND first, within the porch and jaws of hell,
Sat deep Remorse of Conscience, all besprent
With tears; and to herself oft would she tell
Her wretchedness, and, cursing, never stent
To sob and sigh, but ever thus lament
With thoughtful care; as she that, all in vain,
Would wear and waste continually in pain:

Her eyes unstedfast, rolling here and there,
Whirl'd on each place, as place that vengeance brought,
So was her mind continually in fear,
Tost and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crimes which she had wrought ;
With dreadful cheer, and looks thrown to the sky,
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

REVENGE.

AND, next, within the entry of this lake,
Sat fell Revenge, gnashing her teeth for ire ;
Devising means how she may vengeance take ;
Never in rest, 'till she have her desire ;
But frets within so far forth with the fire
Of wreaking flames, that now determines she
To die by death, or 'venged by death to be.

MISERY.

WHEN fell Revenge, with bloody foul pretence,
Had show'd herself, as next in order set,
With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,
'Till in our eyes another sight we met ;

When fro my heart a sigh forthwith I fet,
Ruing, alas, upon the woeful plight
Of Misery, that next appear'd in sight :

His face was lean, and some-deal pin'd away,
And eke his hands consumed to the bone ;
But, what his body was, I cannot say,
For on his carcase raiment had he none,
Save clouts and patches pieced one by one ;
With staff in hand, and scrip on shoulders cast,
His chief defence against the winter's blast :

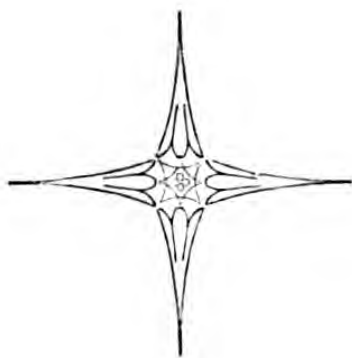
His food, for most, was wild fruits of the tree,
Unless sometimes some crumbs fell to his share,
Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he,
As on the which full daint'ly would he fare ;
His drink, the running stream, his cup, the bare
Of his palm closed ; his bed, the hard cold ground :
To this poor life was Misery ybound.

SLEEP.

By him lay heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath ;
Small keep took he, whom fortune frowned on,

Or whom she lifted up into the throne
Of high renown, but, as a living death,
So dead alive, of life he drew the breath :

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travel's ease, the still night's feer was he,
And of our life in earth the better part ;
Riever of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that [tyde] and oft that never be ;
Without respect, esteem[ing] equally
King Cræsus' pomp and Irus' poverty.



SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Born 1554. Died 1586.

No man ever in his own age attracted more admiration and affection than Sir Philip Sidney; nor do the records of past times present us with any portraitures of character more truly good and great. His poetical productions are chiefly in the form of sonnets, of which the following we consider favourable specimens.

BECAUSE I oft in dark abstracted guise
Seem most alone in greatest company,
With dearth of words, or answers quite awry
To them that would make speech of speech arise,
They deem, and of their doom the rumour flies,
That poison foul of bubbling Pride doth lie
So in my swelling breast, that only I
Fawn on myself, and others do despise.
Yet Pride, I think, doth not my soul possess,
Which looks too oft in his unflattering glass;

But one worse fault Ambition I confess,
That makes me oft my best friends overpass,
Unseen, unheard, while thought to highest place
Bends all his powers, even unto Stella's grace.

With how sad steps, O Moon ! thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face !
What may it be, that even in heavenly place
That busy Archer his sharp arrows tries ?
Sure, if that long with love acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case ;
I read it in thy looks, thy languish'd grace
To me that feel the like thy state describes.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit ?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be ?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess ?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness ?

Come, Sleep, O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low.

With shield of proof shield me from out the prease¹
Of those fierce darts. Despair at me doth throw ;
O make in me those civil wars to cease :
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed ;
A chamber, deaf to noise, and blind to light ;
A rosy garland, and a weary head.
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
Livelier than elsewhere Stella's image see.

¹ Throng.



RICHARD MARLOW.

Highly esteemed as a dramatic author, Marlow's name would have been passed over as a poet, but for the following celebrated "Address;" the answer to which will be found in the extracts from Sir Walter Raleigh.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD'S ADDRESS TO HIS
MISTRESS.

COME live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That vallies, groves, and hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodius birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies ;
A cap of flowers and a kirtle,
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle :

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold :

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs ;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight, each May-morning :
If these delights thy mind may move
Then live with me, and be my love.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

1553 to 1618.

THE SOUL'S ERRAND.

Go, soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand !
Fear not to touch the best,
The truth shall be thy warrant ;
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

Go, tell the court it glows,
And shines like rotten wood ;
Go, tell the church it shows
What's good, and doth no good :
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live
Acting by others actions,
Not lov'd unless they give,
Not strong but by their factions.
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition
That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate.
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,
They beg for more by spending,
Who in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending.
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it lacks devotion,
Tell love it is but lust,
Tell time it is but motion,
Tell flesh it is but dust ;
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth,
Tell honour how it alters,
Tell beauty how she blasteth,
Tell favour how she falters.
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness :
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in over-wiseness.
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness,
Tell skill it is pretension,
Tell charity of coldness,
Tell law it is contention.
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness,
Tell nature of decay,
Tell friendship of unkindness,
Tell justice of delay.
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming,
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming.
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city,
Tell how the country erreth,
Tell, manhood shakes off pity,
Tell, virtue least preferreth.
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing :
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing ;
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the soul can kill.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

Born 1552. Beheaded 29th October, 1618.

No history need here be given of Sir Walter Raleigh. His works are chiefly in prose; but the two extracts which follow shew that he was capable of writing poetry of a high order.

THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE PASSIONATE
SHEPHERD.

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue — a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs ;
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

(Written the night before his death.)

EVEN such is Time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust ;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days !
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.



RICHARD BARNFIELD.

—
Contemporary with Raleigh.
—

ADDRESS TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made ;
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring ;
Every thing did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn ;
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry ;
Teru, teru, by and by ;

That, to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah ! (thought I) thou mourn'st in vain ;
None takes pity on thy pain :
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless bears, they will not cheer thee :
King Pandion he is dead ;
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead ;
All thy fellow-birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing !
Whilst as fickle fortune smil'd,
Thou and I were both beguil'd.
Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy, like the wind ;
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend :
But if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.
If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call ;
And with such-like flattering,
“ Pity but he were a king.”

If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice ;
But if fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown :
They that fawn'd on him before
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need ;
If thou sorrow, he will weep,
If thou wake he cannot sleep :
Thus, of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.



BALLAD OF
SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE.

The subject of this ballad is taken from the ancient romance of King Arthur. Shakspeare quotes it in the second part of Henry IV., Act II., Scene 4. The spelling is given as it exists in the Percy MSS.

WHEN Arthur first in court began,
And was approved king,
By force of armes great victoryes wanne,
And conquest home did bring,
Then into England straight he came
With fifty good and able
Knights, that resorted unto him,
And were of his round table.
And many justs and turnaments,
Wherto were many prest,
Wherin some knights did then excell
And far surmount the rest.

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approved well,
He for his deeds and feates of armes,
All others did excell.

When he had rested him a while,
In play, and game, and sportt,
He said he wold goe prove himselfe
In some adventurous sort.

He armed rode in forrest wide,
And met a damsell faire,
Who told him of adventures great,
Whereto he gave good eare.

Such wold I find, quoth Lancelott :
For that cause came I hither.
Thou seemst, quoth she, a knight full good,
And I will bring thee thither,

Wheras a mighty knight doth dwell,
That now is of great fame :
Therefore tell me what wight thou art,
And what may be thy name.

“ My name is Lancelot du Lake.”
Quoth she, it likes me than :
Here dwells a knight who never was
Yet matcht with any man :

Who has in prison threescore knights
And four, that he did wound ;
Knights of king Arthurs court they be,
And of his table round.

She brought him to a river side,
And also to a tree,
Whereon a copper bason hung,
And many shields to see.

He struck so hard, the bason broke ;
And Tarquin soon he spyed ;
Who drove a horse before him fast,
Whereon a knight lay tyed.

Sir knight, then sayd Sir Lancelott,
Bring me that horse-load hither,
And lay him downe, and let him rest ;
Weel try our force together.

For, as I understand, thou hast,
Soe far as thou art able,
Done great despite and shame unto
The knights of the Round Table.

If thou be of the Table Round,
Quoth Tarquin speedilye,
Both thee and all thy fellowship
I utterly defye.

That's over much, quoth Lancelott ;
Defend thee by and by.
They sett their speares unto their steeds,
And each att other flye.

They coucht their speares, (their horses ran
As though there had been thunder)
And strucke them each amidst their shields,
Wherewith they broke in sunder.

Their horses backes brake under them,
The knights were both astound :
To avoyd their horses they made haste
And light upon the ground.

They tooke them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drew out than,
With mighty strokes most eagerlye
Eache at the other ran.

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
For breath they both did stand,
And leaning on their swordes awhile,
Quoth Tarquine, Hold thy hand,

And tell to me what I shall aske.

Say on, quoth Lancelot tho.

Thou art, quoth Tarquine, the best knight
That ever I did know ;

And like a knight that I did hate :
Soe that thou be not hee,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord with thee.

That is well sayd, quoth Lancelott ;
But sith it must be soe,
What knight is that thou hatest thus ?
I pray thee to me show.

His name is Lancelot du Lake,
He slew my brother deere ;
Him I suspect of all the rest :
I would I had him here.

Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknowne,
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now knight of Arthurs Table round ;
King Hauds son of Schuwake ;

And I desire thee do thy worst.
Ho, ho, quoth Tarquin tho,
One of us two shall end our lives
Before that we do go.

If thou be Lancelot du Lake,
Then welcome shalt thou bee :
Wherefore see thou thyself defend,
For now defye I thee.

They buckled then together so,
Like unto wild boares rushing,
And with their swords and shields they ran
At one another slashing :

The ground besprinkled was with blood :
Tarquin began to yield,
For he gave backe for wearinesse,
And lowe did beare his shield.

This soone Sir Lancelot espyde,
He leapt upon him then,
He pull'd him downe upon his knee,
And rushing off his helm,

Forthwith he strucke his necke in two,
And, when he had so done,
From prison threescore knights and four
Delivered every one.

HENRY CONSTABLE.

End of the sixteenth century.

SONNET.

To live in hell, and heaven to behold,
To welcome life, and die a living death,
To sweat with heat, and yet be freezing cold,
To grasp at stars, and lie the earth beneath,
To tread a maze that never shall have end,
To burn in sighs, and starve in daily tears,
To climb a hill, and never to descend,
Giants to kill, and quake at childish fears,
To pine for food, and watch th' Hesperian tree,
To thirst for drink, and nectar still to draw,
To live accurs'd, whom men hold blest to be,
And weep those wrongs, which never creature saw ;
If this be love, if love in these be founded,
My heart is love, for these in it are grounded.



THE

Book of British Poesy.



SECTION II.

Shakspeare to Milton.





WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

BORN 1564. DIED 1616.

No history of our great national poet and dramatist is required here. Our task will be confined to making a few selections from his immortal works.

SONNET.

○ HOW much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give !
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye,
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses ;
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade ;
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so ;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made ;
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

DECEIT OF ORNAMENT.

(From "The Merchant of Venice.")

THE world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk!
And these assume but valour's excrement,
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.
So are those crisped, snaky, golden locks,

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind
Upon supposed fairness ; often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the gilded shore
To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty ; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
T' entrap the wisest : therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee :
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man : but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I ; joy be the consequence.

SONG.

(From "Cymbeline.")

FEAR no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages ;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages :
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder stone ;
Fear not slander, censure rash,
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee !
Nor no witchcraft charm thee !
Ghost unlaid forbear thee !
Nothing ill come near thee !
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave !

NIGHT IN A CAMP.

(From "Henry V.")

FROM camp to camp, thro' the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch.
Fire answers fire ; and through their paly flames,
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face.
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs,
Piercing the night's dull ear ; and from the tents,
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.
Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
For the low-rated English play at dice,
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, does limp
So tediously away. The poor condemned English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently, and inly ruminatè
The morning's danger : and their gesture sad
(Investing lank lean cheeks and war-worn coats)

Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
So many horrid ghosts. O, now, who will behold
The royal captain of this ruin'd band,
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry praise and glory on his head !
For forth he goes, and visits all his host,
Bids them good-morrow with a modest smile,
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him ;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watched night ;
But freshly looks, and overbears attaint,
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty ;
That ev'ry wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear.

THE WORLD COMPARED TO A STAGE.

(From "As You Like It.")

ALL the world 's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players ;

They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in his nurse's arms :
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then, the soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel ;
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances ;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shanks ; and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion :
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

OTHELLO'S RELATION OF HIS COURTSHIP TO THE SENATE.

(From "Othello.")

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters ;
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true ; true, I have married her ;
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little blest with the soft phrase of peace ;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now, some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field ;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle ;
And therefore shall I little grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet by your gracious patience
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love : what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic
(For such proceeding I am charg'd withal)
I won his daughter with.

Her father lov'd me, oft invited me ;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes,

That I have past.
I ran it through, ev'n from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it :
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field ;
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach ;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
And portance in my travel's history.
Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my lot to speak, such was the process ;
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline ;
But still the house affairs would draw her thence ;
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse : which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively. I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears,

When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs ;
She swore — in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful —
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man : she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story ;
And that would woo her. On this hint I spake ;
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.

MARK ANTONY'S ORATION.

(From "Julius Cæsar.")

O, PARDON me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers !
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood !
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy, —
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue, —

A curse shall light upon the limbs of men ;
Domestic fury, and fierce civil strife,
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy :
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war ;
All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds :
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry " Havock," and let slip the dogs of war ;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men groaning for burial.

HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.

(From "Hamlet.")

To be, or not to be, that is the question —
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them ? To die — to sleep —
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to! — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die — to sleep —
To sleep! — perchance to dream! — ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause — there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his *quietus* make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To groan and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death
(That undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns) puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

THE QUALITY OF MERCY.

(From "The Merchant of Venice.")

THE quality of mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown :
His sceptre shows the force of temporal pow'r,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.
But mercy is above the sceptred sway ;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings ;
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.



EDMUND SPENSER.

Born 1553. Died 16th January, 1599.

This illustrious poet is one of those whose productions mark an era in the history of our country's literature. His works are numerous, and exhibit all the highest attributes of genius. The "Faery Queen," and "The Shepherd's Calendar," are his longest and most admired works.

THE HOUSE OF SLEEP.

HE making speedy way through spersed ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus' house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,
His dwelling is, there Tethys his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe,
In silver deaw, his ever drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one fayre fram'd of burnisht yvory,
The other all with silver overcast ;
And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,
Watching to banish Care their enemy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle sleepe.
By them the sprite doth passe in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe
In drowsie fit he findes ; of nothing he takes keepe.

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cries,
As still are wont t' annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard ; but careless Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternal silence farre from enemyes.

(From "The Epithalamion.")

WAKE now, my love, awake ; for it is time ;
The rosy morn long since left Tithon's bed,
All ready to her silver coach to climb ;
And Phœbus 'gins to show his glorious head.

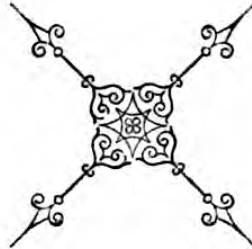
Hark! now the cheerful birds do chant their lays,
And carol of Love's praise.

The merry lark her matins sings aloft ;
The thrush replies ; the mavis descant plays ;
The ouzel shrills ; the ruddock warbles soft ;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this day's merriment.

Ah! my dear love, why do you sleep thus long,
When meeter were that you should now awake,
T' await the coming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds' love-learned song,
The dewy leaves among !
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreams,
And her fair eyes, like stars that dimmed were
With darksome cloud, now show their goodly beams
More bright than Hesperus his head doth rear.
Come now, ye damsels, daughters of delight,
Help quickly her to dight :
But first come, ye fair Hours, which were begot,
In Jove's sweet paradise, of Day and Night ;
Which do the seasons of the year allot,
And all, that ever in this world is fair,
Do make and still repair ;

And ye three handmaids of the Cyprian Queen,
The which do still adorn her beauties' pride,
Help to adorn my beautifullest bride :
And, as ye her array, still throw between
Some graces to be seen ;
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shall answer, and your echo ring.



ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

1560 to 1596.

TIMES GO BY TURNS.

THE lopped tree in time may grow again,
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower ;
The sorriest wight may find release of pain,
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower :
Time goes by turns, and chances change by course,
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow ;
She draws her favours to the lowest ebb :
Her tides have equal times to come and go ;
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web :
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
Not endless night, yet not eternal day :
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.
Thus, with succeeding turns, God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

A chance may win that by mischance was lost ;
That net that holds no great, takes little fish ;
In some things all, in all things none are cross'd ;
Few all they need, but none have all they wish.
Unmingled joys here to no man befall ;
Who least, hath some ; who most, hath never all.

SCORN NOT THE LEAST.

WHERE words are weak, and foes encount'ring strong,
Where mightier do assault than do defend,
The feebler part puts up enforced wrong,
And silent sees, that speech could not amend :
Yet higher powers must think, though they repine,
When sun is set the little stars will shine.

While pike doth range, the silly tench doth fly,
And crouch in privy creeks with smaller fish ;
Yet pikes are caught when little fish go by,
These fleet afloat, while those do fill the dish ;
There is a time even for the worms to creep,
And suck the dew, while all their foes do sleep.

The merlin cannot ever soar on high,
Nor greedy greyhound still pursue the chase ;
The tender lark will find a time to fly,
And fearful hare to run a quiet race.
He that high growth on cedars did bestow,
Gave also lowly mushrooms leave to grow.

In Haman's pomp poor Mardocheus wept,
Yet God did turn his fate upon his foe.
The Lazar pin'd, while Dives' feast was kept,
Yet he to heaven — to hell did Dives go.
We trample grass, and prize the flowers of May ;
Yet grass is green, when flowers do fade away.

SIR JOHN HARRINGTON.

1560 to 1612.

TREASON.

TREASON doth never prosper ; what's the reason ?
For if it prosper none dare call it treason.

FORTUNE.

Fortune, men say, doth give too much to many,
But yet she never gave enough to any.

AGAINST WRITERS THAT CARP AT OTHER
MEN'S BOOKS.

THE readers and the hearers like my books,
But yet some writers cannot them digest ;
But what care I ? for when I make a feast,
I would my guests should praise it, not the cooks.

A PRECISE TAILOR.

A TAILOR, thought a man of upright dealing —
True, but for lying — honest, but for stealing,
Did fall one day extremely sick by chance,
And on the sudden was in wondrous trance ;
The fiends of hell mustering in fearful manner,
Of sundry colour'd silks display'd a banner
Which he had stolen, and wish'd, as they did tell,
That he might find it all one day in hell.
The man, affrighted with this apparition,
Upon recovery grew a great precisian :
He bought a Bible of the best translation,
And in his life he show'd great reformation ;
He walked mannerly, he talked meekly,
He heard three lectures and two sermons weekly ;
He vow'd to shun all company unruly,
And in his speech he used no oath but truly ;
And zealously to keep the Sabbath's rest,
His meat for that day on the eve was drest ;
And lest the custom which he had to steal
Might cause him sometimes to forget his zeal,
He gives his journeyman a special charge,
That if the stuff, allowance being large,

He found his fingers were to filch inclined,
Bid him to have the banner in his mind.
This done (I scant can tell the rest for laughter),
A captain of a ship came three days after,
And brought three yards of velvet and three quarters,
To make Venetians down below the garters.
He, that precisely knew what was enough,
Soon slipt aside three quarters of the stuff;
His man, espying it, said in derision,
Master, remember how you saw the vision!
Peace, knave! quoth he, I did not see one rag
Of such a coloured silk in all the flag.



SIR HENRY WOTTON.

1568 to 1639.

FAREWELL TO THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD.

FAREWELL, ye gilded follies, pleasing troubles ;
Farewell, ye honour'd rags, ye glorious bubbles !
Fame's but a hollow echo ; gold, pure clay ;
Honour, the darling but of one short day ;
Beauty, th' eye's idol, but a damask'd skin ;
State, but a golden prison to live in,
And torture free-born minds ; embroider'd trains
Merely but pageants for proud swelling veins ;
And blood allied to greatness, is alone
Inherited, not purchased, nor our own ;
Fame, honour, beauty, state, train, blood, and birth,
Are but the fading blossoms of the earth.

.

Welcome, pure thoughts, welcome, ye silent groves,
These guests, these courts, my soul most dearly loves :
Now the wing'd people of the sky shall sing
My cheerful anthems to the gladsome spring :
A prayer-book now shall be my looking-glass,
In which I will adore sweet Virtue's face.
Here dwell no hateful looks, no palace cares,
No broken vows dwell here, nor pale-faced fears :
Then here I'll sigh, and sigh my hot love's folly,
And learn t' affect an holy melancholy ;
And if Contentment be a stranger then,
I'll ne'er look for it, but in heaven again.

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE.

How happy is he born and taught,
That serveth not another's will ;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill !

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the worldly care
Of public fame, or private breath ;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Or vice ; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise ;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good :

Who hath his life from rumours freed,
Whose conscience is his strong retreat ;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great ;

Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his grace than gifts to lend ;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend ;

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall ;
Lord of himself, though not of lands ;
And having nothing, yet hath all.



THE STORY OF
THE WANDERING JEW

WHEN as in faire Jerusalem
Our Saviour Christ did live,
And for the sins of all the worlde
His own deare life did give ;
The wicked Jewes with scoffes and scornes
Did dailye him molest,
That never till he left his life,
Our Saviour could not rest.

When they had crown'd his head with thornes,
And scourg'd him to disgrace,
In scornfull sort they led him forthe
Unto his dying place ;
Where thousand thousands in the streete
Beheld him passe along,
Yet not one gentle heart was there,
That pityed this his wrong.

Both old and young reviled him,
As in the streete he wente,
And nothing found but churlish tauntes,
By every ones consente :
His owne deare crosse he bore himselfe,
A burthen far too great,
Which made him in the street to fainte,
With blood and water sweat.

Being weary thus, he sought for rest,
To ease his burthened soule,
Upon a stone ; the which a wretch
Did churlishly controul ;
And sayd, Awaye, thou king of Jewes,
Thou shalt not rest thee here :
Pass on ; thy execution place
Thou seest nowe draweth neare.

And thereupon he thrust him thence ;
At which our Saviour sayd,
I sure will rest, but thou shalt walke,
And have no journey stayed.
With that this cursed shoemaker,
For offering Christ this wrong,
Left wife and children, house and all,
And went from thence along.

Where after he had seene the bloude
Of Jesus Christ thus shed,
And to the crosse his bodye nail'd,
Awaye with speed he fled
Without returning backe againe
Unto his dwelling place,
And wandred up and downe the worlde,
A runnagate most base.

No resting could he finde at all,
No ease, nor hearts content ;
No house, no home, no biding place :
But wandring forth he went
From towne to towne in foreigne landes,
With grieved conscience still,
Repenting for the heinous guilt
Of his fore-passed ill.

Thus after some fewe ages past
In wandring up and downe,
He much again desired to see
Jerusalems renowne,
But finding it all quite destroyd,
He wandred thence with woe,
Our Saviours wordes, which he had spoke,
To verefie and showe.

I'll rest, sayd hee, but thou shalt walke,
So doth this wandring Jewe
From place to place, but cannot rest
For seeing countries newe ;
Declaring still the power of him,
Whereas he comes or goes,
And of all things done in the east,
Since Christ his death, he showes.

The world he hath still compast round
And seene those nations strange,
That hearing of the name of Christ,
Their idol gods doe change :
To whom he hath told wondrous things
Of time forepast, and gone,
And to the princes of the worlde
Declares his cause of moane :

Desiring still to be dissolv'd,
And yield his mortal breath ;
But, if the Lord hath thus decreed,
He shall not yet see death.
For neither lookes he old nor young,
But as he did those times,
When Christ did suffer on the crosse
For mortall sinners crimes.

H' hath past through many a foreigne place,
Arabia, Egypt, Africa,
Grecia, Syria, and great Thrace,
And throughout all Hungaria :
Where Paul and Peter preached Christ,
Those blest apostles deare ;
There he hath told our Saviours wordes,
In countries far and neare.

And lately in Bohemia,
With many a German towne ;
And now in Flanders, as tis thought,
He wandreth up and downe :
Where learned men with him conferre
Of those his lingering dayes,
And wonder much to heare him tell
His journeyes, and his wayes.

If people give this Jew an almes,
The most that he will take
Is not above a groat a time ;
Which he, for Jesus' sake,
Will kindly give unto the poore,
And thereof make no spare,
Affirming still that Jesus Christ
Of him hath dailye care.

He ne'er was seene to laughe nor smile,
But weepe and make great moane ;
Lamenting still his miseries,
And dayes forepast and gone :
If he heare any one blaspheme,
Or take God's name in vaine,
He telles them that they crucifie
Their Saviour Christ againe.

If you had seene his death, saith he,
As these mine eyes have done,
Ten thousand thousand times would yee
His torments think upon :
And suffer for his sake all paine
Of torments, and all woes.
These are his wordes and eke his life
Whereas he comes or goes.

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

1570 to 1626.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

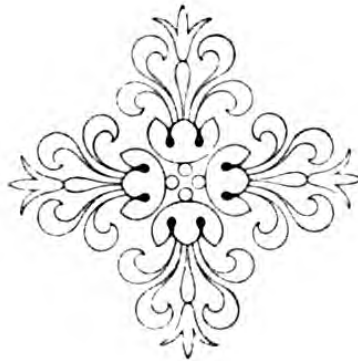
Oh ! what is man, great Maker of mankind !
That thou to him so great respect dost bear ;
That thou adorn'st him with so bright a mind,
Mak'st him a king, and even an angel's peer ?

Oh ! what a lively life, what heav'nly power,
What spreading virtue, what a sparkling fire,
How great, how plentiful, how rich a dow'r
Dost thou within this dying flesh inspire !

Thou leav'st thy print in other works of thine,
But thy whole image thou in man hast writ ;
There cannot be a creature more divine,
Except, like thee, it should be infinite :

But it exceeds man's thought, to think how high
God hath rais'd man, since God a man became ;
The angels do admire this mystery,
And are astonish'd when they view the same.

Nor hath he given these blessings for a day,
Nor made them on the body's life depend ;
The soul, though made in time, survives for aye ;
And though it hath beginning, sees no end



JOHN DONNE.

1570 to 1630.

VALEDICTION — FORBIDDING MOURNING.

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go ;
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
The breath goes now — and some say, no ;

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;
'T were profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant ;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull, sublunary lover's love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which alimented it.

But we're by love so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it¹ is ;
Inter-assured of the mind,
Careless eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls, therefore (which are one)
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two ;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

¹ Absence.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;
 Thy firmness makes my circles just,
 And makes me end where I begun.

 THE WILL.

BEFORE I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
 Great Love, some legacies ; I here bequeath
 Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see ;
 If they be blind, then, Love, I give them thee ;
 My tongue to Fame ; to ambassadors mine ears ;
 To women, or the sea, my tears ;
 Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore,
 By making me serve her who had twenty more,
 That I should give to none but such as had too much
 before.

My constancy I to the planets give ;
 My truth to them who at the court do live ;
 Mine ingenuity and openness
 To Jesuits ; to buffoons my pensiveness ;
 My silence to any who abroad have been ;
 My money to a Capuchin.

Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there, where no love received can be,
Only to give to such as have no good capacity.

My faith I give to Roman Catholics ;
All my good works unto the schismatics
Of Amsterdam ; my best civility
And courtship to an university ;
My modesty I give to soldiers bare ;
My patience let gamesters share ;
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts indignity.

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends ; mine industry to foes ;
To schoolmen I bequeath my doubtfulness ;
My sickness to physicians, or excess ;
To Nature all that I in rhyme have writ !
And to my company my wit :
Thou, Love, by making me adore
Her who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make as though I gave, when I do but
restore.

To him for whom the passing bell next tolls
I give my physic books ; my written rolls

Of moral counsels I to Bedlam give ;
My brazen medals, unto them which live
In want of bread ; to them which pass among
All foreigners, my English tongue :
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion.

Therefore I'll give no more, but I'll undo
The world by dying, because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in mines, where none doth draw it forth,
And all your graces no more use shall have
 Than a sun-dial in a grave.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate all
 three.



BEN JONSON.

This famous lyrical poet was born in Westminster, 1574, and died in 1637. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and has a monument erected there to his memory, bearing only the pretty and appropriate sentence, "O rare Ben Jonson!"

TO CELIA.

DRINK to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine ;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst, that from the soul doth rise,
Doth ask a drink divine ;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,

As giving it a hope, that there
It could not wither'd be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me ;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

ON MY FIRST DAUGHTER.

HERE lies, to each her parents' ruth,
Mary, the daughter of their youth :
Yet all heaven's gifts being heaven's due,
It makes the father less to rue.
At six months' end she parted hence
With safety of her innocence ;
Whose soul heaven's queen (whose name she bears)
In comfort of her mother's tears,
Hath placed among her virgin train :
Where, while that sever'd doth remain,
This grave partakes the fleshly birth,
Which cover lightly, gentle earth.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED MASTER,
WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

To draw no envy, Shakspeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame ;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man nor Muse can praise too much.
'T is true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise ;
For silliest ignorance on these would light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right ;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urges all by chance ;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seem'd to raise.
But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin : Soul of the age !
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage !
My Shakspeare, rise ! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further off, to make thee room :
Thou art a monument without a tomb,

And art alive still, while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great but disproportion'd Muses :
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd or Marlowe's mighty line.
And though thou had small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to honour thee I will not seek
For names ; but call forth thund'ring Eschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To live again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage : or when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all, that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time !
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury, to charm !
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines !

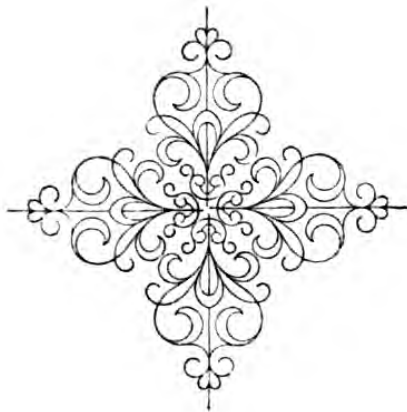
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please ;
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of nature's family.
Yet must I not give nature all ; thy art,
My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion ; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Upon the Muses' anvil ; turn the same,
And himself with it, that he thinks to frame ;
Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn ;
For a good poet's made as well as born.
And such wert thou ! Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakspeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turned and true filed lines :
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon ! what a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James !

But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there !
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheer the drooping stage,
Which since thy flight from hence hath mourned like
 night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light !

ADVICE TO A RECKLESS YOUTH.

WHAT would I have you do? I'll tell you, kinsman ;
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive ;
That would I have you do : and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
Or every foolish brain that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He that is so disrespectful in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest, while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,

A little puff of scorn extinguish it,
And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd ha' you sober, and contain yourself ;
Not that your sail be bigger than your boat ;
But moderate your expenses now (at first)
As you may keep the same proportion still.
Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy, and mere borrow'd thing,
From dead men's dust, and bones ; and none of yours,
Except you make, or hold it.



RICHARD CORBET.

1582 to 1635.

FAREWELL TO THE FAIRIES.

FAREWELL rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say,
For now foul sluts in dairies
Do fare as well as they.
And though they sweep their hearths no less
Than maids were wont to do,
Yet who of late, for cleanliness,
Finds sixpence in her shoe?

Lament, lament, old Abbeys,
The fairies' lost command ;
They did but change priests' babies,
But some have changed your land ;

And all your children sprung from thence
Are now grown Puritans ;
Who live as changelings ever since,
For love of your domains.

At morning and at evening both,
You merry were and glad,
So little care of sleep or sloth
These pretty ladies had ;
When Tom came home from labour,
Or Cis to milking rose,
Then merrily went their tabor,
And nimbly went their toes.

Witness those rings and roundelays
Of theirs, which yet remain,
Were footed in Queen Mary's days
On many a grassy plain ;
But since of late Elizabeth,
And later, James came in,
They never danc'd on any heath,
As when the time hath been.

By which we note the fairies
Were of the old profession,
Their songs were Ave-Maries,
Their dances were procession :

But now, alas! they all are dead,
Or gone beyond the seas;
Or farther for religion fled,
Or else they take their ease.

A tell-tale in their company
They never could endure,
And whoso kept not secretly
Their mirth, was punish'd sure;
It was a just and Christian deed,
To pinch such black and blue;
O how the commonwealth doth need
Such justices as you!



SIR JOHN BEAUMONT.

1582 to 1628.

RICHARD THE THIRD'S ADDRESS TO HIS
SOLDIERS.

MY fellow soldiers ! though your swords
Are sharp, and need not whetting by my words,
Yet call to mind the many glorious days
In which we treasured up immortal praise.
If, when I served, I ever fled from foe,
Fly ye from mine — let me be punish'd so !
But if my father, when at first he tried
How all his sons could shining blades abide,
Found me an eagle whose undazzled eyes
Affront the beams that from the steel arise ;
And if I now in action teach the same,
Know, then, ye have but changed your general's name.

Be still yourselves! Ye fight against the dross
Of those who oft have run from you with loss.
How many Somersets (dissension's brands)
Have felt the force of our revengeful hands?
From whom this youth, as from a princely flood,
Derives his best but not untainted blood.
Have our assaults made Lancaster to droop?
And shall this Welshman, with his ragged troop,
Subdue the Norman and the Saxon line,
That only Merlin may be thought divine?
See what a guide these fugitives have chose!
Who, bred among the French, our ancient foes,
Forgets the English language and the ground,
And knows not what our drums and trumpets sound!

ON MY DEAR SON, GERVASE BEAUMONT.

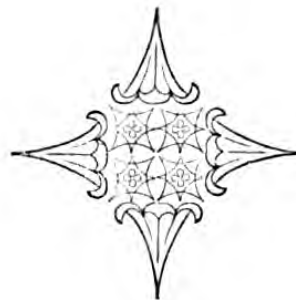
CAN I, who have for others oft compiled
The songs of death, forget my sweetest child,
Which, like a flower crush'd with a blast, is dead,
And ere full time hangs down his smiling head,
Expecting with clear hope to live anew,
Among the angels fed with heavenly dew?

We have this sign of joy, that many days
While on the earth his struggling spirit stays,
The name of Jesus in his mouth contains
His holy food, his sleep, his ease from pains.
O may that sound be rooted in my mind,
Of which in him such strong effect I find !
Dear Lord, receive my son, whose winning love
To me was like a friendship, far above
The course of nature, or his tender age ;
Whose looks could all my bitter griefs assuage :
Let his pure soul — ordain'd seven years to be
In that frail body, which was part of me —
Remain my pledge in heaven, as sent to show
How to this port at every step I go.

TO THE MEMORY OF F. PULTON, ESQ.

WHY should vain sorrow follow him with tears,
Who shakes off burdens of declining years ?
Whose thread exceeds the usual bounds of life,
And feels no stroke of any fatal knife ?
The destinies enjoin their wheels to run,
Until the length of his whole course be spun.

No envious clouds obscure his struggling light,
Which sets contented at the point of night :
Yet this large time no greater profit brings,
Than every little moment whence it springs ;
Unless employ'd in works deserving praise,
Must wear out many years and live few days.
Time flows from instants, and of these each one
Should be esteem'd as if it were alone
The shortest space, which we so lightly prize
When it is coming, and before our eyes :
Let it but slide into the eternal main,
No realms, no worlds can purchase it again :
Remembrance only makes the footsteps last,
When winged time, which fixed the prints, is past.



DR. HENRY KING.

SIC VITA.

LIKE to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are ;
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew ;
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood :
Ev'n such is man, whose borrow'd light
Is straight call'd in, and paid to-night.
The wind blows out, the bubble dies ;
The spring entomb'd in autumn lies ;
The dew dries up, the star is shot ;
The flight is past — and man forgot.

THE DIRGE.

WHAT is the existence of man's life,
But open war, or slumber'd strife ;
Where sickness to his sense presents
The combat of the elements ;
And never feels a perfect peace
Till Death's cold hand signs his release ?

It is a storm — where the hot blood
Outvies in rage the boiling flood ;
And each loose passion of the mind
Is like a furious gust of wind,
Which beats his bark with many a wave,
Till he casts anchor in the grave.

It is a flower — which buds, and grows,
And withers as the leaves disclose ;
Whose spring and fall faint seasons keep,
Like fits of waking before sleep ;
Then shrinks into that fatal mould
Where its first being was enroll'd.

It is a dream — whose seeming truth
Is moralis'd in age and youth ;

Where all the comforts he can share,
As wandering as his fancies are ;
Till in a mist of dark decay,
The dreamer vanish quite away.

It is a dial — which points out
The sun-set, as it moves about ;
And shadows out in lines of night
The subtle stages of Time's flight ;
Till all-obscuring earth hath laid
His body in perpetual shade.

It is a weary interlude —
Which doth short joys, long woes, include ;
The world the stage, the prologue tears,
The acts vain hopes and varied fears ;
The scene shuts up with loss of breath,
And leaves no epilogue but death.



FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

1585 to 1616.

Francis Beaumont is most conspicuous as a dramatist ; he however wrote, in early life, some effusions in verse, of great sweetness and beauty.

ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER.

MORTALITY, behold and fear,
What a charge of flesh is here !
Think how many royal bones
Sleep within these heap of stones :
Here they lie, had realms and lands,
Who now want strength to stir their hands ;
Where, from their pulpits seal'd with dust,
They preach, In greatness is no trust.
Here's an acre sown indeed
With the richest, royal'st seed,
That the earth did e'er suck in
Since the first man died for sin ;

Here the bones of birth have cried,
Though gods they were, as men they died :
Here are wands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings.
Here's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

AN EPITAPH.

HERE she lies, whose spotless fame
Invites a stone to learn her name ;
The rigid Spartan that denied
An epitaph to all that died,
Unless for war, in charity
Would here vouchsafe an elegy.
She died a wife, but yet her mind,
Beyond virginity refined,
From lawless fire remain'd as free
As now from heat her ashes be :
Keep well this pawn, thou marble chest ;
Till it be call'd for, let it rest ;
For while this jewel here is set,
The grave is like a cabinet.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

HAPPINESS OF THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE.

THRIICE, oh thrice happy, shepherd's life and state !
When courts are happiness' unhappy pawns !
His cottage low and safely humble gate
Shuts out proud Fortune with her scorns and fawns :
No feared treason breaks his quiet sleep,
Singing all day, his flocks he learns to keep ;
Himself as innocent as are his simple sheep.

No Syrian worms he knows, that with their thread
Draw out their silken lives : nor silken pride :
His lambs' warm fleece well fits his little need,
Not in that proud Sidonian tincture dyed :
No empty hopes, no courtly fears him fright ;
Nor begging wants his middle fortune bite :
But sweet content exiles both misery and spite.

Instead of music, and base flattering tongues,
Which wait to first salute my lord's uprise ;
The cheerful lark wakes him with early songs,
And birds' sweet whistling notes unlock his eyes :
In country plays is all the strife he uses ;
Or sing, or dance unto the rural Muses ;
And but in music's sports all difference refuses.

His certain life, that never can deceive him,
Is full of thousand sweets, and rich content :
The smooth-leaved beeches in the field receive him
With coolest shades, till noon-tide rage is spent ;
His life is neither toss'd in boist'rous seas
Of troublous world, nor lost in slothful ease :
Pleas'd and full blest he lives, when he his God can
please.

His bed of wool yields safe and quiet sleeps,
While by his side his faithful spouse hath place ;
His little son into his bosom creeps,
The lively picture of his father's face :
Never his humble house nor state torment him :
Less he could like, if less his God had sent him ;
And when he dies, green turfs, with grassy tomb, content
him.

GEORGE WITHER.

1588 to 1667.

Much of the poetry of this pleasing writer was composed in prison. The following, on Christmas, gives a lively and interesting description of the enjoyments of the festival in his day.

CHRISTMAS.

So now is come our joyful'st feast ;
Let every man be jolly ;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning ;
Their ovens they with baked meat choke,
And all their spits are turning.

Without the door let sorrow lie ;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wond'rous trim,
And no man minds his labour ;
Our lasses have provided them
A bagpipe and a tabor ;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys ;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun ;
Their hall of music soundeth ;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.
The country folks, themselves advance,
With crowdy-muttons out of France ;
And Jack shall pipe and Gill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetcht his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel ;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn
With dropping of the barrel.

And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat, or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their errants :
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants :
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer,
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor, that else were undone ;
Some landlords spend their money worse,
On lust and pride at London.
There the roysters they do play,
Drab and dice their lands away,
Which may be ours another day,
And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased ;
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased.

Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should we pine, or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow, care will kill a cat,
And therefore let's be merry.

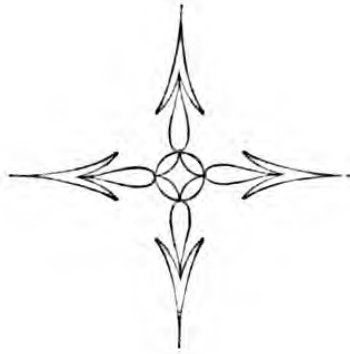
Hark! now the wags abroad do call,
Each other forth to rambling;
Anon you'll see them in the hall,
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark! how the roofs with laughter sound,
Anon they'll think the house goes round,
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassail bowls
About the streets are singing;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in is bringing.
Our kitchen boy hath broke his box,
And to the dealing of the ox,
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheepcotes have,
And mate with every body;
The honest now may play the knave,
And wise men play the noddy.

Some youths will now a mumming go,
Some others play at Rowland-bo,
And twenty other game boys mo,
Because they will be merry.

Then, wherefore, in these merry days,
Should we, I pray, be duller ?
No, let us sing some roundelays,
To make our mirth the fuller :
And, while we thus inspired sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring ;
Woods and hills, and everything,
Bear witness we are merry.



THOMAS CAREW.

1589 to 1639.

DISDAIN RETURNED.

HE that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires ;
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and stedfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires.
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes !

No tears, Celia, now shall win
My resolv'd heart to return ;
I have search'd thy soul within
And find nought but pride and scorn ;
I have learn'd thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou.
Some power, in my revenge, convey
That love to her I cast away.

APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or calls an icy cream
Upon the silver lake, or crystal stream ;
But the warm sun thaws the benumb'd earth
And makes it tender ; gives a sacred birth
To the dead swallow ; wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy cuckoo, and the humble bee ;
Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring
In triumph to the world the youthful spring.
The valleys, hills, and woods, in rich array,
Welcome the coming of the long'd for May.
Now all things smile.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

1585 to 1649.

Drummond, the friend and correspondent of Ben Jonson, may justly be called the greatest of the early Scottish poets. Hawthornden, the residence where he composed his works, is one of the most beautiful spots in Scotland, and is perhaps more resorted to by travellers and visitors than any other place in that part of the United Kingdom.

TO HIS LUTE.

My lute, be as thou wert when thou didst grow
With thy green mother in some shady grove,
When immelodious winds but made thee move,
And birds their ramage¹ did on thee bestow.
Since that dear voice which did thy sounds approve,
Which wont in such harmonious strains to flow,
Is reft from earth to tune the spheres above,
What art thou but a harbinger of woe?

¹ Warbling.

Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,
But orphan wailings to the fainting ear,
Each stroke a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear ;
For which be silent as in woods before :
Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,
Like widow'd turtle still her loss complain.

PRAISE OF A SOLITARY LIFE.

THRICE happy he who by some shady grove,
Far from the clamorous world, doth live his own.
Though solitary, who is not alone,
But doth converse with that eternal love.
O how more sweet is bird's harmonious moan,
Or the hoarse sobbings of the widow'd dove,
Than those smooth whisperings near a prince's throne,
Which good make doubtful, do the evil approve !
O how more sweet is Zephyr's wholesome breath,
And sighs embalm'd which new-born flowers unfold,
Than that applause vain honour doth bequeath !
How sweet are streams to poison drank in gold !
The world is full of horror, troubles, slights :
Woods' harmless shades have only true delights.

TO A NIGHTINGALE.

SWEET bird ! that sing'st away the early hours
Of winters past, or coming, void of care.
Well pleased with delights which present are,
Fair seasons, budding sprays, sweet-smelling flowers :
To rocks, to springs, to rills, from leafy bowers,
Thou thy Creator's goodness dost declare,
And what dear gifts on thee he did not spare,
A stain to human sense in sin that low'rs.
What soul can be so sick which by thy songs
(Attir'd in sweetness) sweetly is not driven
Quite to forget earth's turmoils, spites, and wrongs,
And lift a reverend eye and thought to heaven ?
Sweet, artless songster ! thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres — yes, and to angels' lays.

SONNETS.

IN Mind's pure glass when I myself behold,
And lively see how my best days are spent,
What clouds of care above my head are roll'd
What coming ill, which I cannot prevent :

My course begun, I, wearied, do repent,
And would embrace what reason oft hath told ;
But scarce thus think I, when love hath controll'd
All the best reasons reason could invent.
Though sure I know my labour's end is grief,
The more I strive that I the more shall pine,
That only death shall be my last relief:
Yet when I think upon that face divine,
Like one with arrow shot, in laughter's place,
Maugre my heart, I joy in my disgrace.

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In Time's great periods, shall return to nought ;
The fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays
With toil of sprite, which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought :
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
I know frail beauty like the purple flower,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords ;
'That love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will bring under reason's power :
Know what I list, all this cannot me move,
But that, alas ! I both must write and love.

SIR ROBERT AYTON.

1570 to 1638.

WOMAN'S INCONSTANCY.

LOV'D thee once, I'll love no more,
Thine be the grief, as is the blame ;
Thou art not what thou wast before,
What reason I should be the same ?
He that can love unlov'd again,
Hath better store of love than brain :
God send me love my debts to pay,
While unthrifts fool their love away.

Nothing could have my love o'erthrown,
If thou hadst still continued mine ;
Yea, if thou hadst remain'd thy own,
I might perchance have yet been thine.

But thou thy freedom did recall,
That if thou might elsewhere inthral ;
And then how could I but disdain
A captive's captive to remain ?

When new desires had conquer'd thee,
And chang'd the object of thy will,
It had been lethargy in me,
Not constancy, to love thee still.
Yea, it had been a sin to go
And prostitute affection so,
Since we are taught no prayers to say
To such as must to others pray.

Yet do thou glory in thy choice,
Thy choice of his good fortune boast :
I'll neither grieve nor yet rejoice,
To see him gain what I have lost ;
The height of my disdain shall be,
To laugh at him, to blush for thee ;
To love thee still, but go no more
A begging to a beggar's door.

GEORGE BUCHANAN.

This celebrated scholar wrote chiefly in Latin; and his compositions in that language are considered by competent judges to be the best written by any individual since the days of Virgil. The following is a translation of one of his poems.

THE FIRST OF MAY.

All hail to thee, thou First of May,
Sacred to wonted sport and play,
To wine, and jest, and dance, and song,
And mirth that lasts the whole day long!

Hail! of the seasons honour bright,
Annual return of sweet delight;
Flower of reviving summer's reign,
That hastes to time's old age again!
When Spring's mild air at Nature's birth
First breath'd upon the new-form'd earth;

Or when the fabled age of gold,
Without fix'd law, spontaneous roll'd ;
Such zephyrs, in continual gales,
Pass'd temperate along the vales,
And soften'd and refresh'd the soil,
Not broken yet by human toil ;
Such fruitful warmths perpetual rest
On the fair islands of the blest —
Those plains where fell disease's moan
And frail old age are both unknown.
Such winds with gentle whispers spread
Among the dwellings of the dead,
And shake the cypresses that grow
Where Lethe murmurs soft and slow.
Perhaps when God at last in ire
Shall purify the world with fire,
And to mankind restore again
Times happy, void of sin and pain,
The beings of this earth beneath,
Such pure ethereal air shall breathe.

Hail ! glory of the fleeting year !
Hail ! day the fairest, happiest here !
Memorial of the time gone by,
And emblem of futurity !

FRANCIS QUARLES.

1592 to 1644.

SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

AND what's a life? — a weary pilgrimage,
Whose glory in one day doth fill the stage
With childhood, manhood, and decrepit age.

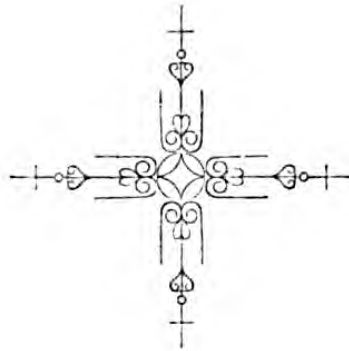
And what's a life? — the flourishing array
Of the proud summer meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.

Read on this dial, how the shades devour
My short-lived winter's day! hour eats up hour;
Alas! the total's but from eight to four.

Behold these lilies, which thy hands have made,
Fair copies of my life, and open laid
To view, how soon they droop, how soon they fade!

Shade not that dial, night will blind too soon ;
My non-aged day already points to noon ;
How simple is my suit !—how small my boon !

Nor do I beg this slender inch to while
The time away, or falsely to beguile
My thoughts with joy : here's nothing worth a smile.



GEORGE HERBERT.

1593 to 1632.

Herbert's poems are entirely of a religious character. They have been much admired for purity of sentiment and depth of feeling.

SUNDAY.

○ DAY most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend, and with his blood ;
The couch of time, care's balm and bay :
The week were dark, but for thy light ;
Thy torch doth show the way.

The other days and thou
Make up one man ; whose face *thou* art,
Knocking at heaven with thy brow :
The workydays are the back-part ;
The burden of the week lies there,
Making the whole to stoop and bow,
Till thy release appear.

Man had straight forward gone
To endless death ; but thou dost pull
And turn us round, to look on one,
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still ;
Since there is no place so alone,
The which he doth not fill.

Sundays the pillars are
On which heaven's palace arched lies :
The other days fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities.
They are the fruitful beds and borders
In God's rich garden : that is bare,
Which parts their ranks and orders.

The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on Time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal, glorious King.
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope ;
Blessings are plentiful and rife —
More plentiful than hope.

This day my Saviour rose,
And did enclose this light for his ;
That, as each beast his manger knows,
Man might not of his fodder miss.

Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
And made a garden there for those
Who want herbs for their wound.

The rest of our creation
Our great Redeemer did remove
With the same shake, which at his passion
Did the earth and all things with it move.
As Sampson bore the doors away,
Christ's hands, though nail'd, wrought our salvation.
And did unhinge that day.

The brightness of that day
We sullied by our foul offence :
Wherefore that robe we cast away,
Having a new at his expense,
Whose drops of blood paid the full price,
That was required to make us gay,
And fit for paradise.

Thou art a day of mirth :
And where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth :
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Fly hand in hand to heaven !

(From "The Church Porch.")

JUDGE not the preacher ; for he is thy Judge :
If thou mislike him, thou conceivest him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.

The worst speak something good ; if all want sense,
God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
He that by being at church escapes the ditch,
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.

He that loves God's abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

Jest not at preachers' language or expression :
How knowest thou, but thy sins made him miscarry ?
Then turn thy faults and his into confession :
God sent him, whatsoe'er he be : O tarry,
And love him for his Master : his condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill physician.

None shall in hell such bitter pangs endure,
As those who mock at God's way of salvation.
Whom oil and balsams kill, what salve can cure ?
They drink with greediness a full damnation.

The Jews refused thunder ; and we, folly.
Though God do hedge us in, yet who is holy ?

Sum up at night what thou hast done by day ;
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.
Dress and undress thy soul : mark the decay
And growth of it : if with thy watch, that too
Be down, then wind both up ; since we shall be
Most surely judged, make thy accounts agree.

In brief, acquit thee bravely ; play the man ;
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go ;
Defer not the least virtue ; life's poor span
Make not an ell, by trifling in thy woe.
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains :
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART I.

O Book ! infinite sweetness ! let my heart
Suck every letter, and a honey gain ;
Precious for any grief, in any part,
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain.

Thou art all health, health thriving, till it make
A full eternity ; thou art a mass
Of strange delights, where we may wish and take.
Ladies, look here, this is the thankful glass,

That mends the looker's eyes : this is the well
That washes what it shows. Who can endear
Thy praise too much ? thou art heaven's lieger here,
Working against the states of death and hell.

Thou art joy's handsel : heaven lies flat in thee,
Subject to every mounter's bended knee.

PART II.

O that I knew how all thy lights combine
And the configurations of their glory !
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the story.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie :
Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christian's destiny.

Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on thee ; for in every thing
Thy words do find me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.

Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss :
This book of stars lights to eternal bliss.

AN EPITAPH,

UPON THE HONOURABLE GEORGE HERBERT.

Yon weeping marbles, monuments, we trust
As well with the injurious as the just.
When your great trust at last shall be resign'd,
And when his noble dust shall be refined,
You shall more gold, myrrh, frankincense return,
Than shall be found in great Augustus' urn.

He was the wonder of a better age,
The eclipse of this, of empty heads the rage ,
Phoenix of Wales, of his great name the glory ;
A theme above all verse, beyond all story ;
A plant of Paradise, which, in a word,
Worms ne'er shall wither, as they did the gourd.

Go, you unborn, bedew dear Herbert's tomb :
No more such babes are in Dame Nature's womb ;
No more such blazing comets shall appear,
Nor leave so happy influences here.
Go, thaw your hearts at his celestial fire,
And what you cannot comprehend, admire.

Go, you dark poems, dark even as the skies,
Make the scales fall from our dark dazzling eyes.
Mirrors were made to mend, not mar our sight ;
Glow-worms to glitter 'n the most gloomy night.
About those glorious regions he is fled,
Where once St. Paul was rapt and ravished.

Here a divine, prophet, and poet lies,
That laid up manna for posterities.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

1608 to 1641.

SONG.

PRITHEE send me back my heart,
Since I can not have thine,
For if from yours you will not part,
Why then shouldst thou have mine?

Yet now I think on't, let it lie,
To find it were in vain ;
For thou'st a thief in either eye
Would steal it back again.

Why should two hearts in one breast lie,
And yet not lodge together ?
Oh love ! where is thy sympathy,
If thus our breasts thou sever ?

But love is such a mystery,
I cannot find it out ;

For when I think I'm best resolv'd,
I then am in most doubt.

Then farewell care, and farewell woe,
I will no longer pine ;
For I'll believe I have her heart,
As much as she has mine.

DETRACTION EXECRATED.

THOU vermin slander, bred in abject minds,
Of thoughts impure, by vile tongues animate,
Canker of conversation ! could'st thou find
Nought but our love whereon to show thy hate ?
Thou never wert, when we two were alone ;
What canst thou witness then ? thou, base dull aid,
Wast useless in our conversation,
Where each meant more than could by both be said.
Whence hadst thou thy intelligence — from earth ?
That part of us ne'er knew that we did love :
Or, from the air ? our gentle sighs had birth
From such sweet raptures as to joy did move ;
Our thoughts, as pure as the chaste morning's breath,
When from the night's cold arms it creeps away,

Were clothed in words, and maiden's blush, that hath
More purity, more innocence than they.
Nor from the water could'st thou have this tale ;
No briny tear has furrowed her smooth cheek ;
And I was pleas'd : I pray what should he ail,
That had her love ; for what else could he seek ?
We shorten'd days to moments by love's art,
Whilst our two souls in amorous ecstasy
Perceiv'd no passing time, as if a part
Our love had been of still eternity.
Much less could'st have it from the purer fire ;
Our heat exhales no vapour from coarse sense,
Such as are hopes, or fears, or fond desire :
Our mutual love itself did recompense.
Thou hast no correspondence had in heaven,
And th' elemental world, thou see'st, is free.
Whence hadst thou, then, this, talking monster ? even
From hell, a harbour fit for it and thee.
Curst be th' officious tongue that did address
Thee to her ears, to ruin my content :
May it one minute taste such happiness,
Deserving lost, unpitied it lament !
I must forbear her sight, and so repay
In grief, those hours' joy shorten'd to a dream ;
Each minute I will lengthen to a day,
And in one year outlive Methusalem.



ROBERT HERRICK.

Though a clergyman, Robert Herrick was one of the most delightful of song writers. Many will be surprised to find in him the author of "Cherry Ripe." He was born in Cheapside, London, in 1591, and lived to a very old age.

TO BLOSSOMS.

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do you fall so fast?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here a while,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
'Tis pity nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave ;
And after they have shown their pride,
 Like you awhile, they glide
 Into the grave.

TO DAFFODILS.

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon ;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon :
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hast'ning day
 Has run
 But to the even-song ;
And having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along !

We have short time to stay as you ;
We have as short a spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you or anything :

We die,
As your hours do ; and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew
Ne'er to be found again.

TWELFTH NIGHT, OR KING AND QUEEN.

Now, now the mirth comes,
With the cake full of plums,
Where bean's the king of the sport here ;
Beside, we must know,
The pea also
Must revel as queen in the court here.

Begin then to choose,
This night, as ye use,
Who shall for the present delight here ;
Be a king by the lot,
And who shall not
Be Twelfth-day queen for the night here.

Which known, let us make
Joy-sops with the cake ;

And let not a man then be seen here,
Who unurged will not drink,
To the base from the brink,
A health to the king and the queen here.

Next crown the bowl full
With gentle lamb's-wool ;
Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger,
With store of ale, too ;
And thus ye must do
To make the wassail a swinger.

Give them to the king
And queen wassailing ;
And though with ale ye be wet here ;
Yet part ye from hence,
As free from offence,
As when ye innocent met here.

THANKSGIVING FOR HIS HOUSE.

LORD, Thou hast given me a cell,
Wherein to dwell ;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weatherproof ;

Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry.
Where Thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state ;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by the poor,
Who hither come, and freely get
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlour, so my hall,
And kitchen small ;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipt, unflead.
Some brittle sticks of thorn or brier
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by Thee.

The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of water cress,
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent :
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth ;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
That sows my land ;
All this, and better, dost Thou send
Me for this end :
That I should render for my part
A thankful heart,
Which, fir'd with incense, I resign
As wholly Thine :
But the acceptance — that must be,
O Lord, by Thee.

TO FIND GOD.

WEIGH me the fire ; or canst thou find
A way to measure out the wind ;

Distinguish all those floods that are
Mixt in that watery theatre,
And taste thou them as saltless there,
As in their channel first they were.
Tell me the people that do keep
Within the kingdoms of the deep ;
Or fetch me back that cloud again,
Beshivered into seeds of rain.
Tell me the motes, dusts, sands, and spears
Of corn, when summer shakes his ears ;
Show me that world of stars, and whence
They noiseless spill their influence :
This if thou canst, then show me Him
That rides the glorious cherubim.

CHERRY RIPE.

CHERRY ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones — come and buy ;
If so be you ask me where
They do grow ? — I answer, There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile —
There's the land, or cherry-isle ;
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

Seventeenth Century.

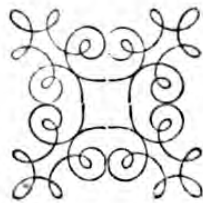
DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST.

THE glories of our birth and state,
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate :
Death lays his icy hands on kings ;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;
But their strong nerves at last must yield,
They tame but one another still ;
Early or late,
They stoop to fate,

And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds ;
Upon Death's purple altar, now,
See where the victor victim bleeds :
All heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.



RICHARD CRASHAW.

Seventeenth Century.

I've seen, indeed, the hopeful bud
Of a ruddy rose, that stood,
Blushing to behold the ray
Of the new-saluted day ;
His tender top not fully spread ;
The sweet dash of a shower new shed,
Invited him no more to hide
Within himself the purple pride
Of his forward flower, when lo,
While he sweetly 'gan to show
His swelling glories, Auster spied him ;
Cruel Auster thither hied him,
And with the rush of one rude blast
Sham'd not spitefully to waste
All his leaves so fresh and sweet,
And lay them trembling at his feet.
I've seen the morning's lovely ray
Hover o'er the new-born day,

With rosy wings, so richly bright,
As if he scorn'd to think of night,
When a ruddy storm, whose scowl
Made Heaven's radiant face look foul,
Call'd for an untimely night
To blot the newly-blossom'd light.

TEMPERANCE, OR THE CHEAP PHYSICIAN.

HARK, hither, reader ! wilt thou see
Nature her own physician be ?
Wilt see a man, all his own wealth,
His own music, his own health ;
A man whose sober soul can tell
How to wear her garments well ;
Her garments, that upon her sit,
As garments should do, close and fit ;
A well-cloth'd soul that's not oppress'd
Nor chok'd with what she should be dress'd ;
A soul sheath'd in a crystal shrine,
Through which all her bright features shine ;
As when a piece of wanton lawn,
A thin aërial veil, is drawn

O'er beauty's face, seeming to hide,
More sweetly shows the blushing bride ;
A soul, whose intellectual beams
No mists do mask, no lazy steams —
A happy soul, that all the way
To heaven, hath a summer's day ?
Would'st see a man, whose well-warm'd blood
Bathes him in a genuine flood ?
A man whose tuned humours be
A seat of rarest harmony ?
Would'st see blithe looks, fresh cheeks, beguile
Age ? Wouldst see December smile ?
Wouldst see nests of new roses grow
In a bed of reverend snow ?
Warm thoughts, free spirits flattering
Winter's self into a spring ?
In sum, wouldst see a man that can
Live to be old, and still a man ?
Whose latest and most leaden hours
Fall with soft wings, stuck with soft flowers ;
And when life's sweet fable ends,
Soul and body part like friends ;
No quarrels, murmurs, no delay ;
A kiss, a sigh, and so away ?
This rare one, reader, wouldst thou see ?
Hark, hither ? and thyself be he.



THE

Book of British Poetry.



SECTION III.

Milton to Cowper.





JOHN MILTON.

Born 9th December, 1608. Died 8th December, 1674.

By many of our ablest critics, the first place in British poesy has been given to Milton. If Shakspeare excelled in versatility of genius, and nice discrimination of human character, Milton soared high above all in grandeur of description and sublimity of imagination.

MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE.

OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos : or, if Sion hill

Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God ; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st ; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And madest it pregnant : what in me is dark,
Illumine ; what is low, raise and support ;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

THE SON'S ADDRESS TO THE FATHER.

FATHER, thy word is past, man shall find grace ;
And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought ?

Happy for man, so coming ; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost ;
Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring :
Behold me, then ; me for him, life for life,
I offer ; on me let thine anger fall ;
Account me man ; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased ; on me let Death wreak all his rage :
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquish'd ; thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself for ever ; by thee, I live,
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
All that of me can die : yet, that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave,
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
For ever with corruption there to dwell :
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil ;
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd.
I, through the ample air, in triumph high
Shall lead hell captive, maugre hell, and shew
The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of heaven shalt look down, and smile,

While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave :
Then, with the multitude of my redeem'd,
Shall enter heaven, long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
And reconcilment ; wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.

THE ANGELS' SONG.

“THEE, Father,” first they sung, “Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King ; thee, Author of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst thy glorious brightness, where thou sitt'st
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shadest
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee, like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.”

“Thee,” next they sang, “of all creation first,
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,

In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold : on thee
Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides,
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.
He heaven of heavens, and all the powers therein,
By thee created ; and by thee threw down
The aspiring dominations : thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
Thou drovest of warring angels disarray'd.
Back from pursuit, thy powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes ;
Not so on man : him, through their malice fall'n,
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity incline :
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined ;
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in thy face discern'd,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offer'd himself to die
For man's offence. O unexampled love !

Love no where to be found less than divine !
Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men ! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin."

SATAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN.

O THOU, that, with surpassing glory crown'd,
Look'st from thy sole dominion, like the god
Of this new world ; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminish'd heads ; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun ! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere ;
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King :
Ah, wherefore ? he deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright em'nence, and with his good
Upbraided none ; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks ?

How due ! yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice ; lifted up so high
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome ; still paying, still to owe :
Forgetful what from him I still received,
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged ; what burden then ?
O had his powerful destiny ordain'd
Me some inferior angel, I had stood
Then happy ; no unbounded hope had rais'd
Ambition. Yet why not ? some other power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part ; but other powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without, to all temptations arm'd.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand ?
Thou hadst : whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
But heaven's free love dealt equally to all ?
Be then his love accursed, since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe.
Nay, cursed be thou ; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable ! which way shall I fly

Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.
O, then, at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission.

MORNING PRAYER.

THESE are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works: yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels! for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in heaven,
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.

Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun! of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires! that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye elements! the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations! that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise:
Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.

His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls : ye birds,
That, singing, up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep ;
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord ! be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE.

O UNEXPECTED stroke, worse than of death !
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise ! thus leave
Thee, native soil ! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods ? where I had hope to spend,

Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names !
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount ?
Thee, lastly, nuptial bower ! by me adorn'd
With what to sight or smell was sweet ! from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild ? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustom'd to immortal fruits ?

MICHAEL'S REPLY.

ADAM, thou know'st heaven his, and all the earth ;
Not this rock only ; his omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power and warm'd :
All the earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift : surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confined

Of Paradise, or Eden ; this had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations ; and had hither come
From all the ends of the earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons :
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain,
God is, as here, and will be found alike
Present ; and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face
Express, and of his steps the track divine.
Which that thou mayst believe, and be confirm'd
Ere thou from hence depart ; know, I am sent
To shew thee what shall come in future days
To thee, and to thy offspring : good with bad
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men ; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow ; equally inured
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse : so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
Thy mortal passage when it comes.

SONNETS.

ON HIS OWN BLINDNESS.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide ;
“ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ?”
I fondly ask ; but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “ God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts ; who best
Bears his mild yoke, they serve him best ; his state
Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait !”

IN MEMORY OF HIS SECOND WIFE.

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind ;
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight,
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, oh ! as to embrace me she inclin'd,
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.



EDMUND WALLER.

1605 to 1687.

GO, LOVELY ROSE.

Go, lovely rose !
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her, that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That, had'st thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retir'd ;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desir'd,
And not blush so to be admir'd.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

THE BRITISH NAVY.

WHEN Britain, looking with a just disdain
Upon this gilded majesty of Spain,
And knowing well that empire must decline
Whose chief support and sinews are of coin,
Our nation's solid virtue did oppose
To the rich troublers of the world's repose.

And now some months, encamping on the main,
Our naval army had besieged Spain :
They that the whole world's monarchy design'd,
Are to their ports by our bold fleet confin'd,
From whence our Red Cross they triumphant see,
Riding without a rival on the sea.

Others may use the ocean as their road,
Only the English make it their abode,
Whose ready sails with every wind can fly,
And make a covenant with the inconstant sky :
Our oaks secure, as if they there took root,
We tread on billows with a steady foot.

A PANEGYRIC ON CROMWELL.

WHILE, with a strong and yet a gentle hand,
You bridle faction, and our hearts command,
Protect us from ourselves, and from the foe,
Make us unite, and make us conquer too ;

Let partial spirits still aloud complain,
Think themselves injur'd that they cannot reign,
And own no liberty, but where they may
Without control upon their fellows prey.

Above the waves, as Neptune show'd his face,
To chide the winds, and save the Trojan race,
So has your Highness, raised above the rest,
Storms of ambition tossing us repress'd.

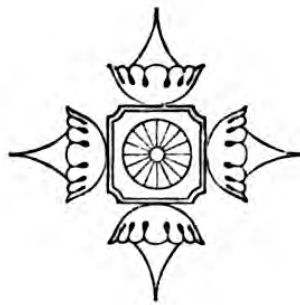
Your drooping country, torn with civil hate,
Restor'd by you, is made a glorious state ;
The seat of empire, where the Irish come,
And the unwilling Scots, to fetch their doom.

The sea's our own ; and now all nations greet,
With bending sails, each vessel of our fleet ;
Your power extends as far as winds can blow,
Or swelling sails upon the globe may go.

Heav'n, that hath placed this island to give law,
To balance Europe, and its states to awe,
In this conjunction doth on Britain smile,
The greatest leader, and the greatest isle !

Whether this portion of the world were rent
By the rude ocean from the continent,
Or thus created, it was sure design'd
To be the sacred refuge of mankind.

Hither the oppressed shall henceforth resort,
Justice to crave, and succour, at your court ;
And then your Highness, not for our's alone,
But for the world's Protector shall be known.



ANDREW MARVELL.

The friend and contemporary of Milton, Marvell was one of the most distinguished and patriotic politicians of the stormy age in which he lived. He wrote little in verse; but the following extract has been greatly admired.

THE EMIGRANTS IN BERMUDAS.

WHERE the remote Bermudas ride
In th' ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that rowed along,
The list'ning winds received their song.
"What should we do but sing His praise,
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where He the huge sea monsters racks,
That lift the deep upon their backs;
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms and prelates' rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,

And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits through the air.
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows.
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet.
But apples, plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.
With cedars, chosen by his hand,
From Lebanon he stores the land ;
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast ;
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound his name.
Oh let our voice his praise exalt,
Till it arrive at Heaven's vault,
Which then perhaps rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexic bay."
Thus sang they in the English boat
A holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

CHARLES COTTON.

1680 to 1687.

Of the writings of the companion and correspondent of "good old Isaak Walton," we present the following.

INVITATION TO ISAAK WALTON.

WHILST in this cold and blustering clime,
Where bleak winds howl, and tempests roar,
We pass away the roughest time
Has been of many years before ;

Whilst from the most tempestuous nooks
The chillest blasts our peace invade,
And by great rains our smallest brooks
Are almost navigable made ;

Whilst all the ills are so improv'd
Of this dead quarter of the year,
That even you, so much belov'd,
We would not now wish with us here :

In this estate, I say, it is
Some comfort to us to suppose,
That in a better clime than this,
You, our dear friend, have more repose ;
And some delight to me the while,
Though nature now does weep in rain,
To think that I have seen her smile,
And haply may I do again.

If the all-ruling Power please
We live to see another May,
We'll recompense an age of these
Foul days in one fine fishing day.

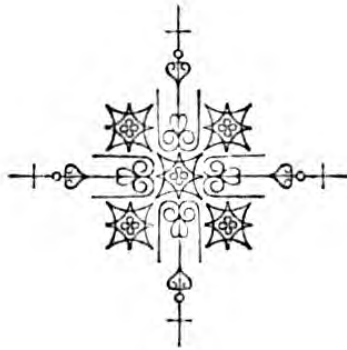
We then shall have a day or two,
Perhaps a week, wherein to try
What the best master's hand can do
With the most deadly killing fly.

A day with not too bright a beam ;
A warm but not a scorching sun ;
A southern gale to curl the stream ;
And, master, half our work is done.

Then, whilst behind some bush we wait
The scaly people to betray,
We'll prove it just, with treacherous bait,
To make the preying trout our prey ;

And think ourselves, in such an hour,
Happier than those, though not so high,
Who, like leviathans, devour
Of meaner men the smaller fry.

This, my best friend, at my poor home,
Shall be our pastime and our theme ;
But then — should you not deign to come,
You make all this a flattering dream.



ABRAHAM COWLEY.

1618 to 1667.

Among the many famous poets born in London, Cowley deserves a foremost place. Few have excelled him in speaking in powerful language to the heart; and his teaching was always on virtue's side.

THE GRASSHOPPER.

HAPPY insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,
Nature self's thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king!

All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee ;
All that summer hours produce,
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plough ;
Farmer he, and landlord thou !
Thou dost innocently enjoy ;
Nor does thy luxury destroy.
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country hinds with gladness hear,
Prophet of the ripen'd year !
Thee Phœbus loves, and does inspire ;
Phœbus is himself thy sire.
To thee, of all things upon earth,
Life is no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect ! happy thou,
Dost neither age nor winter know.
But when thou'st drunk, and danc'd, and sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous and wise withal,
Epicurean animal !)
Satiated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

ON LORD BACON.

FROM these and all long errors of the way,
In which our wandering predecessors went,
And like th' old Hebrews many years did stray
In deserts but of small extent,
Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last ;
The barren wilderness he pass'd
Did on the very border stand
Of the blest promis'd land,
And from the mountain's top of his exalted wit,
Saw it himself, and show'd us it.
But life did never to one man allow
Time to discover worlds and conquer too ;
Nor can so short a line sufficient be,
To fathom the vast depths of nature's sea :
The work he did we ought t' admire,
And we're unjust if we should more require
From his few years, divided 'twixt the excess
Of low affliction and high happiness ;
For who on things remote can fix his sight,
That's always in a triumph or a fight ?

DRYDEN.

Voluminous and excellent though the works of this great poet are, yet they present few opportunities for extracts. The following are selected.

STANZAS ON OLIVER CROMWELL.

His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone ;
For he was great e'er Fortune made him so :
And wars, like moats that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

No borrowed bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring ;
Nor was his virtue poisoned, soon as born,
With the too early thoughts of being king.

Fortune, that easy mistress to the young,
But to her ancient servants coy and hard,
Him at that age her favourites ranked among,
When she her best-loved Pompey did discard.

He private marked the fault of others' sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun ;
Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

And yet dominion was not his design ;
We owe that blessing not to him, but Heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join,
Rewards that less to him than us were given.

THE SWALLOW.

THE swallow, privileged above the rest
Of all the birds as man's familiar guest,
Pursues the sun in summer, brisk and bold,
But wisely shuns the persecuting cold ;
Is well to chancels and to chimneys known,
Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smoke alone.
From hence she has been held of heavenly line,
Endued with particles of soul divine :
This merry chorister had long possess'd
Her summer seat, and feather'd well her nest,
Till frowning skies began to change their cheer,
And time turn'd up the wrong side of the year ;
The shedding trees began the ground to strow
With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow :

Such auguries of winter thence she drew,
Which by instinct or prophecy she knew ;
When prudence warn'd her to remove betimes,
And seek a better heaven and warmer climes.
Her sons were summoned on a steeple's height,
And, call'd in common council, vote a flight.
The day was nam'd, the next that should be fair ;
All to the general rendezvous repair ;
They try their fluttering wings, and trust themselves in
air.

Who but the swallow now triumphs alone ?
The canopy of heaven is all her own :
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs,
And stoop on rivers, to refresh their wings.

ON MILTON.

THREE poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd,
The next in majesty ; in both the last.
The force of nature could no further go ;
To make a third, she join'd the other two.

MATTHEW PRIOR.

1664 to 1721.

THE GARLAND.

THE pride of every grove I chose,
The violet sweet and lily fair,
The dappled pink and blushing rose,
To deck my blushing Chloe's hair.

At morn the nymph vouchsafed to place
Upon her brow the various wreath ;
The flowers less blooming than her face,
The scent less fragrant than her breath.

The flowers she wore along the day,
And every nymph and shepherd said,
That in her hair they look'd more gay
Than glowing in their native bed.

Undress'd at evening, when she found
Their odours lost, their colours past,
She chang'd her look, and on the ground
Her garland and her eyes she cast.

That eye dropp'd sense distinct and clear,
As any muse's tongue could speak,
When from its lid a pearly tear
Ran trickling down her beauteous cheek.

Dissembling what I knew too well,
My love, my life, said I, explain,
This change of humour; prithee tell—
That falling tear—what does it mean?

She sigh'd, she smil'd; and to the flowers
Pointing, the lovely moralist said,
See, friend, in some few fleeting hours,
See yonder, what a change is made.

Ah me! the blooming pride of May
And that of beauty are but one;
At morn both flourish bright and gay,
Both fade at evening, pale, and gone

THE CAMELEON.

As the Cameleon, who is known
To have no colours of his own ;
But borrows from his neighbour's hue,
His white or black, his green or blue ;
And struts as much in ready light,
Which credit gives him upon sight,
As if the rainbow were in tail,
Settled on him and his heirs male ;
So the young squire, when first he comes
From country school to Will's or Tom's,
And equally, in truth, is fit
To be a statesman, or a wit ;
Without one notion of his own,
He saunters wildly up and down,
Till some acquaintance, good or bad,
Takes notice of a staring lad,
Admits him in among the gang ;
They jest, reply, dispute, harangue ;
He acts and talks, as they befriend him,
Smear'd with the colours which they lend him.

Thus, merely as his fortune chances,
His merit or his vice advances.

If haply he the sect pursues,
That read and comment upon news ;
He takes up their mysterious face ;
He drinks his coffee without lace ;
This week his mimic tongue runs o'er
What they have said the week before ;
His wisdom sets all Europe right,
And teaches Marlborough when to fight.
Or if it be his fate to meet
With folks who have more wealth than wit,
He loves cheap port, and double bub,
And settles in the Humdrum Club ;
He learns how stocks will fall or rise ;
Holds poverty the greatest vice ;
Thinks wit the bane of conversation ;
And says that learning spoils a nation.
But if, at first, he minds his hits,
And drinks champaign among the wits ;
Five deep he toasts the towering lasses ;
Repeats you verses wrote on glasses ;
Is in the chair ; prescribes the law ;
And 's lov'd by those he never saw.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

1672 to 1719.

Addison, though best known as the writer of that model of English composition, "The Spectator," holds a distinguished place in the rank of poets.

O D E .

THE spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim :
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth :

Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What, though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball ;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid the radiant orbs be found ;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

O LIBERTY, thou goddess heavenly bright,
Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight !
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train ;
Eas'd of her load, subjection grows more light,
And poverty looks cheerful in thy sight ;
Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.

Thee, goddess, thee, Britannia's isle adores ;
How has she oft exhausted all her stores,
How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,
Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought !
On foreign mountains may the sun refine
The grape's soft juice, and mellow it to wine ;
With citron groves adorn a distant soil,
And the fat olive swell with floods of oil :
We envy not the warmer clime, that lies
In ten degrees of more indulgent skies ;
Nor at the coarseness of our heaven repine,
Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine :
'Tis liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,
And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains
smile.

CATO'S SOLILOQUY.

It must be so — Plato, thou reason'st well ! —
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality ?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into nought ? why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?

'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass !
The wide, th' unbounded prospect, lies before me ;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us,
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Through all her works,) he must delight in virtue ;
And that which he delights in must be happy.
But when ? or where ? This world was made for Cæsar.
I'm weary of conjectures. This must end them.
Thus am I doubly arm'd : my death and life,
My bane and antidote, are both before me :
This in a moment brings me to an end ;
But this informs me I shall never die.
The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years ;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,
The wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds.

JONATHAN SWIFT.

1667 to 1745.

The works of Swift, like those of Dryden, though extensive, present few suitable for transposition.

IMITATION OF HORACE.

I've often wished that I had clear
For life six hundred pounds a year,
A handsome house to lodge a friend,
A river at my garden's end,
A terrace-walk, and half a rood
Of land, set out to plant a wood.

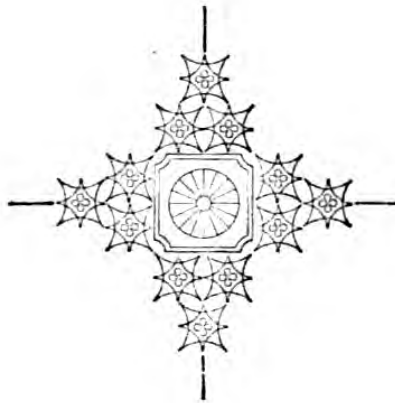
Well, now I have all this and more,
I ask not to increase my store ;
But here a grievance seems to lie,
All this is mine but till I die ;
I can't but think 'twould sound more clever,
To me and to my heirs for ever.

If I ne'er got or lost a groat
By any trick or any fault ;
And if I pray by reason's rules,
And not like forty other fools,
As thus, " Vouchsafe, oh gracious Maker !
To grant me this and t'other acre ;
Or if it be thy will and pleasure,
Direct my plough to find a treasure !"
But only what my station fits,
And to be kept in my right wits ;
Preserve, Almighty Providence !
Just what you gave me, competence,
And let me in these shades compose
Something in verse as true as prose.

RHAPSODY ON POETRY.

Not empire to the rising sun,
By valour, conduct, fortune won ;
Not highest wisdom in debates
For framing laws to govern states ;
Not skill in sciences profound,
So large to grasp the circle round,
Such heavenly influence require,
As how to strike the muses' lyre.

Not beggar's brat on bulk begot,
Not bastard of a pedler Scot,
Not boy brought up to cleaning shoes,
The spawn of Bridewell or the stews,
Not infants dropt, the spurious pledges
Of gipsies littering under hedges,
Are so disqualified by fate
To rise in church, or law, or state,
As he whom Phœbus in his ire
Hath blasted with poetic fire.



ALEXANDER POPE.

1688 to 1744.

The poetry of Pope, though not so imaginative as the productions of our greatest poets, is yet full of wisdom and wit, and presents a variety scarcely equalled.

(From the "Essay on Man.")

HEAVEN from all creatures hides the book of fate,—
All but the page prescribed, their present state :
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know,
Or who could suffer, being here below ?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
Oh, blindless to the future ! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heaven ;
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,

Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
Hope humbly then ; with trembling pinions soar ;
Wait the great teacher, Death ; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast ;
Man never is, but always to be blessed :
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates on a life to come.

Look round our world ; behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.
See plastic Nature working to this end :
The single atoms each to other tend,
Attract, attracted to, the next in place
Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
See matter next, with various life endued,
Press to one centre still, the general good.
See dying vegetables life sustain,
See life dissolving vegetate again :
All forms that perish other forms supply
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die) ;
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

Nothing is foreign ; parts relate to whole ;
One all extending, all preserving soul,
Connects each being, greatest to the least ;
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast ;
All served, all serving : nothing stands alone ;
The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Order is Heaven's first law ; and this confessed,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest,
More rich, more wise ; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.
Heaven to mankind impartial we confess,
If all are equal in their happiness :
But mutual wants this happiness increase ;
All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace.
Condition, circumstance, is not the thing :
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,
In who obtain defence, or who defend,
In him who is, or him who finds a friend :
Heaven breathes through every member of the whole
One common blessing, as one common soul.
But fortune's gifts, if each alike possessed,
And each were equal, must not all contest ?
If then to all men happiness was meant,
God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
And these be happy called, unhappy those ;
But Heaven's just balance equal will appear,
While those are placed in hope, and these in fear ;
Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
But future views of better, or of worse.

Know then this truth (enough for man to know),
"Virtue alone is happiness below."

The only point where human bliss stands still,
And tastes the good without the fall to ill ;
Where only merit constant pay receives,
Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives ;
The joy unequalled, if its end it gain,
And if it lose, attended with no pain :
Without satiety, though e'er so blessed,
And but more relished as the more distressed :
The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears :
Good, from each object, from each place acquired,
For ever exercised, yet never tired ;
Never elated, while one man's oppressed ;
Never dejected, while another's blest ;
And where no wants, no wishes can remain,
Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

(From the "Satires.")

CURSED be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear !
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fallen worth, or beauty in distress ;
Who loves a lie, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out ;
That fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent wounds an author's honest fame :
Who can *your* merit *selfishly* approve,
And show the *sense* of it without the *love* ;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injured, to defend ;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray.

Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Makes satire a lampoon, and fiction lie ;
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.

THE MAN OF ROSS.

BUT all our praises why should lords engross !
Rise, honest Muse ! and sing the Man of Ross :
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow ?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow ?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost ;
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows ?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose ?
Who taught the heaven-directed spire to rise ?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread !
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread :
He feeds yon almshouse, neat, but void of state,
Where age and want sit smiling at the gate :
Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blessed,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick ? the Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, and med'cine makes and gives.
Is there a variance ? enter but his door,
Baulked are the courts, and contest is no more :

Despairing quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now a useless race.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL.

VITAL spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame :
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying —
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying !
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life !

Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,
Sister spirit, come away !
What is this absorbs me quite ?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath ?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

The world recedes ; it disappears !
Heaven opens on my eyes ! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring :
Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !
O Grave ! where is thy victory ?
O Death ! where is thy sting ?

JOHN GAY.

1688 to 1732.

It is as a dramatist chiefly that Gay is now remembered; but his beautiful song of "Black-eyed Susan" must not be omitted here.

BLACK-EYED SUSAN.

ALL in the downs the fleet lay moored,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-eyed Susan came aboard,
Oh! where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew?

William, who high upon the yard
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sighed, and cast his eyes below:
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,
And (quick as lightning) on the deck he stands.

So sweet the lark, high poised in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast
(If chance his mate's shrill call he hear),
And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet.

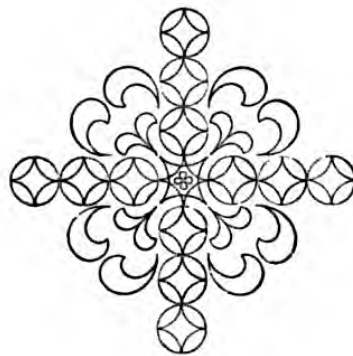
O! Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain ;
Let me kiss off that falling tear ;
We only part to meet again.
Change as ye list, ye winds ! my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

Believe not what the landmen say,
Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind ;
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In every port a mistress find :
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,
For thou art present wheresoe'er I go.

If to fair India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright,
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory so white.
Thus every beauteous object that I view,
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn ;
Though cannons roar, yet, safe from harms,
William shall to his dear return.
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's eye.

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,
The sails their swelling bosom spread ;
No longer must she stay aboard ;
They kissed, she sighed, he hung his head.
Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land,
Adieu ! she cries, and waved her lily hand.



THOMAS PARNELL.

1680 to 1718.

THE CHURCH YARD.

How deep yon azure dyes the sky !
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie ;
While through their ranks, in silver pride,
The nether crescent seems to glide.
The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds, which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire :
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.

There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
“Time was, like thee, they life possessed,
And time shall be that thou shalt rest.”
Those with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground,
Quick to the glancing thought disclose
Where toil and poverty repose.
The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
The chisel’s slender help to fame
(Which, ere our set of friends decay,
Their frequent steps may wear away),
A middle race of mortals own,
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.
The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,
Whose pillars swell with sculptured stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones ;
These all the poor remains of state,
Adorn the rich, or praise the great ;
Who, while on earth in fame they live,
Are senseless of the fame they give.

(From "The Hermit.")

"THY prayer, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown,
In sweet memorial rise before the throne :
These charms success in our bright region find,
And force an angel down to calm thy mind ;
For this commissioned, I forsook the sky :
Nay, cease to kneel — thy fellow servant I.
Then know the truth of government divine,
And let these scruples be no longer thine.
The Maker justly claims that world he made ;
In this the right of Providence is laid ;
Its sacred majesty through all depends
On using second means to work his ends :
'Tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,
The power exerts his attributes on high ;
Your action uses, nor controls your will,
And bids the doubting sons of men be still.
What strange events can strike with more surprise,
Than those which lately struck thy wondering eyes ?
Yet, taught by these, confess the Almighty just,
And, where you can't unriddle, learn to trust.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

1686 to 1756.

Ramsay, though the author of the most perfect pastoral poem in our language, "The Gentle Shepherd," affords but little matter suitable for our pages. The following is one of the most pathetic melodies known.

LOCHABER NO MORE.

FAREWELL to Lochaber, and farewell, my Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I've mony day been ;
For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.
These tears that I shed they are a' for my dear,
And no for the dangers attending on wear ;
Though bore on rough seas to a far bloody shore,
Maybe to return to Lochaber no more.

Though hurricanes rise, and rise every wind,
They'll ne'er make a tempest like that in my mind ;
Though loudest of thunder on louder waves roar,
That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.

To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pained ;
By ease that's inglorious no fame can be gained ;
And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,
And I must deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeany, man plead my excuse :
Since honour commands me, how can I refuse ?
Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,
And without thy favour I'd better not be.
I gae then, my lass, to win honour and fame,
And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.



ROBERT BLAIR.

1699 to 1746.

The following extracts are all from the beautiful poem of "The Grave,"
the only work of the author.

THE GRAVE.

WHILST some affect the sun, and some the shade,
Some flee the city, some the hermitage ;
Their aims as various as the roads they take
In journeying through life ; the task be mine
To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb ;
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all
These travellers meet. Thy succours I implore,
Eternal King ! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death. The Grave, dread thing !
Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd : Nature appall'd
Shakes off her wonted firmness. Ah ! how dark
Thy long extended realms, and rueful wastes !
Where nought but silence reigns, and night, dark night,
Dark as was Chaos, ere the infant sun

Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound. The sickly taper,
By glimmering through thy low-brow'd misty vaults,
(Furr'd round with mouldy damp, and ropy slime,)
Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
And only serves to make thy night more irksome.

.

Oft in the lone church-yard at night I've seen,
By glimpse of moonshine, chequering thro' the trees,
The school-boy, with his satchel in his hand,
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)
That tell in homely phrase who lie below.
Sudden he starts, and hears — or thinks he hears —
The sound of something purring at his heels :
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind,
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows,
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
O'er some new open'd grave — and, strange to tell,
Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

.

Invidious Grave ! how dost thou rend in sunder

Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one!
A tie more stubborn far than nature's band.
Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweetener of life! and solder of society!
I owe thee much. Thou hast deserved from me
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.
Oft have I proved the labours of thy love,
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,
Anxious to please. Oh! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wandered heedless on,
Hid from the vulgar eye; and sat us down
Upon the sloping cowslip-covered bank,
Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
In grateful errors through the underwood,
Sweet murmuring; methought the shrill-tongued thrush
Mended his song of love; the sooty blackbird
Mellowed his pipe, and softened every note;
The eglantine smelled sweeter, and the rose
Assumed a dye more deep; whilst every flower
Vied with its fellow-plant in luxury
Of dress! O! then the longest summer's day
Seemed too, too much in haste: still the full heart
Had not imparted half: 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last! Of joys departed
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

.

Thrice welcome, Death !
That, after many a painful bleeding step,
Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
On the long-wished-for shore. Prodigious change !
Our bane turned to a blessing ! Death, disarmed,
Loses his fellness quite ; all thanks to Him
Who scourged the venom out ! Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace ! How calm his exit !
Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.
Behold him in the evening tide of life,
A life well spent, whose early care it was
His riper years should not upbraid his green :
By unperceived degrees he wears away ;
Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting !
High in his faith and hopes, look how he reaches
After the prize in view ! and, like a bird
That's hampered, struggles hard to get away !
Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded
To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
Of the fast-coming harvest ! Then, O then,
Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
Shrunk to a thing of nought ! O how he longs
To have his passport signed, and be dismissed !
'Tis done — and now he's happy !

ISAAC WATTS.

1674 to 1748.

The most eminent of our sacred poets. The hymns of Dr. Watts are universally known.

THE ROSE.

How fair is the rose ! what a beautiful flower,
The glory of April and May !
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour,
And they wither and die in a day.

Yet the rose has one powerful virtue to boast,
Above all the flowers of the field ;
When its leaves are all dead, and its fine colours lost,
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield !

So frail is the youth and the beauty of men,
Though they bloom and look gay like the rose ;
But all our fond care to preserve them is vain,
Time kills them as fast as he goes.

Then I'll not be proud of my youth nor my beauty,
Since both of them wither and fade ;
But gain a good name by well doing my duty ;
This will scent like a rose when I'm dead.

TRUE RICHES.

I AM not concerned to know
What to-morrow fate will do ;
'Tis enough that I can say,
I've possessed myself to-day :
Then if haply midnight death
Seize my flesh, and stop my breath,
Yet to-morrow I shall be
Heir to the best part of me.

Glittering stones, and golden things,
Wealth and honours that have wings,
Ever fluttering to be gone,
I could never call my own :
Riches that the world bestows,
She can take, and she can lose ;
But the treasures that are mine
Lie afar beyond her line.

When I view my spacious soul,
And survey myself a whole,
And enjoy myself alone,
I'm a kingdom of my own.

PSALM.

GREAT God, whose universal sway
The known and unknown worlds obey,
Now give the kingdom to thy Son,
Extend his power, exalt his throne.

Thy sceptre well becomes his hands,
All heaven submits to his commands ;
His justice shall avenge the poor,
And pride and rage prevail no more.

With power he vindicates the just,
And treads the oppressor in the dust ;
His worship and his fear shall last
Till hours and years and time be past.

As rain on meadows newly mown,
So shall he send his influence down ;
His grace on fainting souls distils
Like heavenly dew on thirsty hills.

The heathen lands, that lie beneath
The shades of overspreading death,
Revive at his first dawning light,
And deserts blossom at the sight.

The saints shall flourish in his days,
Drest in the robes of joy and praise ;
Peace like a river from his throne
Shall flow to nations yet unknown.

HYMN.

THERE is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign ;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

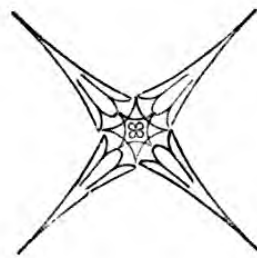
There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers :
Death like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dress'd in living green :
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan roll'd between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross this narrow sea,
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

O! could we make our doubts remove,
These gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love,
With unbeckoned eyes!

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, not death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.



EDWARD YOUNG.

1681 to 1765.

(From "Night Thoughts.")

T IRED Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep !
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where Fortune smiles ; the wretched he forsakes :
Swift on his downy pinion flies from wo,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.

From short (as usual) and disturbed repose
I wake : how happy they who wake no more !
Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous ; where my wrecked, desponding thought
From wave to wave of fancied misery
At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
Though now restored, 'tis only change of pain
(A bitter change !) severer for severe :

The day too short for my distress ; and night,
E'en in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine to the colour of my fate.

Night, sable goddess ! from her ebon throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world.
Silence how dead ! and darkness how profound !
Nor eye nor listening ear an object finds ;
Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse
Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause ;
An awful pause ! prophetic of her end.
And let her prophecy be soon fulfilled :
Fate ! drop the curtain ; I can lose no more.

.

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man !
How passing wonder He who made him such !
Who centred in our make such strange extremes,
From different natures marvellously mixed,
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds !
Distinguished link in being's endless chain !
Midway from nothing to the Deity !
A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorpt !
Though sullied and dishonoured, still divine !

Dim miniature of greatness absolute !
An heir of glory ! a frail child of dust !
Helpless immortal ! insect infinite !
A worm ! a god ! I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost. At home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surprised, aghast,
And wondering at her own. How reason reels !
Oh what a miracle to man is man !
Triumphantly distressed ! what joy ! what dread !
Alternately transported and alarmed !
What can preserve my life ! or what destroy !
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave ;
Legions of angels can't confine me there.

THOUGHTS ON TIME.

THE bell strikes one. We take no note of time
But from its loss : to give it then a tongue
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours.
Where are they ? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the signal that demands despatch :
How much is to be done ? My hopes and fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge

Look down — on what? A fathomless abyss.
A dread eternity! how surely mine!
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?

O time! than gold more sacred; more a load
Than lead to fools, and fools reputed wise.
What moment granted man without account?
What years are squandered, wisdom's debt unpaid!
Our wealth in days all due to that discharge.
Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door;
Insidious Death; should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the prisoner free.
Eternity's inexorable chain
Fast binds, and vengeance claims the full arrear.

PROCRASTINATION.

BE wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer:
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.

If not so frequent, would not this be strange ?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.

Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
The palm, "That all men are about to live,"
For ever on the brink of being born :
All pay themselves the compliment to think
They one day shall not drivel, and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise ;
At least their own ; their future selves applaud ;
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead !
Time lodged in their own hands is Folly's vails ;
That lodged in Fate's to wisdom they consign ;
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.
All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage. When young, indeed,
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves, and only wish,
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan ;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve ;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves ; then dies the same.

JAMES THOMSON.

1700 to 1748.

SUMMER MORNING.

WITH quickened step
Brown night retires : young day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine ;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps awkward ; while along the forest glade
The wild-deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy ;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves
His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells ;
And from the crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.

SUMMER EVENING.

His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
Hies merry-hearted ; and by turns relieves
The ruddy milkmaid of her brimming pail ;
The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart —
Unknowing what the joy-mixed anguish means —
Sincerely loves, by that best language shown
Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.
Onward they pass o'er many a panting height,
And valley sunk, and unfrequented ; where
At fall of eve the fairy people throng,
In various game and revelry, to pass
The summer night, as village stories tell.
But far about they wander from the grave
Of him whom his ungentle fortune urged
Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
Of impious violence. The lonely tower
Is also shunned ; whose mournful chambers hold —
So night-struck fancy dreams — the yelling ghost.

Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glowworm lights his gem, and through the dark
A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields

The world to Night ; not in her winter robe
Of massy Stygian woof, but loose arrayed
In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,
Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half an image on the straining eye ;
While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks, and mountain tops, that long retained
The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to heaven
Thence weary vision turns ; where, leading soft
The silent hours of love, with purest ray
Sweet Venus shines ; and from her genial rise,
When daylight sickens till it springs afresh,
Unrivalled reigns, the fairest lamp of night.

REFLECTIONS ON WINTER.

Ah little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround ;
They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste ;
Ah little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death
And all the sad variety of pain.

How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want and dungeon glooms ;
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse ;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic muse.
Even in the vale, where wisdom loves to dwell,
With friendship, peace, and contemplation joined,
How many, racked with honest passions, droop
In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the deathbed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought, fond man,
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appalled,
And heedless rambling impulse learn to think ;
The conscious heart of charity would warm,

And her wide wish benevolence dilate ;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh ;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.

RULE BRITANNIA.

WHEN Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung the strain :
Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves !
Britons never shall be slaves.

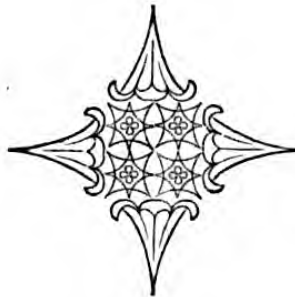
The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turn to tyrants fall,
Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
Rule Britannia, &c.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke ;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.
Rule Britannia, &c.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame ;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
And work their wo and thy renown.
Rule Britannia, &c.

To thee belongs the rural reign ;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine ;
All shall be subject to the main,
And every shore it circles thine.
Rule Britannia, &c.

The muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair ;
Blest isle, with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.
Rule Britannia, &c.



WILLIAM COLLINS.

1720 to 1756.

(From "Ode on the Passions.")

OH Music! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid,
Why, goddess, why to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that loved Athenian bower,
You learn an all-commanding power;
Thy mimic soul, oh nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders in that godlike age
Fill thy recording sister's page;

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

ODE TO LIBERTY.

STROPHE.

Who shall awake the Spartan life,
And call in solemn sounds to life,
The youths, whose locks, divinely spreading,
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue.
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
Applauding freedom loved of old to view ?
What new Alceus, fancy-blessed,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles dressed,
At wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing,
(What place so fit to seal a deed renowned ?)

Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing,
It leaped in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound !
Oh goddess, in that feeling hour,
When most its sounds would court thy ears,
Let not my shell's misguided power
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.
No, freedom, no ; I will not tell
How Rome, before thy face,
With heaviest sound, a giant statue fell,
Pushed by a wild and artless race
From off its wide ambitious base,
When time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of strength and grace,
With many a rude repeated stroke,
And many a barbarous yell, to thousand fragments
broke.

EPODE.

Yet, even where'er the least appeared,
The admiring world thy hand revered ;
Still 'midst the scattered states around,
Some remnants of her strength were found ;
They saw, by what escaped the storm,
How wondrous rose her perfect form ;
How in the great, the laboured whole,
Each mighty master poured his soul ;

For sunny Florence, seat of art,
Beneath her vines preserved a part,
Till they whom science loved to name
(Oh, who could fear it?) quenched her flame.
And, lo, a humbler relic laid,
In jealous Pisa's olive shade!
See small Marino joins the theme,
Though least, not last in thy esteem;
Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings
To those whose merchants' sons were kings;
To him, who, decked with pearly pride,
In Adria weds his green-haired bride:
Hail port of glory, wealth and pleasure,
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure;
Nor e'er her former pride relate,
To sad Liguria's bleeding state.
Ah, no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak
(Where, when the favoured of thy choice,
The daring archer, heard thy voice,
Forth from his eyry roused in dread,
The ravening eagle northward fled);
Or dwell in willowed meads more near,
With those to whom thy stork is dear:
Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
Whose crown a British queen refused!

The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,
One holier name alone remains ;
The perfect spell shall then avail,
Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail !

ANTISTROPHE.

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

Where thousand elfin shapes abide,
And Wight who checks the westering tide,
For thee consenting heaven has each bestowed
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride :
To thee this blessed divorce she owed,
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy last abode !

SECOND EPODE.

Then, too, 'tis said, a hoary pile,
'Midst the green naval of our isle,
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul enforcing goddess, stood !
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet :
Though now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls, to find its place ;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane,
Or Roman's self o'erturned the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.
Yet still, if truth those beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light embroidered sky ;
Amidst the bright pavilioned plains,
The beauteous model still remains.

There happier than in islands blessed,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe dressed,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string.

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

Ye forms divine, ye laureate band,
That near her inmost altar stand !
Now soothe her to her blissful train,
Blithe Concord's social form to gain :

Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even Anger's blood-shot eyes in sleep :
Before whose breathing bosom's balm,
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm ;
Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore ;
Our youths, enamoured of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair ;
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around.
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, lady, thou shalt rule the west !

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THOMSON.

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

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

The maids and youths shall linger here,
And, while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in pity's ear
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell.

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

And oft as ease and health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,
The friend shall view yon whitening spire,
And 'mid the varied landscape weep.

But thou, who own'st that earthly bed,
Ah ! what will every dirge avail !
Or tears, which love and pity shed,
That mourn beneath the gliding sail !

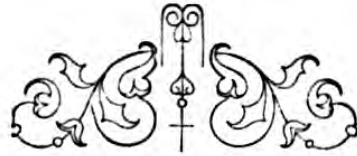
Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near,
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
And joy desert the blooming year.

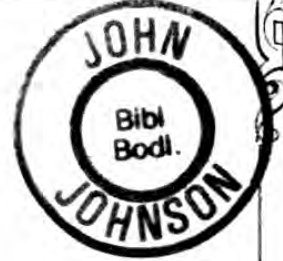
But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crowned sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side,
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend !

And see, the fairy valleys fade,
Dun night has veiled the solemn view !
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek nature's child, again adieu !

The genial meads, assigned to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom !
Their hinds and shepherd girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

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





WILLIAM SHENSTONE.

1714 to 1763.

(From "The Schoolmistress.")

AH me! full sorely is my heart forlorn,
To think how modest worth neglected lies;
While partial fame doth with her blasts adorn
Such deeds alone as pride and pomp disguise;
Deeds of ill sort, and mischievous emprise;
Lend me thy clarion, goddess! let me try
To sound the praise of merit ere it dies;
Such as I oft have chanced to espy,
Lost in the dreary shades of dull obscurity.

In every village marked with little spire,
Embowered in trees, and hardly known to fame,
There dwells, in lowly shed, and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we Schoolmistress name;

Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame :
They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent,
Awed by the power of this relentless dame ;
And ofttimes, on vagaries idly bent,
For unkempt hair, or task unconned, are sorely shent.

And all in sight doth rise a birchen tree,
Which learning near her little dome did stow ;
Whilom a twig of small regard to see,
Though now so wide its waving branches flow,
And work the simple vassals mickle wo ;
For not a wind might curl the leaves that blew,
But their limbs shuddered, and their pulse beat low ;
And as they looked, they found their horror grew,
And shaped it into rods, and tingled at the view.

Near to this dome is found a patch so green,
On which the tribe their gambols do display ;
And at the door imprisoning board is seen,
Lest weakly wights of smaller size should stray ;
Eager, perdie, to bask in sunny day !
The noises intermixed, which thence resound,
Do learning's little tenement betray ;
Where sits the dame, disguised in look profound,
And eyes her fairy throng, and turns her wheel around.

SONG, ON CAPTAIN JAMES DAWSON,

AN OFFICER IN THE REGIMENT OF MANCHESTER VOLUNTEERS, IN
THE SERVICE OF THE PRETENDER, AND WHO WAS EXECUTED
IN 1746.

COME listen to my mournful tale,
Ye tender hearts and lovers dear ;
Nor will you scorn to heave a sigh,
Nor will you blush to shed a tear.

And thou, dear Kitty, peerless maid,
Do thou a pensive ear incline ;
For thou canst weep at every wo,
And pity every plaint but mine.

Young Dawson was a gallant youth,
A brighter never trod the plain ;
And well he loved one charming maid,
And dearly was he loved again.

One tender maid she loved him dear,
Of gentle blood the damsel came :
And faultless was her beauteous form,
And spotless was her virgin fame.

But curse on party's hateful strife,
That led the favoured youth astray ;
The day the rebel clans appeared,
O had he never seen that day !

Their colours and their sash he wore,
And in the fatal dress was found ;
And now he must that death endure,
Which gives the brave the keenest wound.

How pale was then his true love's cheek,
When Jemmy's sentence reached her ear !
For never yet did Alpine snows
So pale or yet so chill appear.

With faltering voice she weeping said,
Oh Dawson, monarch of my heart !
Think not thy death shall end our loves,
For thou and I will never part.

Yet might sweet mercy find a place,
And bring relief to Jemmy's woes,
O George ! without a prayer for thee
My orisons should never close.

The gracious prince that gave him life
Would crown a never-dying flame ;
And every tender babe I bore
Should learn to lisp the giver's name.

But though, dear youth, thou shouldst be dragged
To yonder ignominious tree,
Thou shalt not want a faithful friend
To share thy bitter fate with thee.

O then her mourning-coach was called,
The sledge moved slowly on before ;
Though borne in her triumphal car,
She had not loved her favourite more.

She followed him, prepared to view
The terrible behests of law ;
And the last scene of Jemmy's woes
With calm and stedfast eye she saw.

Distorted was that blooming face,
Which she had fondly loved so long ;
And stifled was that tuneful breath,
Which in her praise had sweetly sung :

And severed was that beauteous neck,
Round which her arms had fondly closed ;
And mangled was that beauteous breast,
On which her love-sick head reposed :

And ravished was that constant heart,
She did to every heart prefer ;
For though it could its king forget,
'Twas true and loyal still to her.

Amid those unrelenting flames
She bore this constant heart to see ;
But when 'twas mouldered into dust,
Now, now, she cried, I follow thee.

My death, my death alone can show
The pure and lasting love I bore :
Accept, O Heaven ! of woes like ours,
And let us, let us weep no more.

The dismal scene was o'er and past,
The lover's mournful hearse retired ;
The maid drew back her languid head,
And, sighing forth his name, expired.

Though justice ever must prevail,
The tear my Kitty sheds is due ;
For seldom shall she hear a tale
So sad, so tender, and so true.



THOMAS GRAY.

1716 to 1771.

This celebrated poet has written many pieces of great merit; but we cannot find room for more than his "Elegy," without which no selection of British poetry would be complete.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
How jocund did they drive their team a-field !
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour :
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre :

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,
Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind :
The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride,
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.
Far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.
Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.
Their names, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply :
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
Even from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonoured dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate ;

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
" Oft have we seen him, at the peep of dawn,
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woful, wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD. 311

One morn I missed him on the 'customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ;
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

The next, with dirges due in sad array,
Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne ;
Approach and read, for thou canst read, the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown ;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear ;
He gained from Heaven, 'twas all he wished, a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
There they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of his Father and his God.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

1728 to 1774.

DESCRIPTION OF AUBURN.

SWEET Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain ;
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed ;
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please ;
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm !
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm ;
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill ;
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !

How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play ;
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired :
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain, mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove —
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please.

THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

NEAR yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a-year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place ;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away ;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their wo ;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

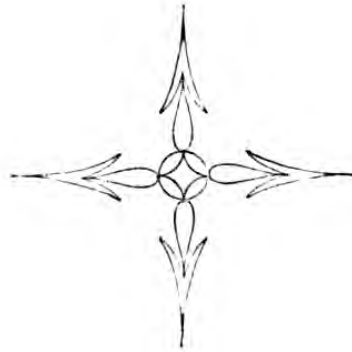
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

THE VILLAGE TEACHER.

BESIDE yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school ;
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew.
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ;
Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned ;
Yet he was kind ; or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew ;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too ;

Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could guage ;
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length, and thundering sound,
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame : the very spot,
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.



WILLIAM FALCONER.

1730 to 1769.

EVENING ON SHIPBOARD.

THE sun's bright orb, declining all serene,
Now glanced obliquely o'er the woodland scene.
Creation smiles around ; on every spray
The warbling birds exalt their evening lay.
Blithe skipping o'er yon hill, the fleecy train
Join the deep chorus of the lowing plain ;
The golden lime and orange there were seen,
On fragrant branches of perpetual green.
The crystal streams, that velvet meadows lave,
To the green ocean roll with chiding wave.
The glassy ocean hushed forgets to roar,
But trembling murmurs on the sandy shore :
And lo ! his surface, lovely to behold !
Glow in the west, a sea of living gold !

While, all above, a thousand liveries gay
The skies with pomp ineffable array.
Arabian sweets perfume the happy plains :
Above, beneath, around, enchantment reigns !
While yet the shades, on time's eternal scale,
With long vibration deepen o'er the vale ;
While yet the songsters of the vocal grove
With dying numbers tune the soul to love,
With joyful eyes the attentive master sees
The auspicious omens of an eastern breeze.
Now radiant Vesper leads the starry train,
And night slow draws her veil o'er land and main ;
Round the charged bowl the sailors form a ring :
By turns recount the wondrous tale, or sing ;
As love or battle, hardships of the main,
Or genial wine, awake their homely strain :
Then some the watch of night alternate keep,
The rest lie buried in oblivious sleep.

THE SHIP IN DANGER.

No season this for counsel or delay !
Too soon the eventful moments haste away ;
Here perseverance, with each help of art,
Must join the boldest efforts of the heart.

These only now their misery can relieve ;
These only now a dawn of safety give ;
While o'er the quivering deck, from van to rear,
Broad surges roll in terrible career ;
Rodmond, Arion, and a chosen crew,
This office in the face of death pursue.
The wheeled artillery o'er the deck to guide,
Rodmond descending claimed the weather-side.
Fearless of heart, the chief his orders gave,
Fronting the rude assaults of every wave.
Like some strong watch-tower nodding o'er the deep,
Whose rocky base the foaming waters sweep,
Untamed he stood : the stern aërial war
Had marked his honest face with many a scar.
Meanwhile Arion, traversing the waist,
The cordage of the leeward guns unbraced,
And pointed crows beneath the metal placed.
Watching the roll, their forelocks they withdrew,
And from their beds the reeling cannon threw ;
Then, from the windward battlements unbound,
Rodmond's associates wheel the artillery round ;
Pointed with iron fangs, their bars beguile
The ponderous arms across the steep defile ;
Then hurled from sounding hinges o'er the side,
Thundering, they plunge into the flashing tide.

DEATH OF ALBERT.

NEXT, O unhappy chief! the eternal doom
Of heaven decreed thee to the briny tomb :
What scenes of misery torment thy view !
What painful struggles of thy dying crew !
Thy perished hopes all buried in the flood,
O'erspread with corpses, red with human blood !
So, pierced with anguish, hoary Priam gazed,
When Troy's imperial domes in ruin blazed ;
While he, severest sorrow doomed to feel,
Expired beneath the victor's murdering steel.
Thus with his helpless partners to the last,
Sad refuge ! Albert grasps the floating mast.
His soul could yet sustain this mortal blow,
But droops, alas ! beneath superior wo ;
For now strong nature's sympathetic chain
Tugs at his yearning heart with powerful strain ;
His faithful wife, for ever doomed to mourn
For him, alas ! who never shall return ;
To black adversity's approach exposed,
With want, and hardships unforeseen enclosed ;
His lovely daughter, left without a friend
Her innocence to succour and defend,

By youth and indigence set forth a prey
To lawless guilt, that flatters to betray —
While these reflections rack his feeling mind,
Rodmond, who hung beside, his grasp resigned,
And, as the tumbling waters o'er him rolled,
His outstretched arms the master's legs infold :
Sad Albert feels their dissolution near,
And strives in vain his fettered limbs to clear,
For death bids every clinching joint adhere.
All faint, to heaven he throws his dying eyes,
And " Oh protect my wife and child ! " he cries —
The gushing streams roll back the unfinished sound ;
He gasps ! and sinks amid the vast profound.



JOHN LOGAN.

1748 to 1788.

TO THE CUCKOO.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of Spring !
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear ;
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ?

Delightful visitant ! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest the vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No Winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.



JAMES BEATTIE.

1735 to 1803.

(From "The Minstrel.")

AH ! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar ;
Ah who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war ;
Checked by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropped into the grave, unpitied and unknown !

And yet the languor of inglorious day
Not equally oppressive is to all ;
Him, who ne'er listened to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.

There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear the obstreperous trump of Fame ;
Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had he, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

THE HERMIT.

At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove :
'Twas thus, by the cave of the mountain afar,
While his harp rung symphonious, a hermit began :
No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a sage, though he felt as a man.

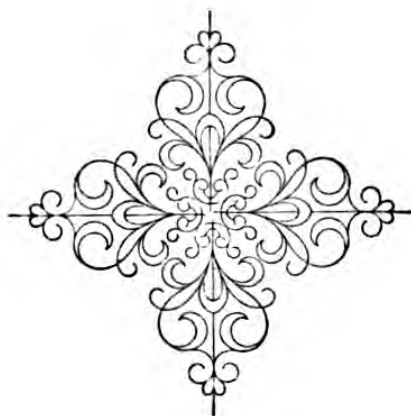
“ Ah ! why, all abandoned to darkness and wo,
Why, lone Philomela, that languishing fall ?
For spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
And sorrow no longer thy bosom inthral :
But, if pity inspire thee, renew the sad lay,
Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee to mourn ;
O soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass away :
Full quickly they pass — but they never return.

“ Now gliding remote on the verge of the sky,
The moon half extinguished her crescent displays :
But lately I marked, when majestic on high
She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze.
Roll on, thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
The path that conducts thee to splendour again ;
But man’s faded glory what change shall renew ?
Ah fool ! to exult in a glory so vain !

“ ’T is night, and the landscape is lovely no more ;
I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you ;
For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
Perfumed with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew :
Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn ;
Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.
But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn !
O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave !

“ ’Twas thus, by the glare of false science betrayed,
That leads, to bewilder ; and dazzles, to blind :
My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.
‘ O pity, great Father of Light,’ then I cried,
‘ Thy creature, who fain would not wander from thee ;
Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride ;
From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free !’

“ And darkness and doubt are now flying away,
No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.
So breaks on the traveller, faint, and astray,
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom !
On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.”



THOMAS MOSS.

This author was Minister of Trentham, Staffordshire, and died there in 1808. The well-known and popular poem, "The Beggar's Petition," forms one of a small volume of poems he published in 1769.

THE BEGGAR'S PETITION.

PITY the sorrows of a poor old man !
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh ! give relief, and heaven will bless your store.

These tattered clothes my poverty bespeak,
These hoary locks proclaim my lengthened years ;
And many a furrow in my grief-worn cheek
Has been the channel to a stream of tears.

Yon house, erected on the rising ground,
With tempting aspect drew me from my road,
For plenty there a residence has found,
And grandeur a magnificent abode.

(Hard is the fate of the infirm and poor !)
Here craving for a morsel of their bread,
A pampered menial forced me from the door,
To seek a shelter in a humbler shed.

Oh ! take me to your hospitable dome,
Keen blows the wind, and piercing is the cold !
Short is my passage to the friendly tomb,
For I am poor, and miserably old.

Should I reveal the source of every grief,
If soft humanity e'er touched your breast,
Your hands would not withhold the kind relief,
And tears of pity could not be repressed.

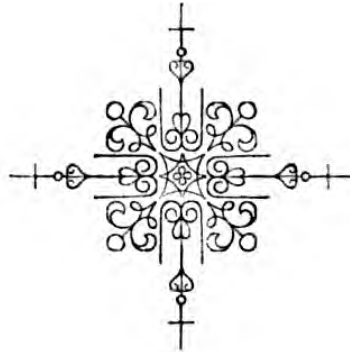
Heaven sends misfortunes — why should we repine ?
'Tis heaven has brought me to the state you see :
And your condition may be soon like mine,
The child of sorrow, and of misery.

A little farm was my paternal lot,
Then, like the lark, I sprightly hailed the morn ;
But ah ! oppression forced me from my cot ;
My cattle died, and blighted was my corn.

My daughter — once the comfort of my age !
Lured by a villain from her native home,
Is cast, abandoned, on the world's wide stage,
And doomed in scanty poverty to roam.

My tender wife — sweet soother of my care !
Struck with sad anguish at the stern decree,
Fell — lingering fell, a victim to despair,
And left the world to wretchedness and me.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man !
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh ! give relief, and Heaven will bless your store.





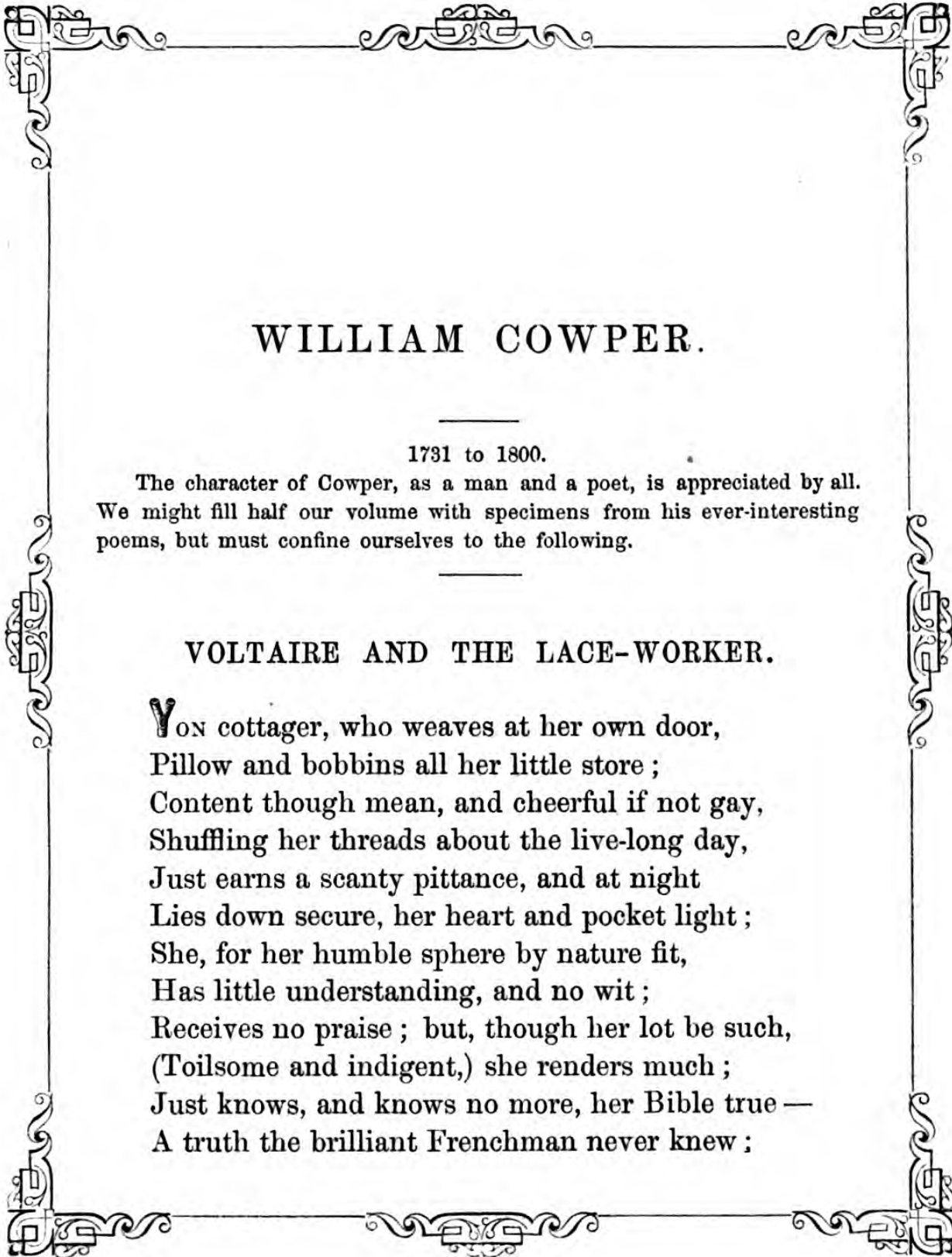
THE

Book of British Poesy.



SECTION IV.

Comper to Present Time.



WILLIAM COWPER.

1731 to 1800.

The character of Cowper, as a man and a poet, is appreciated by all. We might fill half our volume with specimens from his ever-interesting poems, but must confine ourselves to the following.

VOLTAIRE AND THE LACE-WORKER.

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 live-long 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, her's 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.

TO WINTER.

O WINTER! ruler of the inverted year,
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,

Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;
No powdered 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.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.

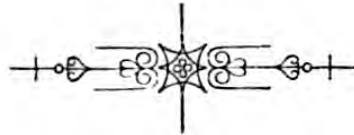
My mother ! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unseen, a kiss ;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers — Yes.
I heard the bell tolled 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 sound shall pass my lips no more !
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of a quick return :

What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived ;
By disappointment 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 sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

ENGLISH LIBERTY.

WE love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them ; him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free :
But, recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still ;
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant !
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 daubed with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.



ROBERT BURNS.

1759 to 1796.

Burns, like Cowper, is one of Britain's universal poets, and his history is too well known to require observation here.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

My loved, my honour'd, much respected friend !
No mercenary bard his homage pays ;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end ;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise :
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;

What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh ;
The shortening winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
The blackening trains o' craws to their repose ;
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward
bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
The expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee,
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lispin infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun' ;
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town :

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthful bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers :
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet ;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears ;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years ;
Anticipation forward points the view :
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new :
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey ;
" An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play :
And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway !
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night !
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might :
They never sought in vain, that sought the Lord aright !"

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,

Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak ;
Weel pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless
rake.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben ;
A strappin' youth ; he taks the mother's e'e ;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy.
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave ;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What mak's the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave ;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found !
O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare —
“ If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,

In others' arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning
gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart —
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride:

His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care ;
And " Let us worship God !" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
Perhaps Dundee's wild, warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name ;
Or noble Elgin beats the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
Or, Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;

How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head :
How his first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;
Hope " springs exulting on triumphant wing,"¹
That thus they all shall meet in future days :
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart !
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,

¹ Pope's " Windsor Forest."

The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul ;
And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

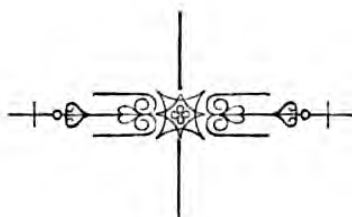
Then homeward all take off their several way ;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest ;
The parent pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to heaven the warm request
That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide ;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad :
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
" An honest man 's the noblest work of God :"
And certes in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;
What is a lordling's pomp ! a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
From whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent !

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, how'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire aro'und their much-lov'd Isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart!
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part;
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert:
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard.



MRS. BARBAULD.

1745 to 1825.

HYMN TO CONTENT.

— natura beatos
Omnibus esse dedit, si quis cognoverit uti.

CLAUDIAN.

○ THOU, the nymph with placid eye !
O seldom found, yet ever nigh !

Receive my temperate vow :
Not all the storms that shake the pole
Can e'er disturb thy halcyon soul,
And smooth the unaltered brow.

O come, in simple vest arrayed,
With all thy sober cheer displayed,
To bless my longing sight ;
Thy mien composed, thy even pace,
Thy meek regard, thy matron grace,
And chaste, subdued delight.

No more by varying passions beat,
O gently guide my pilgrim feet
 To find thy hermit cell ;
Where in some pure and equal sky,
Beneath thy soft, indulgent eye,
 The modest virtues dwell.

Simplicity in Attic vest,
And Innocence with candid breast,
 And clear, undaunted eye ;
And Hope, who points to distant years,
Fair opening, through this vale of tears,
 A vista to the sky.

There Health, through whose calm bosom glide
The temperate joys in even-tide
 That rarely ebb or flow ;
And Patience there, thy sister meek,
Presents her mild, unvarying cheek
 To meet the offered blow.

Her influence taught the Phrygian sage
A tyrant master's wanton rage
 With settled smiles to wait :
Inured to toil and bitter bread,
He bowed his meek, submissive head,
 And kissed thy sainted feet.

But thou, oh nymph retired and coy !
In what brown hamlet dost thou joy
To tell thy tender tale ?
The lowliest children of the ground,
Moss-rose and violet, blossom round,
And lily of the vale.

O say what soft, propitious hour
I best may choose to hail thy power,
And court thy gentle sway ?
When autumn, friendly to the Muse,
Shall thy own modest tints diffuse,
And shed thy milder day.

When eve, her dewy star beneath,
Thy balmy spirit loves to breathe,
And every storm is laid ;
If such an hour was e'er thy choice,
Oft let me hear thy soothing voice,
Low whispering through the shade.



ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

1766 to 1823.

THE FARMER'S LIFE.

THE farmer's life displays in every part
A moral lesson to the sensual heart.
Though in the lap of plenty, thoughtful still,
He looks beyond the present good or ill ;
Nor estimates alone one blessing's worth,
From changeful seasons, or capricious earth !
But views the future with the present hours,
And looks for failures as he looks for showers ;
For casual as for certain want prepares,
And round his yard the reeking haystack rears ;
Or clover, blossomed lovely to the sight,
His team's rich store through many a wintry night.
What though abundance round his dwelling spreads,
Though, ever moist, his self-improving meads

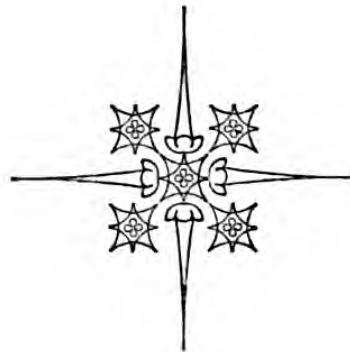
Supply his dairy with a copious flood,
And seem to promise unexhausted food ;
That promise fails when buried deep in snow,
And vegetative juices cease to flow.
For this his plough turns up the destined lands,
Whence stormy winter draws its full demands ;
For this the seed minutely small he sows,
Whence, sound and sweet, the hardy turnip grows.
But how unlike to April's closing days !
High climbs the sun, and darts his powerful rays ;
Whitens the fresh-drawn mould, and pierces through
The cumbrous clods that tumble round the plough.
O'er heaven's bright azure, hence with joyful eyes
The farmer sees dark clouds assembling rise ;
Borne o'er his fields a heavy torrent falls,
And strikes the earth in hasty, driving squalls.
" Right welcome down, ye precious drops," he cries :
But soon, too soon, the partial blessing flies.
" Boy, bring the harrows, try how deep the rain
Has forced its way." He comes, but comes in vain ;
Dry dust beneath the bubbling surface lurks,
And mocks his pains the more the more he works.
Still, 'midst huge clods, he plunges on forlorn,
That laugh his harrows and the showers to scorn.
E'en thus the living clod, the stubborn fool,
Resists the stormy lectures of the school,

Till tried with gentler means, the dunce to please,
His head imbibes right reason by degrees ;
As when from eve till morning's wakeful hour,
Light constant rain evinces secret power,
And, ere the day resumes its wonted smiles,
Presents a cheerful, easy task for Giles.
Down with a touch the mellow soil is laid,
And yon tall crop next claims his timely aid ;
Thither well-pleased he hies, assured to find
Wild, trackless haunts, and objects to his mind.

DESCRIPTION OF A BLIND YOUTH.

FOR from his cradle he has never seen
Soul-cheering sunbeams, or wild nature's green.
But all life's blessings centre not in sight ;
For Providence, that dealt him one long night,
Had given, in pity, to the blooming boy
Feelings more exquisitely tuned to joy.
Fond to excess was he of all that grew ;
The morning blossom sprinkled o'er with dew,
Across his path, as if in playful freak,
Would dash his brow and weep upon his cheek ;

Each varying leaf that brushed where'er he came,
Pressed to his rosy lip, he called by name ;
He grasped the saplings, measured every bough,
Inhaled the fragrance that the spring's months throw
Profusely round, till his young heart confessed
That all was beauty, and himself was blessed.
Yet when he traced the wide extended plain,
Or clear brook side, he felt a transient pain ;
The keen regret of goodness, void of pride,
To think he could not roam without a guide.



JAMES GRAHAME.

1765 to 1811.

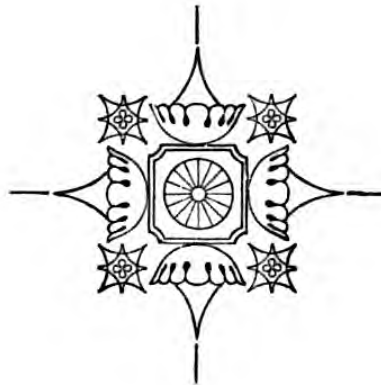
(From "The Sabbath.")

How still the morning of the hallowed day !
Mute is the voice of rural labour, hushed
The ploughboy's whistle and the milkmaid's song.
The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath
Of tedded grass, mingled with faded flowers,
That yester-morn bloomed waving in the breeze.
Sounds the most faint attract the ear — the hum
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,
The distant bleating midway up the hill.
Calmness seems throned on yon unmoving cloud.
To him who wanders o'er the upland leas,
The blackbird's note comes mellow from the dale ;
And sweeter from the sky the gladsome lark
Warbles his heaven-tuned song ; the lulling brook
Murmurs more gently down the deep-sunk glen ;

While from yon lowly roof, whose curling smoke
O'ermounts the mist, is heard at intervals
The voice of psalms, the simple song of praise.

But wood and wild, the mountain and the dale,
The house of prayer itself, no place inspires
Emotions more accordant with the day,
Than does the field of graves, the land of rest.
Oft at the close of evening-prayer, the toll,
The funeral-toll, announces solemnly
The service of the tomb ; the homeward crowds
Divide on either hand : the pomp draws near ;
The choir to meet the dead go forth, and sing,
" I am the resurrection and the life."
Ah me ! these youthful bearers robed in white,
They tell a mournful tale ; some blooming friend
Is gone, dead in her prime of years — 'twas she,
The poor man's friend, who, when she could not give,
With angel tongue pleaded to those who could,
With angel-tongue and mild, beseeching eye,
That ne'er besought in vain, save when she prayed
For longer life, with heart resigned to die —
Rejoiced to die, for happy visions blessed
Her voyage's last days, and hovering round,
Alighted on her soul, giving presage

That heaven was nigh. Oh what a burst
Of rapture from her lips ! what tears of joy
Her heavenward eyes suffused ! Those eyes are closed ;
Yet all her loveliness is not yet flown :
She smiled in death, and still her cold pale face
Retains that smile ; as when a waveless lake,
In which the wintry stars all bright appear,
Is sheeted by a nightly frost with ice,
Still it reflects the face of heaven unchanged,
Unruffled by the breeze or sweeping blast.



GEORGE CRABBE.

1754 to 1832.

A NOBLE PEASANT.

NEXT to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble peasant, Isaac Ashford, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestioned and his soul serene :
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid ;
At no man's question Isaac looked dismayed :
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace ;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face ;
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seemed, and gentleness he loved ;
To bliss domestic he his heart resigned,
And with the firmest, had the fondest mind :
Were others joyful, he looked smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none ;
Good he refused with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caused reflection's sigh ;

A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distressed ;
(Bane of the poor ! it wounds their weaker mind
To miss one favour which their neighbours find.)
Yet far was he from stoic pride removed ;
He felt humanely, and he warmly loved :
I marked his action when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried ;
The still tears, stealing down that furrowed cheek,
Spoke pity plainer than the tongue can speak.
If pride were his, 'twas not their vulgar pride,
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride ;
Nor pride in learning, though my clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed ;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew
None his superior, and his equal few :
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace ;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gained,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours trained ;
Pride in the power that guards his country's coast,
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast ;
Pride in a life that slander's tongue defied,
In fact, a noble passion, misnamed pride.

HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

1785 to 1806.

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE.

MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire !
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity ; in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserved ;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

WHEN, marshalled on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky ;
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

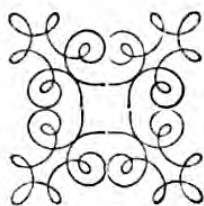
Hark ! hark ! to God the chorus breaks,
From every host, from every gem ;
But one alone the Saviour speaks,
It is the Star of Bethlehem.

Once on the raging seas I rode,
The storm was loud — the night was dark ;
The ocean yawned — and rudely blowed
The wind that tossed my foundering bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze,
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem ;
When suddenly a star arose,
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all,
It bade my dark forebodings cease ;
And through the storm and dangers' thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moored — my perils o'er,
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and for evermore,
The Star — the Star of Bethlehem !



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

1772 to 1834.

A DUNGEON.

AND this place our forefathers made for man !
This is the process of our love and wisdom
To each poor brother who offends against us —
Most innocent, perhaps — and what if guilty ?
Is this the only cure ? Merciful God !
Each pore and natural outlet shrivelled up
By ignorance and parching poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart
And stagnate and corrupt, till, changed to poison,
They break on him like a loathsome plague-spot !
Then we call in our pampered mountebanks —
And this is their best cure ! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steam and vapours of his dungeon

By the lamp's dismal twilight! So he lies
'Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
By sights of evermore deformity!
With other ministrations thou, O Nature,
Healest thy wandering and distempered child:
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets;
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters;
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonised
By the benignant touch of love and beauty.

LOVE, HOPE, AND PATIENCE IN EDUCATION.

O'ER wayward childhood wouldst thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces;
Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.
For as old Atlas on his broad neck places
Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it, so

Do these upbear the little world below
Of education — Patience, Love, and Hope.
Methinks I see them grouped in seemly show,
The straitened arms upraised, the palms aslope,
And robes that, touching as adown they flow,
Distinctly blend, like snow embossed in snow.
O part them never! If Hope prostrate lie,
 Love too will sink and die.
But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive
From her own life that Hope is yet alive;
And bending o'er, with soul-transfusing eyes,
And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,
Woos back the fleeting spirit, and half supplies;
Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to Love.
Yet haply there will come a weary day,
 When overtasked at length
Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.
Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loath,
And both supporting, does the work of both.

LORD BYRON.

1788 to 1824.

PICTURE OF MODERN GREECE.

HE who hath bent him o'er the dead,
Ere the first day of death is fled —
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress —
Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,
And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that 's there —
The fixed, yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek —
And — but for that sad shrouded eye,
 That fires not — wins not — weeps not — now —
 And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Whose touch thrills with mortality,
And curdles to the gazer's heart,
As if to him it could impart

The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon —
Yes — but for these — and these alone —
Some moments — ay — one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power,
So fair — so calm — so softly sealed
The first — last look — by death revealed !

Such is the aspect of this shore ;
'Tis Greece — but living Greece no more !
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start — for soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath ;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb —
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of feeling past away !
Spark of that flame — perchance of heavenly birth —
Which gleams — but warms no more its cherished earth !

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies ;

And all that 's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes :
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace,
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent !

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen :
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still !

And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride :
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

1771 to 1832.

LOVE OF COUNTRY.

From "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
 From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go mark him well:
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.
 O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!

Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan.

FAR, FAR FROM LOVE AND THEE, MARY.

From "The Lady of the Lake."

THE heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;

To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary.

I will not, dare not, fancy now,
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary;
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

BOAT SONG.

HAIL to the chief who in triumph advances !
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine !
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line !

Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
" Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho ! ieroe !"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade ;
When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the
mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow ;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
" Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !"

Proudly our pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied ;
Glen Luss and Ross-Dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side ;
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan Alpine with fear and with woe ;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear again,
" Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands,
Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine !
O ! that the rose-bud that graces yon island
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine.
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow !
Loud should Clan Alpine then
Ring from the deepest glen,
" Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! iero !"

ROBERT TANNAHILL.

1774 to 1810.

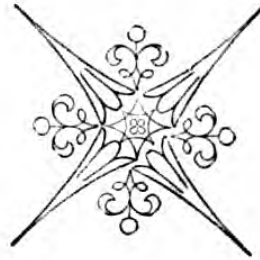
THE FLOWER O' DUMBLANE.

THE sun has gane down o'er the lofty Benlomond,
And left the red clouds to preside o'er the scene,
While lanely I stray in the calm summer gloamin,
To muse on sweet Jessie, the flower o' Dumblane.
How sweet is the brier, wi' its saft fauldin' blossom!
And sweet is the birk, wi' its mantle o' green;
Yet sweeter and fairer, and dear to this bosom,
Is lovely young Jessie, the flower of Dumblane.

She's modest as ony, and blithe as she's bonnie;
For guileless simplicity marks her its ain:
And far be the villain, divested of feeling,
Wha'd blight in its bloom the sweet flower o' Dum-
blane.

Sing on, thou sweet mavis, thy hymn to the e'ening ;
Thou 'rt dear to the echoes of Calderwood glen :
Sae dear to this bosom, sae artless and winning,
Is charming young Jessie, the flower o' Dumblane.

How lost were my days till I met wi' my Jessie !
The sports o' the city seemed foolish and vain ;
I ne'er saw a nymph I would ca' my dear lassie,
Till charmed wi' sweet Jessie, the flower o' Dumblane.
Though mine were the station of loftiest grandeur,
Amidst its profusion I 'd languish in pain,
And reckon as naething the height o' its splendour,
If wanting sweet Jessie, the flower o' Dumblane.



JAMES HOGG,
THE ETRICK SHEPHERD.

1772 to 1835.

THE SHEPHERD'S EVENINGS IN YOUTH.

LIST the mystic lore sublime
Of fairy tales of ancient time !
I learned them in the lonely glen,
The last abodes of living men,
Where never stranger came our way,
By summer night, or winter day ;
Where neighbouring hind or cot was none —
Our converse was with heaven alone —
With voices through the cloud that sung,
And brooding storms that round us hung.
O lady, judge, if judge ye may,
How stern and ample was the sway

Of themes like these, when darkness fell,
And gray-haired sires the tales would tell!
When doors were barred, and elder dame
Plied at her task beside the flame
That through the smoke and gloom alone
On dim and umbered faces shone —
The bleat of mountain-goat on high,
That from the cliff came quavering by ;
The echoing rock, the rushing flood,
The cataract's swell, the moaning wood ;
The undefined and mingled hum —
Voice of the desert, never dumb !
All these have left within this heart
A feeling tongue can ne'er impart ;
A wildered and unearthly flame,
A something that 's without a name.

THE SKYLARK.

BIRD of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea !
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place —
O to abide in the desert with thee !

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place —
O to abide in the desert with thee!



ROBERT POLLOK.

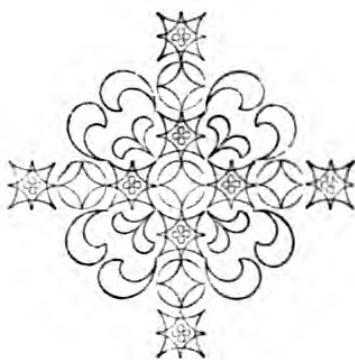
1799 to 1827.

THE MAIDEN'S PRAYER.

SUCH was the night, so lovely, still, serene,
When, by a hermit thorn that on the hill
Had seen a hundred flowery ages pass,
A damsel kneeled to offer up her prayer —
Her prayer nightly offered, nightly heard.
This ancient thorn had been the meeting place
Of love, before his country's voice had called
The ardent youth to fields of honour far
Beyond the wave : and hither now repaired,
Nightly, the maid, by God's all-seeing eye
Seen only, while she sought this boon alone —
Her lover's safety, and his quick return.
In holy, humble attitude she kneeled,
And to her bosom, fair as moonbeam, pressed
One hand, the other lifted up to heaven.

Her eye, upturned, bright as the star of morn,
As violet meek, excessive ardour streamed,
Wafting away her earnest heart to God.
Her voice, scarce uttered, soft as Zephyr sighs
On morning's lily cheek, though soft and low,
Yet heard in heaven, heard at the mercy-seat.
A tear-drop wandered on her lovely face ;
It was a tear of faith and holy fear,
Pure as the drops that hang at dawning-time
On yonder willows by the stream of life.
On her the moon looked stedfastly ; the stars
That circle nightly round the eternal throne
Glanced down, well pleased ; and everlasting Love
Gave gracious audience to her prayer sincere.
O had her lover seen her thus alone,
Thus holy, wrestling thus, and all for him !
Nor did he not : for oftentimes Providence
With unexpected joy the fervent prayer
Of faith surprised. Returned from long delay,
With glory crowned of righteous actions won,
The sacred thorn, to memory dear, first sought
The youth, and found it at the happy hour
Just when the damsel kneeled herself to pray.
Rapt in devotion, pleading with her God,
She saw him not, heard not his foot approach.
All holy images seemed too impure

To emblem her he saw. A seraph kneeled,
Beseeching for his ward before the throne,
Seemed fittest, pleased him best. Sweet was the thought!
But sweeter still the kind remembrance came,
That she was flesh and blood formed for himself,
The plighted partner of his future life.
And as they met, embraced, and sat embowered
In woody chambers of the starry night,
Spirits of love about them ministered,
And God, approving, blessed the holy joy!



FELICIA HEMANS.

—
1793 to 1835.
—

THE HOMES OF ENGLAND.

THE stately Homes of England,
How beautiful they stand !
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land.
The deer across their greensward bound
Through shade and sunny gleam,
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry Homes of England !
Around their hearths by night,
What gladsome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light !
There woman's voice flows forth in song,
Or childhood's tale is told,
Or lips move tunefully along
Some glorious page of old.

The blessed Homes of England !
How softly on their bowers
Is laid the holy quietness
That breathes from Sabbath-hours !
Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bell's chime
Floats through their woods at morn ;
All other sounds, in that still time,
Of breeze and leaf are born.

The cottage Homes of England !
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet fanes.
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves,
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free, fair Homes of England !
Long, long, in hut and hall,
May hearts of native proof be reared,
To guard each hallowed wall !
And green for ever be the groves,
And bright the flowery sod,
Where first the child's glad spirit loves
Its country and its God !

REGINALD HEBER.

1783 to 1826.

MIRIAM'S SONG.

OH! welcome came the morn, where Israel stood
In trustless wonder by the avenging flood!
Oh! welcome came the cheerful morn, to show
The drifted wreck of Zoan's pride below!
The mangled limbs of men — the broken car —
A few sad relics of a nation's war:
Alas, how few! Then, soft as Elim's well,
The precious tears of new-born freedom fell.
And he, whose hardened heart alike had borne
The house of bondage and the oppressor's scorn,
The stubborn slave, by hope's new beams subdued,
In faltering accents sobbed his gratitude,
Till, kindling into warmer zeal, around
The virgin timbrel waked its silver sound;

And in fierce joy, no more by doubt supprest,
The struggling spirit throbb'd in Miriam's breast.
She, with bare arms, and fixing on the sky
The dark transparence of her lucid eye,
Poured on the winds of heaven her wild sweet harmony.
"Where now," she sang, "the tall Egyptian spear?
On's sunlike shield, and Zoan's chariot, where?
Above their ranks the whelming waters spread.
Shout, Israel, for the Lord hath triumphèd!"
And every pause between, as Miriam sang,
From tribe to tribe the martial thunder rang,
And loud and far their stormy chorus spread —
"Shout, Israel, for the Lord hath triumphèd!"

MISSIONARY HYMN.

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile ;
In vain, with lavish kindness,
The gifts of God are strown,
The Heathen, in his blindness,
Bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high —
Shall we to man benighted
The lamp of life deny ?
Salvation ! Oh, salvation !
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole.
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb, for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign !

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

1777 to 1848.

THE HARPER.

ON the green banks of Shannon, when Sheelah was nigh,
No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I ;
No harp like my own could so cheerily play,
And wherever I went was my poor dog Tray.

When at last I was forced from my Sheelah to part,
She said, (while the sorrow was big at her heart,)
Oh ! remember your Sheelah when far, far away ;
And be kind, my dear Pat, to our poor dog Tray.

Poor dog ! he was faithful and kind, to be sure,
And he constantly loved me, although I was poor :
When the sour-looking folks sent me heartless away,
I had always a friend in my poor dog Tray.

When the road was so dark, and the night was so cold,
And Pat and his dog were grown weary and old,
How snugly we slept in my old coat of grey,
And he lick'd me for kindness — my poor dog Tray.

Though my wallet was scant, I remember'd his case,
Nor refused my last crust to his pitiful face ;
But he died at my feet on a cold winter day,
And I play'd a sad lament for my poor dog Tray.

Where now shall I go, poor, forsaken, and blind ?
Can I find one to guide me, so faithful and kind ?
To my sweet native village, so far, far away,
I can never more return with my poor dog Tray.

SONG — "MEN OF ENGLAND."

MEN of England ! who inherit
Rights that cost your sires their blood !
Men whose undegenerate spirit
Has been proved on land and flood : —
By the foes you 've fought uncounted,
By the glorious deeds ye 've done,
Trophies captured — breaches mounted,
Navies conquer'd — kingdoms won !

Yet, remember, England gathers
Hence but fruitless wreaths of fame,
If the freedom of your fathers
Glow not in your hearts the same.

What are monuments of bravery,
Where no public virtues bloom ?
What avail, in lands of slavery,
Trophied temples, arch and tomb ?

Pageants ! — Let the world revere us
For our people's rights and laws,
And the breasts of civic heroes
Bared in Freedom's holy cause.

Yours are Hampden's, Russel's glory,
Sydney's matchless shade is yours, —
Martyrs in heroic story,
Worth a hundred Agincourts !

We 're the sons of sires that baffled
Crown'd and mitred tyranny : —
They defied the field and scaffold
For their birthrights — so will we !

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM.

Our bugles sang truce—for the night-cloud had lower'd,
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpower'd,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

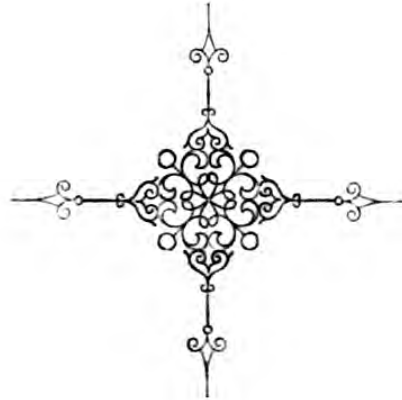
When reposing that night on my pallet of straw,
By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain ;
At the dead of the night a sweet vision I saw,
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array,
Far, far I had roam'd on a desolate track :
'T was Autumn, — and sunshine arose on the way
To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields, traversed so oft
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young ;
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore,
From my home and my weeping friends never to part ;
My little ones kiss'd me a thousand times o'er,
And my wife sobb'd aloud in her fulness of heart.

Stay, stay with us, — rest, thou art weary and worn ;
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay ; —
But sorrow return'd with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.



BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him ,
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we stedfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they 'll talk of the spirit that 's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him —
But little he 'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone —
But we left him alone with his glory !

WOLFE.

CASA WAPPY.

AND hast thou sought thy heavenly home,
Our fond, dear boy —
The realm where sorrow dare not come,
Where life is joy ?
Pure at thy death as at thy birth,
Thy spirit caught no taint from earth ;
Even by its bliss we mete our death,
Casa Wappy !

Despair was in our last farewell,
As closed thine eye ;
Tears of our anguish may not tell
When thou didst die ;
Words may not paint our grief for thee,
Sighs are but bubbles on the sea,
Of our unfathomed agony,
Casa Wappy !

Thou wert a vision of delight,
To bless us given ;
Beauty embodied to our sight,
A type of heaven :
So dear to us thou wert, thou art
Even less thine own self than a part
Of mine and of thy mother's heart,
Casa Wappy !

Thy bright brief day knew no decline,
'T was cloudless joy ;
Sunrise and night alone were thine,
Beloved boy !
This morn beheld thee blithe and gay,
That found thee prostrate in decay,
And ere a third shone, clay was clay,
Casa Wappy !

Gem of our hearth, our household pride,
Earth's undefiled ;
Could love have saved, thou hadst not died,
Our dear, sweet child !
Humbly we bow to Fate's decree ;
Yet had we hoped that Time should see
Thee mourn for us, not us for thee,
Casa Wappy !

Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight ;
There dost thou glide before me still —
A form of light !
I feel thy breath upon my cheek —
I see thee smile — I hear thee speak —
Till oh ! my heart is like to break,
Casa Wappy !

Methinks thou smilest before me now,
With glance of stealth ;
The hair thrown back from thy full brow
In buoyant health :
I see thine eyes' deep violet light,
Thy dimpled cheek carnationed bright,
Thy clasping arms so round and white,
Casa Wappy !

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball ;
But where art thou ?
A corner holds thine empty chair,
Thy playthings idly scattered there,
But speak to us of our despair,
Casa Wappy !

Even to the last thy every word —
 To glad, to grieve —
Was sweet as sweetest song of bird
 On summer's eve ;
In outward beauty undecayed,
Death o'er thy spirit cast no shade,
And like the rainbow thou didst fade,
 Casa Wappy !

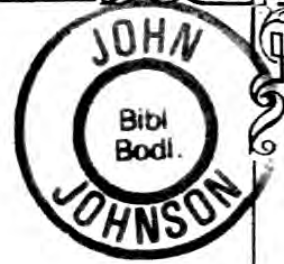
We mourn for thee when blind blank night
 The chamber fills ;
We pine for thee when morn's first light
 Reddens the hills :
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea,
All, to the wall-flower and wild pea,
Are changed — we saw the world through thee,
 Casa Wappy !

And though, perchance, a smile may gleam
 Of casual mirth,
It doth not own, whate'er may seem,
 An inward birth :
We miss thy small step on the stair ;
We miss thee at thine evening prayer !
All day we miss thee, everywhere,
 Casa Wappy !

Snows muffled earth when thou didst go,
 In life's spring bloom,
Down to the appointed house below,
 The silent tomb.
But now the green leaves of the tree,
The cuckoo and "the busy bee,"
Return — but with them bring not thee,
 Casa Wappy !

'T is so ; but can it be (wild flowers
 Revive again) —
Man's doom, in death that we and ours
 For aye remain ?
Oh ! can it be, that o'er the grave
The grass, renewed, should yearly wave,
Yet God forget our child to save ? —
 Casa Wappy !

It cannot be : for were it so
 Thus man could die,
Life were a mockery, Thought were wo,
 And Truth a lie ;
Heaven were a coinage of the brain,
Religion frenzy, Virtue vain,
And all our hopes to meet again,
 Casa Wappy !



Then be to us, O dear, lost child,
With beam of love,
A star, death's uncongenial wild
Smiling above ;
Soon, soon thy little feet have trod
The skyward path, the seraph's road,
That led thee back from man to God,
Casa Wappy !

Yet 't is sweet balm to our despair,
Fond, fairest boy,
That heaven is God's, and thou art there,
With him in joy :
There past are death and all its woes,
There beauty's stream for ever flows,
And pleasure's day no sunset knows,
Casa Wappy !

Farewell, then — for a while, farewell —
Pride of my heart !
It cannot be that long we dwell
Thus torn apart :
Time's shadows like the shuttle flee :
And, dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave I'll meet with thee,
Casa Wappy !

D. M. MOIR — DELTA.

(From "The Excursion.")

THE mountain ash

No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms ; and ye may have marked,
By a brookside or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn. The pool
Glow's at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale,
Such and so glorious did this youth appear ;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand
Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form ;
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade,
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame

May find chance mention on this sacred ground),⁷
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone ;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley. How the quoit
Whizzed from the stripling's arm ! If touched by him,
The inglorious football mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight, or shaped a rainbow curve
Aloft in prospect of the shouting field !
The indefatigable fox had learned
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loath to assault the majesty he loved,
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glede,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
The sporting sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious waterfowl from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the mere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim.

WORDSWORTH.

POWER AND GENTLENESS.

NOBLE the mountain stream,
Bursting in grandeur from its vantage-ground ;
Glory is in its gleam
Of brightness — thunder in its deafening sound !

Mark, how its foamy spray,
Tinged by the sunbeams with reflected dyes,
Mimics the bow of day
Arching in majesty the vaulted skies ;

Thence, in a summer-shower,
Steeping the rocks around — O ! tell me where
Could majesty and power
Be clothed in forms more beautifully fair ?

Yet lovelier, in my view,
The streamlet flowing silently serene ;
Traced by the brighter hue,
And livelier growth it gives — itself unseen !

It flows through flowery meads,
Gladdening the herds which on its margin browse ;
Its quiet beauty feeds
The alders that o'ershade it with their boughs.

Gently it murmurs by
The village churchyard : its low, plaintive tone,
A dirge-like melody,
For worth and beauty modest as its own.

More gaily now it sweeps
By the small school-house in the sunshine bright ;
And o'er the pebbles leaps,
Like happy hearts by holiday made light.

May not its course express,
In characters which they who run may read,
The charms of gentleness,
Were but its still small voice allowed to plead ?

What are the trophies gained
By power, alone, with all its noise and strife,
To that meek wreath, unstained,
Won by the charities that gladden life ?

Niagara's streams might fail,
And human happiness be undisturbed :
But Egypt would turn pale,
Were her still Nile's o'erflowing bounty curbed !

BERNARD BARTON.





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