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POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER

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POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER

EDITED BY

THE REV. ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT

INCUMBENT OF BEAR WOOD

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THESE POEMS OF A TRUE ENGLISHMAN

Are Inscribed

BY R. A. WILLMOTT.

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BY R. A. WILMOT

PREFACE.

THIS Volume contains all the original Poems of Cowper, except the Olney Hymns; it includes, also, the translations from Milton, Vincent Bourne, Madame Guyon, and some miscellaneous Authors. The Text has been revised with care. Cowper was extremely watchful in preserving the measure of his verse, particularly distinguishing the dactyle from the spondee; with that view he introduced very frequent elisions, which his later Editors seem, with one consent, to have erased. These are now restored. The punctuation of the Poems presents many difficulties. "I know no use of points," Cowper wrote to Mr. Unwin, "unless to direct the voice;" and his own inclination led him to claim for the author an authority quite independent of the grammarian. A man of fine taste may, indeed, regulate the inflection, the cadence, and the pause by the instinct of his own ear; but the general reader requires some distinctive guides. In the present

Volume I have endeavoured to supply them. The number and the length of the Poems prevented me from inserting many critical remarks; but the foot-notes are numerous, and will be found, I hope, illustrative of the Poet. The introductory notice of Cowper is designed for a picture-sketch of his life and genius.

St Catherine's, Bear Wood,

October 9, 1854

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WILLIAM COWPER.

HERTFORDSHIRE, though according to Fuller it is the garden of England for delight, has never shown much bloom or fruit in literature; and its fair places, courts, halls, and manors embalm few great names in history or learning. But the pastoral house of Great Berkhamstead did give to it one Worthy in WILLIAM COWPER, born November 26, 1731. His father, the second son of a Judge of the Common Pleas, was Rector of the parish, and Chaplain to George the Second. The walnut-tree and the elms of the parsonage have long been cut down, and we know not whether the sacrilege was visited by the misfortune, which Evelyn affirms to have always followed such an act. Like his two most attached and distinguished friends—Hayley and Newton—Cowper was blessed with an admirable mother, whose love he has for ever recorded. Her sweet face confirms the praise of her son, who lost her two days before the completion of his sixth year. Her death very speedily bore bitter fruit. The morning task of the "gardener Robin" was over, and the sorrowing child was placed in the school of Dr. Pitman at Market-street; a town which has the singular fortune of being divided between Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. There Cowper spent two years of misery in mind and body. The wrench alone might have left so tender and clinging a spirit wounded and bleeding; but a special affliction awaited him in a boy older than himself; and greedy, as well as curious, in the brutalities which he worked. The school-fellows were at length separated, the bully by expulsion, and the victim by removal. Cowper was now entrusted to the care of an oculist, in whose house he abode for two

years, not without some alleviation of his complaint; but a subsequent attack of the small-pox seems to have been a successfuller medicine to his eyes.

At ten years of age we find Cowper settled at Westminster School. Those early days of his life are not to be judged by the sombre colours in which he afterwards portrayed them. He shared the amusements of his companions, and was great at foot-ball and cricket. But the "coming event" of his manhood already began to throw forward a little shadow, in low spirits, a chilling sense of personal guilt, and a dread of incipient consumption. There was much to brace him in the air of the place. Westminster had never sheltered a more promising growth of genius, since Dryden sate under the ferule of Busby. Foremost on the list we see Churchill, older than Cowper by a few months; Hastings, presently to shine among the lights of our Eastern Empire; Cumberland, Lloyd, Thornton, Colman, and others not yet forgotten. A public school has seldom much of the "dim religious light" to solemnize the young mind; but Westminster did not lag behind its rivals, and perhaps we may read in the following verses a proof that the Master's religious preparation had not been entirely fruitless:—

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

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

O Solyma! if e'er thy praise
 Be silent in my song,
 Rude and displeasing be thy lays
 And artless be my tongue!

Thy name my fancy still employs ;
 To thee, great fountain of my joys,
 My sweetest airs belong.

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

Thou, too, great Babylon, shalt fall
 A victim to our God ;
 Thy monstrous crimes already call
 For heaven's chastising rod.
 Happy who shall thy little ones
 Relentless dash against the stones,
 And spread their limbs abroad.

Cowper was eighteen years old when he left Westminster, to pass some months with his father at the old rectory. His new home was in the house of Mr. Chapman, an attorney in London, to whom he was articled ; his fellow-clerk being the future Lord Chancellor Thurlow. The poet's uncle, Mr. Ashley Cowper, lived in Southampton-row, and there the two clerkly friends were constantly to be found "giggling and making giggle;" the establishment of Mr. Chapman being regarded only as a place of sleep, after the entertainment of the day. It was upon one of these occasions that Cowper startled the company with a hypothetical petition to the Chancellor that was to be:— "Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall always be nobody; you will be Chancellor; you shall provide for me when you are." Thurlow readily gave a promise, and repeated it twice. How he kept it, the readers of the poet are well informed. It was not a singular case. He had engaged to make Eldon a Commissioner of Bankrupts, and when, in later years he was reminded of his broken assurance, he told his then prosperous brother in the law, that he had disappointed him only to make him work.

But Southampton-row had a particular charm for one of these gigglers, in the handsome face and lively temper of

his cousin, Theodora Jane Cowper. It was at this period that Cowper wrote the playful stanzas on "Himself:"—

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

Some said that it was want of sense,
And others want of spirit,
(So blest a thing is impudence,
While others could not bear it.)

But some a different notion had,
And, at each other winking,
Observed, that though he little said,
He paid it off with thinking.

Howe'er it happened, by degrees,
He mended and grew perter ;
In company was more at ease,
And dressed a little smarter ;

Nay, now and then would look quite gay,
As other people do ;
And sometimes said, or tried to say,
A witty thing or so.

He eyed the women, and made free
To comment on their shapes ;
So that there was, or seemed to be,
No fear of a relapse.

The women said, who thought him rough,
But now no longer foolish,
"The creature may do well enough,
But wants a deal of polish."

At length, improved from head to heel,
'Twere scarce too much to say,
No dancing bear was so genteel,
Or half so *dégage*.

Now that a miracle so strange
May not in vain be shown,
Let the dear maid who wrought the change
E'en claim him for her own.

A letter of Hayley to John Johnson, May 15, 1814, enables us satisfactorily to identify the lady to whom these lines were addressed:—"The attractive composition 'William was once,' could not be printed without a violation of my word of honour; for when the kind T— sent

them to me, I promised that I would keep them secret and sacred, as was wished, and never print unless I happened to be the survivor."

Cowper was called to the "Bar" in 1754, but his studies led him along more flowery paths. In the meanwhile, Thurlow struggled up the difficult rock, making sure of every step in the ice, as he cut it; for he was haunted by no "Delia," darting bewildering gleams over Coke and Littleton. The stream of love soon ran roughly in Southampton-row. It was in the year 1755 that the hopes of the cousins began to decline. The father of the lady opposed the union, and was not to be shaken by argument or entreaty. The parting hour came, and the lovers never saw one another again.

On Cowper the shock was faint and transitory; he had the wit of the Temple to fall back upon, and in the early spring of 1756 he recovered sufficient gaiety to banter old bachelors in the pages of the "Connoisseur," and to set forth the pleasant mischiefs of Miss Diana Grizzle, who utterly spoiled the only suit of a poor celibate by pinning the skirts of it together with a red-hot poker. It may be doubted if Cowper's love for his cousin had ever ripened into any feeling, richer and more glowing than the admiration of an affectionate and rather changeable temperament. "I still look back," he told Lady Hesketh, in mature life, "to the memory of your sister, and regret her; but how strange it is, if we were to meet now, we should not know each other." Did a love, worthy of the name, ever think or speak thus? How much truer to the heart is the picture of Edith, in the "Talisman," holding her silver lamp over the black face of the disguised Nubian, as if to peruse his features, then placing it that it might throw the shadow of the face in profile upon the curtain which hung beside her in the tent, and at length, speaking in a voice composed yet deeply sorrowful:—"Is it you? Is it indeed you, brave Knight of the Leopard?" Memory has its own lamp, fed with aromatic oil, and bright enough to pierce *

darker cloud than the skill of Saladin shed over the Scottish knight. Theodora would have known William. Nothing in the history of poets is more touching than her tenderness and faith. Unseen she watched, and cherished, and cheered the beloved of her youth; now she increased his comforts by an enclosure of money; at another time, she pleased him by some elegant gift. "Dear Anonymous," he exclaimed, "is come again." But Southampton-row must have faded in thick shadow, when he breathed a grateful prayer for his benefactor, and said: "*God bless him!*" How could he unpack the parcel and take out the snuff-box of tortoiseshell, with the familiar landscape on the lid of it, and the figures of the three hares, and read "The Peasant's Rest," and the names of "Tiney," "Puss," and "Bess," without being sure that only womanly tenderness could have shown itself with such delicacy and grace.

We left Cowper in the Temple, cheating time with a hasty sketch in prose or verse, teaching the art of keeping a secret, and turning an ode from Horace or a motto from Terence into pleasant metre. Moreover, the "Nonsense Club" was in all its glory, and with one of its members, Joseph Hill, the Sephus of his earlier letters, he maintained an intercourse through life. The drudgery of the office had not yet chilled the literary taste and romance of the young lawyer, who delighted to waste a summer's day in reading Tasso's "Jerusalem," or the "Pastor Fido," on a mouldering wall by the sea-shore. Cowper's literary fire would be kept alive by the wants and the fame of his associates. Lloyd enlisted his sympathy, and Churchill inflamed his ambition. That remarkable person was then stunning the public ear with his "giddy larum" of rhyme. Cowper might be offended by his life, but he was an enthusiast in the praise of his genius. He had the feeling in common with his contemporaries. Goldsmith's "Traveller" was only regarded as a star that began to shine after the sun was gone down; and Walpole inforres

us of a namesake of the poet who being asked by a Frenchman if he were *le fameux poete*, and, answering in the negative, was greeted with the complimentary exclamation: "*Ma foi, Monsieur, tant pis pour vous.*"

This Temple-life was more easy than profitable to a man in his thirty-second year; and just at the period when his means were sinking to a very low ebb, Fortune seemed to shine out upon him with all her lustre. His kinsman, Major Cowper, called at the poet's chambers, and requesting him to take a turn in the garden, offered him the office of Reading Clerk, and of Clerk of the Committees, in the House of Lords. Cowper had scarcely accepted the appointment, when, in his own words, "he seemed to receive a dagger in his heart." A change of the richer post for the humbler one of Clerk of the Journals, in some measure healed the wound. But sharper pangs were in store. His kinsman's right of presentation was disputed, and the prospect of a public and hostile examination of his own competency quite overset the judgment of the poet. Troubled by day, sleepless by night, a perpetual fever wasted his spirits, as he pored upon the journals with a dizzy brain, in the search of the information which he needed. About the middle of August, 1763, he obtained a short respite from his agony in a visit to Margate; but the good effects of the holiday vanished in the renewed investigations of October. He now found himself in a strait betwixt two difficulties,—the retaining of the office until the last minute, or the immediate resignation of it. Fearful were his struggles in his lonely chambers; sometimes bursting forth into loud cries of anguish and wrath. The tempest was coming up swift with the wind. He saw no escape from the trial that he dreaded, except in madness or suicide. His own pen has written the dreadful tale. It was on a dark November evening of that fatal "'63," that he entered a chemist's shop, and with a tranquil voice and look, requested to have a half-ounce phial of laudanum. He obtained it, and

placed it carefully in a side pocket for future use; but as he walked in the fields, his despair put on a new face. He would go to France; his small property in the Funds might be sold out in an hour; and when it was all spent he could become a Romanist, and find a shelter with the Friars. Delighted with the expedient, he hurried back to his chambers, and was looking over his portmanteau, when the former plan of self-murder again presented itself with redoubled attractions. This time, drowning displaced poison. Without delay, he called a coach, and was driven to Tower Wharf, intending to throw himself into the river from the Custom-house quay; but when he reached it, he found the water low, and a porter seated on a pile of goods, as if keeping watch on purpose. Hopeless of accomplishing his object, he re-entered the coach, closed the shutters, and seized the laudanum. Twenty times he held the bottle to his lips, and as often an unseen hand seemed to beat it down. Arrived at the Temple, he shut the outer and the inner door, poured the laudanum into a basin, set it on a chair by the bed, and lay down. That hour of temptation passed away, to be followed by one yet deadlier in the morning. A broad crimson spot under the eye, and a red circle round the neck, showed the desperation and the character of the attempt. In this state of horror Major Cowper discovered him. Of course the Clerkship of the Journals was allowed to torment him no longer; but the storm only cleared for a few moments, to return with more blackness and fire. The delusion took a religious form, and in a sense fearfuller than the writer of the line imagined,

God's revenge hung heavy on his soul.

It was during one of these seasons of frenzy and violence that he composed the awful lyric on his own mind:—

Hatred and vengeance,—my eternal portion
Scarce can endure delay of execution,—
Wait with impatient readiness to seize my
Soul in a moment.

Damned below Judas; more abhorred than he was,
 Who for a few pence sold his holy Master!
 Twice betrayed Jesus me, the last delinquent,
 Deems the profanest.

Man disavows, and Deity disowns me,
 Hell might afford my miseries a shelter;
 Therefore, Hell keeps her ever-hungry mouths all
 Bolted against me.

Hard lot! encompassed with a thousand dangers;
 Weary, faint, trembling with a thousand terrors,
 I'm called, if vanquished! to receive a sentence
 Worse than Abiram's.

Him the vindictive rod of angry Justice
 Sent quick and howling to the centre headlong;
 I, fed with judgment, in a fleshy tomb am
 Buried above ground.

Dr. Southey considered the third line in the fourth verse to be evidently corrupted, and suggested the alteration of "if vanquished," into "in anguish." He did not remember the history in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers, where Dathan and Abiram, the leaders of a rebellion against Moses, are seen resolved to abide the consequences of it. Accordingly they were vanquished, and the opening of the earth was the result of their defeat and the punishment of it. In like manner, the delirious poet represents himself as a rebel, daring to contend with God, and certain, if overcome, to receive a horrible condemnation. The crisis had now arrived, and in December his friends removed him to the house of Dr. Cotton at St. Alban's. The choice was happy; the physician was himself a writer of verses, that in his own day won the name of poetry. His "Visions," published twelve years before his acquaintance with Cowper, were favourites with young readers; and perhaps to the playfulness and the moralising tone of those writings, his celebrated patient may have been unconsciously indebted. It was in this house of mercy that the sick soul of Cowper found health. Seven months he waited the coming down of the angel.

When thus he lay,
 Forlorn of heart, withered, and desolate,
 As leaf of Autumn, which the wolfish winds,

Selecting from its fallen sisters, chase
Far from its native grove, to lifeless wastes,
And leave it there alone to be forgotten
Eternally. God passed in mercy by,—
His praise be ever new! and on him breathed,
And bade him live, and put into his hands
A holy harp, into his lips a song,
That rolled its numbers down the tide of Time:
Ambitious now but little to be praised
Of men alone; ambitious most, to be
Approved of God, the Judge of all; and have
His name recorded in the book of life.

The recovery began with a visit of his brother from Cambridge, July 25, 1764; he only stayed one day, but it was blessed of God to the restoring of the sufferer. The brothers went together into the garden, and as they walked, William spoke of the sudden judgment that awaited him; John declared the fear to be only a delusion, and his assurances were so vehement, that they arrested the attention of his companion, who, bursting into tears, exclaimed: "If it be a delusion, then I am the happiest of beings." This was the first shine of the bow in the cloud. He slept well that night, and awoke a new creature. Not long afterwards, being again in the garden, and finding a Bible on a seat, he opened it and read the history of Lazarus. The tomb of Bethany brought tender thoughts, and his reviving hopes grew daily, as mercy, peace, and love streamed in upon him from the Cross, seen in its beauty and power.

Cowper prolonged his sojourn with Dr. Cotton for a year after his recovery, and when it became expedient to choose some new abode, his brother suggested Huntingdon as a convenient situation. On the 7th of June, 1765, he quitted St. Albans, with a grateful heart, and deeply in debt to his "little physician." From Cambridge to Huntingdon the distance is fifteen miles, and the brothers visited each other in alternate weeks. The servant, who nursed the poet in his long sorrow, accompanied him to his new home. He had not long occupied his

rodgings, when he was invited to exchange them for the roof of a family, whose names he has married to his own verse for ever. There lived in the High-street of Huntingdon, "in a genteel way," and "in a special good house," a clergyman, the Rev. Morley Unwin, who prepared a few pupils for the University. His proper sphere of duty was at Grimstone, Norfolk, of which he was the Incumbent; but he had a lively wife, and the vicarage was dull. To please her he returned to Huntingdon, where he had formerly been lecturer. Cowper describes the family to Lady Hesketh, September 14, 1765:—"The last acquaintance I made here is with the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mother, son and daughter, the most comfortable, social folks you ever knew. The son is about twenty-one years of age, one of the most unreserved and amiable young men I ever conversed with." The daughter "was eighteen, rather handsome, and genteel." The father was a Parson Adams, and his wife as polite as a duchess. It appears to have been about September, 1765, that the intimacy commenced with the Unwins, and in the February of the following year Cowper was admitted a member of their interesting circle. The motherly feeling of Mrs. Unwin very quickly showed itself, for we find him informing Hill that she knitted all his stockings, and would have knitted his hats, if she had been able. The peace of these brethren, dwelling together in so much unity, was suddenly broken by the death of Mr. Unwin, who sustained a fracture of the skull, by a fall from his horse, July, 1767. The accident only affected Cowper's place of abode, and while it was yet undetermined, Mr. Newton, in passing through Huntingdonshire, paid a visit to Mrs. Unwin. Being then curate of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, he proposed his own parish as a desirable home, and his suggestion proving acceptable, the two friends, henceforth to be put asunder only by death, fixed their habitation in a house which Mr. Newton provided for them, October 14, 1767.

The history of Newton is well-known. He was then about forty-two years of age, a warm-hearted, vigorous, earnest man, with a dash of peremptoriness that brought back the stormier days of the slaver. His character had several features likely to attract the regard of Cowper. He was a poet in his love of nature. A fine landscape gave him intense delight. It had been his habit, whenever he found an opportunity, to say his prayers in the open air, on the hill-top, or under the shade of trees. His temper, too, was quick and fanciful, not disinclined to superstition, but regulated by a very clear and powerful understanding. It were vain to deny the excellence of such a man; yet it may be fairly doubted if he did not cause irreparable injury to Cowper. I do not mean either by his conversation or his doctrine. Newton, in the happy phrase which has been applied to him, was not a sulphureous preacher, continually looking out a new word in the diabolical dictionary, although his pulpit had got an ill name for disordering the minds of the parish. Southey has indicated the true seat of the mischief in the system of spiritual excitement, which he kept up with untiring perseverance; the sermon, the prayer-meeting, the lecture, the exposition, the visit, each followed the other with a perplexing and incessant rapidity, that made the heart's yoke painful, and its burden heavy. Newton suffered nothing from his work; in former years he had been exposed on the shelterless deck, with no clothing but a shirt, a pair of drawers, and a handkerchief round his head, to the rain and wind for forty hours. His robust frame defied fatigue. It was otherwise with Cowper. Never did the man live to whom excitement was more perilous. He had been heard to confess, that when he expected to take the lead in a prayer-meeting, his mind was always greatly agitated for some hours preceding it. The tremor might die with the first words he uttered, but the effect remained. What a temperament for a lay

curate! Four days in the week the friends constantly passed together, allotting the time after this manner:—dinner at one, tea three hours later, and a lecture, or some religious exercise, which lasted until supper. The summer walk was entirely lost by such an arrangement, and the mind enjoyed no calm.

Bacon was surely wiser, when he advised people in search of health to entertain a variety of delights, rather than a surfeit of them, and studies that fill the understanding with splendid and illustrious objects.

The death of the poet's brother, in 1770, was a calamity of which the effects were soon apparent. If Mr. Newton had deserved the praise of being able to draw a hair-stroke, where another man would make a blot as large as a sixpence, we should not have found him recommending to such a sufferer the composition of the Olney Hymns. Cowper had not proceeded far in the work, before his afflicting disorder returned with extreme violence.

Oh! who can tell what days, what nights he spent
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe.

It was now that the devoted tenderness of his second mother obtained a task worthy of it. "What," wrote Mrs Grant, of Laggan, nearly fifty years afterwards, "but sensibility of the purest, highest kind, led her to do and suffer, in the cause of friendship, more than ever the courage of man or the love of woman achieved? Dying for one's friend was nothing to this. Estranged from all social enjoyments, and having one's sole attention tied down, day after day, and year after year, to the most painful object that heart can conceive—the ghastly form and suspended faculties of a dear friend! How much beyond the conception of ordinary minds was the tenderness, the constancy, the fortitude, and, above all, the faith of this blessed woman! Lady Hesketh, the good, the generous, the amiable, tried to fill her place, but sank under it. Miss Fanshawe, who was with Lady H. in the

last months of her life, told me that she never recovered the miserable winter she spent with her beloved cousin."¹

When the wheels of thought began to move again, some employment was wanted that might occupy, without oppressing, the mind of the poet; and he found it in the domestication of his three hares. Cowper's love of animals had been a feature of his boyish character. At Westminster he kept a tame mouse in his "bureau," and rejoiced in the appearance of six mice; but going one morning to visit the enlarged family, he discovered that the maternal mouse had devoured it, and turning her loose in his wrath, he banished the tribe for ever from his sympathies. In future days he met with kindlier specimens of the mute creation. Long is the catalogue of his rabbits, cats, magpie, squirrels, pigeons, starling, jay, goldfinches, canary birds, and robins. His spaniel Beau is preserved in rhyme. "Shock" was hardly guarded with more solicitude by Ariel. A poet's hand alone might comb his ears, or pick out the burrs which he caught from the thickets in the grassy walks about Weston. But the story of the hares should be read by itself, in the author's own words; it might be bound up with Cowley's essay "Of Myself:"—

In the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of anything that would engage my attention, without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything: it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present, and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here

¹ "Correspondence of Mrs. Grant," iii. 35.

distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you, that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick), and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed; the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was, however, very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been

washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when, the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the *Vestris* of the party. One evening, the cat being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them no two could be found exactly similar: a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites: to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least, grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them: I suppose as a digestive. It

happened, that I was cleaning a birdcage when the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which, being at once directed to it by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties: they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night; during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These, however, not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit, that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins, by a fall; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he has grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.¹

¹MEMORANDUM FOUND AMONG MR. COWPER'S PAPERS.

"Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

"This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pa-

Natural history was not his only amusement. The chisel and the saw were likewise in great request in his diligent hands, producing tables and joint-stools of mysterious workmanship. There was not, he said, in all the county, a squire who had made better squirrel-houses, nutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than himself; while in the manufacture of cabbage-nets he had no superior. His ambition even grasped the pencil, which he used through a whole year in delineating figures that had no parallel in nature or art. Having completed three landscapes, and seen them glazed and framed, and remembering that no artist was ever painted down except by himself, he determined to relinquish the pursuit, and retire with his fame. Of all his little engagements, gardening was the most beneficial and lasting. He began with lettuces and cauliflowers, ascending by slow steps to melons, an orange-tree, and myrtles. A severe winter put his skill to the trial, but he rose with the occasion, contriving to give his plants and beds a fire-heat; and he might have been seen wading through the snow, with the bellows under his arm, "just before going to bed, to give the latest puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning."

The friend who watched the poet in his long sickness, was to have the reward of finding a comfort for him when the heaviness of the night had in some measure melted in the morning. To the suggestion of Mrs. Unwin we owe the first volume of Cowper's poems. The winter of 1780 was cheered by the employment. "At this season of the year," he said, "and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divert it from sad objects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect." He was not one of the mob of gentlemen who write with ease. "A poet in my circumstances," he told a friend, "has a difficult part to act. One minute obliged to bridle his humour, if he has any, and the next to clap a spur to the sides of it;

now ready to weep from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If this be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is, and if any man doubt it, let him try."

While Cowper was busy in these poetical labours, a lady to whom every reader of taste must be for ever indebted, came to visit her sister, in the neighbouring village of Clifton. Her name was Austen, the widow of Sir Robert Austen. Cowper was looking through the window when the two sisters entered a shop on the opposite side of the street, and being immediately struck by the appearance of the stranger, he requested Mrs. Unwin to invite them to tea. The growth of the acquaintance was as rapid as the commencement had been romantic; and her "ladyship" quickly vanished in "dear Anna." Olney rarely received so attractive a guest. A fairer form and face might not shine upon a poet, even in dreams. "Show but a wish to please her," exclaimed the delighted friend, "and the tears start into her eyes." For Mr. Newton he painted a graver portrait: "She is a lively, agreeable woman, has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labour at it." The intimacy lasted between three and four years; and perhaps it formed the brightest episode in a life most sad and stormy. The morning call, the afternoon walk, the literary evening, the mirthful conversation, and the gay song, were blended together in harmonious interchange. A door in the garden, originally opened by Mr. Newton, helped to unite the two families, who dined at each other's houses alternately.

Nor less it pleased in livelier mood

Beyond the bounding hills to stray,

And break the live-long summer day,

With banquet in the distant woods.

Who has forgotten the picnic in the Spinnie? Frou

those hours of genial intercourse flowed the "Task" and the grander Homeric strains. Great familiarity, however, is always a perilous delight; and after the sunny day the sharp frost sets in. Neither is constancy in his attachments, with the exception of Mrs. Unwin, to be numbered among the virtues of Cowper. He has confessed that his admiration was passionate and fleeting. The gloss of a new pleasure soon wore off; and perhaps the most delicate texture was the least enduring. The friends quarrelled, and the cause of the lady's anger is stated by Hayley with a positiveness and authority that cannot be questioned. She had reason to be offended. Not even Theodora had treasured the verses of her laureate with a fonder interest. From those endearing expressions of regard, what closer bond might not "Sister Anne" have anticipated? Yet the charming delusion would have yielded to a more thoughtful knowledge of her friend. He treated his correspondents poetically. His kinsman, Mr. Johnson, was "Johnny of Norfolk;" "the Bull" symbolized the dissenting minister of that name; and the kind Throckmorton was "the Dowager Frog." Lady Austen had to learn by experience that love, like verse, is sometimes made in metaphor, and ends with it.

Any feeling of loneliness in the mind of Cowper was quickly dispersed by a new friendship with a family in the neighbouring village of Weston. The Throckmortons were Roman Catholics, liberal, charitable, and most accomplished and elegant in their tastes and pursuits.

Henceforward Weston Hall became a favourite haunt of Cowper, who found in it grace, kindness, books, and welcome. No vision of Guy Fawkes seems to have troubled his thoughts; the gentlemen opened their grounds to him, the ladies sang his songs, and even the Padre himself transcribed Homer. Dearer companionship was in store. "The Task," which appeared in 1785, awoke the sleeping memories of many friends. His old schoolfellow, Colman, who boarded in the same house at Westminster,

praised it in the *Observer*; and Lady Hesketh, inspired by "John Gilpin," sent a letter more delightful than all. The letter was followed by a visit, which led to the poet's removal from Olney to a very agreeable residence—the Lodge, at Weston. He had no sooner entered his new abode, than his eyes seemed to be opened to the wretchedness of the old; it was St. Giles's to Grosvenor-square. Weston he considered to be one of the prettiest villages in England, with walks delightful throughout the year. A terrace sloped gently down to the Ouse, overlooking a pleasant valley; and short grass met the footstep whithersoever it turned. The Lodge was sufficiently spacious, and Cowper regarded it as the fulfilment of Milton's visionary hermitage; that sequestered abode, he told his cousin, as understood by a poet, always meaning a house with six sashes in front, two comfortable parlours, a smart staircase, and three convenient bed-rooms. In the orchard he made the best winter walk in the parish, sheltered from cutting winds, and open to the early sun. It was just the place, he declared, to saunter along with Don Quixote in the hand; every denomination of feathered fowls swarmed in it, and pigs, the drollest in the world. A charming picture he draws of himself. Beau, of the silken ears, sits in his lap, licking his face, or nibbling the end of his pen; the birds make the wires ring in their joy; and through the elm tree, the sun, broken up among the leaves, glimmers over his paper with the softness of moonshine. Time deepened his affection; and playfully acknowledging his inability to write verses on any other spot, he compared himself to the man who could leap only at Rhodes. He had begun to enjoy his abode, and to be as comfortable as winter could make him, when his dear friend Mr. Unwin was suddenly snatched from life. A nervous fever was the penalty of his love. Not only Homer, but the pen also had to be put aside. He did not, however, abandon books altogether, and among others he read the poems of Burns, which Mr. Rose, "a young

gentleman who came six miles out of his way to see" him, brought to his notice. To Cowper, the dialect of Burns suggested the struggles of a bright candle in a dark lantern; but he esteemed him the only poet since Shakspeare, or rather since Prior, "who need not be indebted for any part of his praise to a charitable consideration of his origin, and the disadvantages under which he laboured."

The beginning of 1790 was marked by two circumstances of great interest in the life of Cowper; one being the receipt of his mother's picture, the gift of his cousin Anne Bodham, and the other the acquaintance of John Johnson, the grandson of his mother's brother, formerly rector of Catfield, in Norfolk. The picture, indeed, was the fruit of the visit. Cowper's heart yearned to his kinsman. He was then a very young man—"a wild boy," the poet called him, simple, humorous, and shy as a bird, with a sweet face, thoughtful and good, and moreover "a shred" of his own mother. Some years after Mr. Johnson closed the weary eyes of his famous relative, he obtained his reward, in a way stranger than fiction. A young orphan lady, rich, elegant, musical, and devout, was in the habit of reading Cowper with ever new delight, and charmed by the affectionate watchfulness of his kinsman, she sighed, and "wished that heaven had made her such a man." Mrs. Grant tells the story:¹ "Her worthy and liberal-minded relations, notwithstanding Johnny's confined circumstances and unprepossessing appearance—for he is little, and diffident in manner—her people, in short, told his people that Johnny might try; so he did, and succeeded; for when you know him, he is charming, innocent, sweet-tempered, full of fancy and humour, and a delightful letter writer." It was quite in harmony with the romance of the courtship, that the wedding visit should be to Hayley's house, where the bride sang and played all Cowper's lyrics. But Johnny had to cross a stormy sea, before he reached this haven.

¹ Correspondence, i. 187.

In the August of the same year, 1790, Cowper completed his version of the great Homeric Poems, upon which he had bestowed the continual and patient toil of five years and one month; and in the spring of the following year he concluded the second revisal. Perhaps an enterprise was never undertaken with slighter preparation, or with a more contemptuous opinion of a predecessor. Scarcely by one of his own Dunces could Pope have been more decried. In the judgment of Cowper, the simplicity of the original, the discrimination of the characters, and the naturalness of the narrative, had entirely disappeared from the English couplet; and the miserable nights and wanderings over trackless heaths, of which Pope complained, only seemed to his Critic to be the just tax levied by conscience upon an incompetent translator. No reader of Homer will deny that Pope modernized the costume and the furniture into the flowered gown and the lackered chair. But he performed what he designed, and made the Greek delightful in English. His work is a finer poem than it is a translation. Cowper is truer, but then he is harsher; we read him for the sake of Homer, but Pope may be read for himself. Let not Cowper be defrauded of his due praise. There are passages in which he caught the mantle of his ascending Master, and smote the current of song with equal power. An example is seen in the appearance of Apollo:—

—The god,
 Down from Olympus with his radiant bow,
 And his full quiver o'er his shoulder hung,
 Marched in his anger; shaken as he moved,
 His rattling arrows told of his approach.
 Gloomy he came as night; sate from the ships
 Apart, and sent an arrow. Clang'd the cord
 Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow.

These are noble lines; but the poems, viewed as wholes, are heavy and cold, while the inversions and transpositions are frequent and perplexing.

The translator of the Iliad and Odyssey had hardly

rested from his labours, when he was invited to superintend an edition of the only poet who might claim to be the companion of the Grecian. Cowper's veneration for Milton was profound; but, like the object of his love, he had now fallen upon evil days. The protracted strain of the Homeric Bow began to be felt in every nerve, and the illness of Mrs. Unwin, who suffered an attack of paralysis in the winter of 1791, shattered him still more. A second blow struck her in the following spring. Cowper was now entering the valley of the shadow of death. Day by day the same spectacle of grief filled his eyes; and surely the sun did not rise on a scene of mournfulness more peculiar and affecting. The brave, the gentle-hearted woman—the second mother, the friend, the nurse—sat listless in her chair; and he, the tender, the grateful, and the unhappy, ever needing the sympathising hand for his own tears, gave up all his time and strength to the lightening and the bearing of her burden. How could he enjoy the walk in field or wood, or by the river-side, when the companion of so many years was a prisoner in-doors? And not her body only was smitten; the stroke reached the mind, benumbing its noblest qualities, and arousing the most earthly. Amid these varied miseries the preparations for the edition of Milton were carried on, not, however, without one most precious alleviation, in the unexpected friendship of Hayley, for which Cowper was indebted to that employment. He accounted him the chief acquisition which his verses had procured; and Hayley was a man, notwithstanding all his faults, of whose regard he might well be proud. We trace several features of resemblance in the two poets. Each retained a romantic remembrance of his mother; each had undergone much cruelty at school; each was subject to inflammation in the eyes; and each formed an early attachment for

Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.

The boy Hayley, during an attack of the small-pox, was

persuaded to lie in bed by his mother, who promised to read the *Arcadia* to him. But his face alone would be an eloquent letter of introduction to so sensitive a reader of countenances as Cowper. The glow and the ardour that we look for, and rarely see, in poets, lived and breathed in it. His eyes were dark and lustrous, and his manner, in a high degree captivating and elegant. From the first interview Cowper claimed him for a brother. The accomplishments of the author were likely to preserve and enlarge the impression of the man. Southey was led by his notes to the study of Spanish literature. His poetical character deserves neither the scorn nor the praise which it has received; and Porson, who denounced him as the worst of poets, did not outrage criticism more than Gibbon, when he called his lines the most melodious since Pope's. Hayley's executive powers were not equal to his taste; but his "Triumphs of Temper" will outlive poems of which the world hears louder panegyrics. He has the advantage, growing scarcer every day, of being intelligible; and if we look in vain for splendour, we find sense.

Some slight oddities of personal character, not to mention graver defects of practice, might excite a kindly smile in Cowper; when he discovered his friend's habit of walking in the garden, though covered by a deep snow, long before daylight with a lantern in his hand, and of riding on horseback with an umbrella, of which the sudden opening frequently caused a ludicrous disaster. Upon one occasion, we are informed, he was tossed into the air, at the moment when an interesting friend, from whom he had just parted, was watching him from her window through a telescope, in anticipation of the catastrophe.

Hayley, while staying with his brother bard in the Lodge, obtained his promise to return the visit at Earsham. A journey to Timbuctoo has been undertaken with less anxiety. However, he took the road at last, accompanied by Mrs. Unwin, for whose sake chiefly he braved the difficulties of the expedition; and a travelling minstrel never

reposed under a more elegant or hospitable roof. Cowper's admiration of the house and its gardens is expressed in his letters. In the second summer after his visit, Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante, saw Hayley at Earsham. He talked of Cowper, and showed his favourite walk covered with laburnums, and the portrait by Romney. Twenty-five years went by, and again the same ingenious scholar met the friend of Cowper; he was then an old man, living a lonely life in the village of Felpham; but the same beloved picture still hung before his eyes, and pointing to it, he said: "There is our idol."

Cowper returned to Weston, September 22, 1792; his companion somewhat improved in strength, but he boasting small, if any amendment. One blessing greeted him on the threshold, in the shape of a "manifestation of God's presence," only dimly seen, but an assurance that his Father's face had not entirely withdrawn its light. A month, however, did not elapse before he complained of the future being dark as ever, and spoke of himself as scrambling always among rocks and precipices, with the enemy at his heels eager to push him over headlong. The gloom rapidly thickened, until every greater and lesser light of hope and peace was obscured or extinguished in it. A pension of three hundred pounds from the King, in 1794, awoke no satisfaction in the poet's breast, and the solicitude of his affectionate cousin, Lady Hesketh, seemed to be altogether without fruit. It was now that his dear Johnny of Norfolk became his protector; and believing that a summer's residence by the sea might invigorate his mind and body, on Tuesday, July 28, 1795, he prevailed on Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to accompany him to North Tuddenham, in Norfolk, which residence they subsequently exchanged for the village of Mundsley, on the coast. Cowper walked upon the sands, and listened to the soothing murmur of the breakers, but his heart was with the trees and the green leaves of Weston. The common herbs reminded him of the birds which he had left behind.

For him the spring bloom and the autumn lights were to shine and set no longer :—

Unwatched the garden-bough shall away,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved the beech-tree gather brown,
The maple burn itself away.

Dunham Lodge, near Swaffham, was also, for a season, the home of Cowper, where he listened to his kinsman reading the novels of Richardson, and other works of fiction; but the last scene of his troubled pilgrimage was the town of East Dereham, in the same county. There, December 17, 1796, his "Mary" fell asleep, and was buried in the north aisle of the church. His own body of death was to be dragged through four years longer; in that interval between night and morning, he bestowed considerable care upon his Homer, composed the pathetic poem, "The Cast-away," and translated some of the Latin verses of Vincent Bourne. But the end was in view; his constitution sank rapidly under the weight of anguish and time, and on Friday, the 25th of April, 1800, the voice of ONE who had been with him in all his storms, though he saw Him not, rebuked the waves and the winds, and there was a great calm. In the afternoon of that day the pilgrim spirit, its tears for ever dried, was at the haven where it would be. He was buried in St. Edmund's Chapel, in the church of East Dereham, on Saturday, the 2nd of May, and Hayley wrote the inscription for his monument.

In Memory of WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

Born in Hertfordshire 1731.

Buried in this Church 1800.

Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise.
His highest honours to the heart belong;
His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

The literary claims of Cowper do not rest on his poetry alone; his prose is exquisite. "A line written from this place," was his remark to Mr. Unwin, in 1783, "is a creation." Barren soil he found in that Silver End of Olney. But his letters grew, like his poems, out of richer ground. The smallest seed became a flower. A rose, blown over by last night's gale, was to be bound up; Catharina's birthday had returned, and demanded a song; a friend dropped in, and he must take him to see Yardley Oak; he has just unpacked a wealthy hamper from his cousin; a game of battledore and shuttlecock was to be finished with Lady Austen; or the last new book is to be read aloud to the evening circle. These were the materials of which he constructed his letters; and the style changes with the theme. Now we have a series of what, in the want of an English term, we may call genre-paintings, displaying home-life under its aspects of refinement and ease; then a moral and philosophical reflection, after the manner of Addison, with a mild gleam of Steele's pleasantry playing over it; afterwards, a wise and thoughtful homily, or a strain of warm and beautiful affection. The sunshine and the shadows, under the trees of Weston, might be the emblems of the gentleness and the humour that lighten and soften his many-coloured correspondence. He loved "talking letters," and wrote them; and if the talk be commonly of himself, who does not rejoice in the gain? "You tell me," Southey said to an old friend, "to write like an Egotist, and I am well-disposed to do so; for what else is it that gives private letters their greatest value, but the information they bring us of those for whom we are interested?" The letters of Cowper are his "Prose-writings," and related to his poetry, and illustrating it; having the same features and expression, and speaking with equal elegance and beauty.

Perhaps with the single exception of Shakspeare, Cowper is the English poet who has given the greatest happiness

to the greatest number. He had said, in a moment of gratified feeling at hearing the commendation of Joseph Warton, that the poet who pleases a man like him, has nothing left to wish for. But the praise of Warton was only the suffrage of the Scholar. It has been the rare fortune of Cowper to obtain the votes of the crowd. What safer candidate for Parnassus might go to the poll? The tasteful read him for his grace, and the serious for his religion. And the pleasure which he affords is of that natural, healthy character, which leaves no heat and weariness behind it. The mind is strengthened without a stimulant. His poetry influences the feelings, as a summer day affects the body; and the reader has a sense of enjoyment, calm, pure, and lasting.

As a moral satirist, Cowper may not be compared, for breadth and warmth of design and colour, with his elder brethren, Dryden and Pope; nor for power and music with his contemporary Churchill; and sometimes we seem to doze over a page of Mr. Newton's discourses set up in rhyme. But even in these ruder verses the chariot-wheels began to kindle. He had only started in the race. The "Task" was the goal. Of the four Poems which are everywhere known and read, "Paradise Lost" wins higher reverence; the "Seasons" stir the pulse with a wilder rapture; and the "Night Thoughts" unveil grander visions of the soul and its glories; but the "Task" is felt to be the chosen, the dear, the familiar friend; with a warning and a lesson for the old and the young, and a picture and a song for every hour in the day. No phrase can be more expressive than Coleridge's "divine chit-chat" of Cowper. Its biographical charm will be understood better by contrasting it with the "Prelude" of Wordsworth; and perhaps the only Episode which the reader wishes to erase, is that of the raising of cucumbers.

Cowper has been called the Gainsborough of our poetry; and the pencil never sprinkled fresher dews over the leaf,

than we see dropping from his pen. The little nook of his rural life was beneficial to the truthfulness of his pictures. Those painters produce the noblest works who gaze much and often upon the same spots. Such was Claude, watching the morning and evening lights over the Vatican and the valley of the Tiber; G. Poussin gathering into his memory the broad shadows and the mouldering walls of the Coliseum; or Wilson returning to the old Scotch firs beside his door. The most delicious landscapes of Milton were composed in his sequestered home in a Buckinghamshire village, the continual haunt of his footsteps, and the harvest of his eye.

The honours of Cowper are not to be restricted to his longer poems. There is scarcely any form of verse which he did not attempt, and he failed in none. The ballad of "John Gilpin" forms a class to itself; "Boadicea" is not far behind the ode of Campbell; while in poems of affection, the lyrics of his own heart, he challenges every brother of the lyre, from its first melody until now. The lines to "Mary," and to his "Mother's Picture," are not so much pathetic, as the words of Pathos itself. His lighter efforts of compliment and sympathy abound in sprightliness and play; the gallantry of the high-bred gentleman clothed in the allegory of the poet. Most of these pieces have a feminine birth and application. His manners in the society of women are said to have been extremely soft and engaging. He sang his choicest harmonies at their bidding, or in their praise; and never more may they hope to crown with their white hands such an Ariosto of the fireside.

And as he is among the most various, he is also one of the most original of our writers. Throughout the period of his author-life, his reading was slight. Of Collins he had never heard, until he saw his name in Johnson "Lives." Darwin surprised, and Beattie enchanted him; but his literary recollections belonged to early manhood,

when the accent and the phrases of the "Spectator" and the "Tatler" still lingered upon the public tongue. Milton he read in boyhood with a passion of delight; and the ear is often reminded in the "Task" of his majestic pauses. The writers, however, who chiefly coloured and shaped his poetry, were unquestionably Churchill and Young. His admiration of Churchill never wavered. Cowper was about fourteen years old when the concluding portion of the "Night Thoughts" appeared; and they had reached the height of their fame during his sojourn in the Temple. The resemblance to Young is not to be looked for in direct imitations, but in certain peculiarities of thought and utterance, scattered over the poems. To this class may be assigned the description of the gipsy encampment:—

—the sportive wind blows wide
 Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they hide.

And all these charms of fancy, tenderness, and wisdom are reflected through language nearly without a stain or a flaw. Purer, sweeter, simpler English never was written. La Fontaine gives the best idea of it to a French, as Wordsworth to a native reader. Several of the shorter poems are remarkable, as we see in Herbert, for the monosyllabic flow of the words, which not only enriches their music, but imparts to it the hearty Saxon tone. This, like every other excellence, he improved by labour. He did not take his pen from a line while there was the faintest hope of rendering it better; completing his work slowly, with many backward and forward steps of the artist, to judge of the effect of distance, combination, and colour. And so by genius and by toil, he has climbed to no mean seat in that Temple of Fame which he honoured and sought. Seven years before his death, he dreamed a dream of Pindus, and related it to Hayley. He seemed to be in a house in the city of London, with

much company assembled in the room, when, looking to the further end of it, he saw a figure which he immediately knew to be that of Milton. He was gravely attired in the fashion of the times. Cowper, after the transport of astonishment and delight had passed away, determined to accost him, and was received with a welcome of mingled dignity and sweetness, and listened to with a smile and a gentle bending of the head, as he spoke of the "Paradise Lost." Milton then took his hand affectionately, and said, "Well, you, for your part, will do well also." The dream melted with the sun, but its interpretation is known.

THE

POEMS OF COWPER.

VERSES WRITTEN AT BATH, ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE, IN 1748.

[THE opinion long prevailed that Cowper began to be a poet late in life. It was an error which he himself encouraged:—"At forty years of age," he told Mr. Park (1792), "I commenced author; it is a whim that has served me longest and best, and will probably be my last." This was a mere extravagance of the pen. He had been a rhymers from boyhood, and mentions a translation from Tibullus, done in his fifteenth year. In one of his letters he alludes to the ballads which he composed, while in the Temple, upon the model of Rowe, Congreve, and Prior, and of which "two or three had the honour to be popular." The poem on the "Heel of a Shoe" is the earliest specimen of his genius that has reached us, and it shows the music of the "Task" to have been, not an invented, but a recollected tune. The manner of Milton was not copied and burlesqued with more happiness by Phillips; while in the moral of the verse "The Splendid Shilling" is greatly excelled.]

FORTUNE! I thank thee: gentle Goddess! thanks!
Not that my Muse, tho' bashful, shall deny,
She would have thank'd thee rather, hadst thou cast
A treasure in her way; for neither meed
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes;
And bowel-raking pains of emptiness,
Nor noontide feast, nor ev'ning's cool repast,
Hopes she from this—presumptuous, tho', perhaps,
The cobbler, leather-carving artist! might.
Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon
Whatever; not as erst the fabled cock.

Vainglorious fool! unknowing what he found,
 Spurn'd the rich gem thou gav'st him. Wherefore, ah!
 Why not on me that favour, (worthier sure!)
 Confer'dst thou, Goddess! Thou art blind, thou say'st:
 Enough!—thy blindness shall excuse the deed.

Nor does my Muse no benefit exhale
 From this thy scant indulgence!—even here,
 Hints, worthy sage philosophy, are found;
 Illustrious hints, to moralize my song!
 This pond'rous heel of perforated hide
 Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,
 Haply (for such its massy form bespeaks),
 The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
 Upbore: on this supported oft, he stretch'd,
 With uncouth strides, along the furrow'd glebe,
 Flatt'ning the stubborn clod, till cruel time
 (What will not cruel time), or a wry step,
 Sever'd the strict cohesion; when, alas!
 He, who could erst, with even equal pace,
 Pursue his destin'd way with symmetry,
 And some proportion form'd, now, on one side,
 Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,
 Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop!
 With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on:
 Thus fares it oft with other than the feet
 Of humble villager—the statesman thus,
 Up the steep road, where proud ambition leads,
 Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds
 His prosp'rous way; nor fears miscarriage foul,
 While policy prevails, and friends prove true:
 But that support soon failing, by him left,
 On whom he most depended, basely left,
 Betray'd, deserted; from his airy height
 Headlong he falls; and thro' the rest of life,
 Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

AN ODE.

ON READING SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, IN 1753

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, ESQ. 1754.

[LLOYD was at this period an undergraduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in the following year, he took his Bachelor's degree. Cowper's praise has more of the schoolfellow than the critic. Lloyd's inheritance of Prior was limited to the "jingle;" he said very well of himself—

Like Tristram Shandy, I could write
 From morn to noon, from noon to night;
 Sometimes obscure, and sometimes leaning
 A little sideways to a meaning.

He felt the Poet's Hill to be too steep for his powers, and wove a small nosegay from the flowers that grew at its foot; but the bloom and the colour soon faded together.]

'Tis not that I design to rob
 Thee of thy birth-right, gentle Bob.
 For thou art born sole heir, and single,
 Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;
 Not that I mean, while thus I knit
 My threadbare sentiments together,
 To show my genius or my wit,
 When God and you know, I have neither;
 Or such, as might be better shown
 By letting poetry alone.
 'Tis not with either of these views,
 That I presumed t' address the Muse:
 But to divert a fierce banditti,
 (Sworn foes to every thing that's witty!)
 That, with a black, infernal train,
 Make cruel inroads in my brain,
 And daily threaten to drive thence
 My little garrison of sense:
 The fierce banditti, which I mean,
 Are gloomy thoughts, led on by Spleen.

Then there's another reason yet,
 Which is, that I may fairly quit
 The debt which justly became due
 The moment when I heard from you ;
 And you might grumble, crony mine,
 If paid in any other coin ;
 Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,
 (I would say twenty sheets of prose,)
 Can ne'er be deem'd worth half so much
 As one of gold, and yours was such.
 Thus, the preliminaries settled,
 I fairly find myself *pitch-kettled* ;¹
 And cannot see, tho' few see better,
 How I shall hammer out a letter.

First, for a thought—since all agree—
 A thought—I have it—let me see
 'Tis gone again—plague on't ! I thought
 I had it—but I have it not.
 Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,
 That useful thing, her needle, gone !
 Rake well the cinders :—sweep the floor,
 And sift the dust behind the door ;
 While eager Hodge beholds the prize
 In old grimalkin's glaring eyes ;
 And Gammer finds it on her knees
 In every shining straw she sees.
 This simile were apt enough ;
 But I've another, critic-proof !
 The virtuoso thus, at noon,
 Broiling beneath a July sun,
 The gilded butterfly pursues,
 O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews
 And after many a vain essay,
 To captivate the tempting prey,
 Gives him at length the lucky pat,
 And has him safe beneath his hat ;
 Then lifts it gently from the ground ;
 But ah ! 'tis lost as soon as found ;
 Culprit his liberty regains ;
 Flits out of sight, and mocks his pains.
 The sense was dark ; 'twas therefore fit
 With simile t' illustrate it ;

¹ Pitch-kettled, a favourite phrase at the time when this epistle was written, expressive of being puzzled, or what, in the *Spectator's* time, would have been called *bamboozled*.—HAYLEY.

But as too much obscures the sight,
 As often as too little light,
 We have our similes cut short,
 For matters of more grave import.
 That Matthew's numbers run with ease
 Each man of common sense agrees!
 All men of common sense allow,
 That Robert's lines are easy too:
 Where then the preference shall we place,
 Or how do justice in this case?
 Matthew (says Fame) with endless pains,
 Smooth'd and refined the meanest strains;
 Nor suffer'd one ill-chosen rhyme
 T' escape him at the idlest time;
 And thus o'er all a lustre cast,
 That, while the language lives, shall last.
 An't please your ladyship (quoth I),
 For 'tis my business to reply;
 Sure so much labour, so much toil,
 Bespeak at least a stubborn soil:
 Thers be the laurel-wreath decreed,
 Who both write well, and write full speed!
 Who throw their Helicon about
 As freely as a conduit spout!
 Friend Robert thus, like *chien scavant*,
 Lets fall a poem *en passant*,
 Nor needs his genuine ore refine!
 'Tis ready polish'd from the mine.

THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK
OF HORACE.

(Printed in *Duncombe's Horace*, 1759.)

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

'Twas a long journey lay before us,
 When I, and honest Heliodorus,
 Who far, in point of rhetoric,
 Surpasses ev'ry living Greek,
 Each leaving our respective home,
 Together sallied forth from Rome.

First at Aricia we alight,
 And there refresh, and pass the night.

Our entertainment rather coarse,
 Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse.
 Thence o'er the causeway soft and fair
 To Appiiforum we repair.
 But as this road is well supplied
 (Temptation strong!) on either side
 With inns commodious, snug, and warm,
 We split the journey, and perform
 In two days' time what's often done
 By brisker travellers in one.
 Here, rather choosing not to sup
 Than with bad water mix my cup,
 After a warm debate in spite
 Of a provoking appetite,
 I sturdily resolved at last
 To balk it, and pronounce a fast,
 And in a moody humour wait,
 While my less dainty comrades bait.

Now o'er the spangled hemisphere
 Diffused the starry train appear,
 When there arose a desperate brawl;
 The slaves and bargemen, one and all,
 Rending their throats (have mercy on us)
 As if they were resolved to stun us.
 "Steer the barge this way to the shore;
 I tell you we'll admit no more;
 Plague! will you never be content?"
 Thus a whole hour at least is spent,
 While they receive the sev'ral fares,
 And kick the mule into his gears.
 Happy, these difficulties past,
 Could we have fall'n asleep at last!
 But, what with humming, croaking, biting,
 Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,
 These tuneful natives of the lake
 Conspired to keep us broad awake.
 Besides, to make the concert full,
 Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,
 The bargeman and a passenger,
 Each in his turn, essay'd an air
 In honour of his absent fair.
 At length the passenger, opprest
 With wine, left off, and snored the rest.
 The weary bargeman too gave o'er,
 And hearing his companion snore,

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

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

With smiles the rising morn we greet,
 At Sinuessa pleased to meet
 With Plotius, Varius, and the bard,
 Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.
 The world no purer spirits knows,
 For none my heart more warmly glows.
 O! what embraces we bestow'd,
 And with what joy our breasts o'erflow'd!
 Sure, while my sense is sound and clear,
 Long as I live, I shall prefer
 A gay, good-natured, easy friend,
 To every blessing Heaven can send.

At a small village the next night
 Near the Vulturnus we alight;
 Where, as employ'd on state affairs,
 We were supplied by the purvey'rs
 Frankly at once, and without hire,
 With food for man and horse, and ere
 Capua next day betimes we reach,
 Where Virgil and myself, who each
 Labour'd with different maladies,
 His such a stomach, mine such eyes,
 As would not bear strong exercise,
 In drowsy mood to sleep resort;
 Mæcenas to the tennis-court.
 Next at Cocceius' farm we're treated,
 Above the Caudian tavern seated;
 His kind and hospitable board
 With choice of wholesome food was stored.

Now, O ye nine, inspire my lays!
 To nobler themes my fancy raise!
 Two combatants, who scorn to yield
 The noisy, tongue-disputed field,
 Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim
 A poet's tribute to their fame;
 Cicirrus of true Oscian breed,
 Sarmentus, who was never freed,
 But ran away. We don't defame him;
 His lady lives, and still may claim him
 Thus dignified, in harder fray,
 These champions their keen wit display,
 And first Sarmentus led the way,
 "Thy locks (quoth he), so rough and coarse
 Look like the mane of some wild horse."
 We laugh: Cicirrus undismay'd—
 "Have at you!"—cries, and shakes his head.
 "'Tis well (Sarmentus says), you've lost
 That horn your forehead once could boast;
 Since, maim'd and mangled as you are,
 You seem to butt." A hideous scar
 Improved ('tis true) with double grace
 The native horrors of his face.
 Well. After much jocosely said
 Of his grim front, so fiery red,
 (For carbuncles had blotch'd it c'er,
 As usual on Campania's shore.)

" Give us (he cried), since you're so big,
 A sample of the Cyclops' jig!
 Your shanks methinks no buskins ask,
 Nor does your phiz require a mask."
 To this Cicirrus. " In return
 Of you, sir, now I fain would learn,
 When 'twas, no longer deem'd a slave,
 Your chains you to the Lares gave.
 For though a scriv'ner's right you claim,
 Your lady's title is the same.
 But what could make you run away,
 Since, pigmy as you are, each day
 A single pound of bread would quite
 O'erpow'r your puny appetite?"
 Thus joked the champions, while we laugh'd,
 And many a cheerful bumper quaff'd.

To Beneventum next we steer;
 Where our good host by over care
 In roasting thrushes lean as mice
 Had almost fall'n a sacrifice.
 The kitchen soon was all on fire,
 And to the roof the flames aspire.
 There might you see each man and master
 Striving, amidst this sad disaster,
 To save the supper. Then they came
 With speed enough to quench the flame.
 From hence we first at distance see
 Th' Apulian hills, well known to me,
 Parch'd by the sultry western blast;
 And which we never should have past,
 Had not Trivicius by the way
 Received us at the close of day.
 But each was forced at ent'ring here
 To pay the tribute of a tear,
 For more of smoke than fire was seen—
 The hearth was piled with logs so green.
 From hence in chaises we were carried
 Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarried
 At a small town, whose name my verse
 (So barb'rous is it) can't rehearse.
 Know it you may by many a sign,
 Water is dearer far than wine.
 There bread is deem'd such dainty fare,
 That ev'ry prudent traveller

His wallet loads with many a crust;
 For at Canusium you might just
 As well attempt to gnaw a stone
 As think to get a morsel down:
 That too with scanty streams is fed;
 Its founder was brave Diomed.
 Good Varius (ah, that friends must part!)
 Here left us all with aching heart.
 At Rubi we arrived that day,
 Well jaded by the length of way,
 And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter:
 Next day no weather could be better;
 No roads so bad; we scarce could crawl
 Along to fishy Barium's wall.
 Th' Egnatians next, who by the rules
 Of common sense are knaves or fools,
 Made all our sides with laughter heave,
 Since we with them must needs believe,
 That incense in their temples burns,
 And without fire to ashes turns.
 To circumcision's bigots tell
 Such tales! for me, I know full well,
 That in high Heav'n, unmoved by care,
 The Gods eternal quiet share:
 Nor can I deem their spleen the cause,
 Why fickle nature breaks her laws.
 Brundisium last we reach: and there
 Stop short the muse and traveller.

THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK
OF HORACE.

THE DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPERTINENT, ADAPTED TO THE
PRESENT TIMES, 1759.

SAUNT'RING along the street one day,
 On trifles musing by the way—
 Up steps a free familiar wight.
 (I scarcely knew the man by sight.)
 "Carlos (he cried), your hand, my dear;
 Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!
 Pray Heav'n I see you well?"—"So, so;
 Ev'n well enough as times now go.

The same good wishes, Sir, to you."
 Finding he still pursued me close—
 "Sir, you have business I suppose."—
 "My business, Sir, is quickly done,
 'Tis but to make my merit known.
 Sir, I have read"—"O learned Sir,
 You and your learning I revere."
 Then, sweating with anxiety,
 And sadly longing to get free,
 Gods, how I scamper'd, scuffed for't,
 Ran, halted, ran again, stopp'd short,
 Beckon'd my boy, and pull'd him near,
 And whisper'd nothing in his ear.

Teas'd with his loose unjointed chat—
 "What street is this? What house is that?
 O Harlow, how I envied thee
 Thy unabash'd effrontery,
 Who dar'st a foe with freedom blame,
 And call a coxcomb by his name!
 When I return'd him answer none,
 Obligingly the fool ran on,
 "I see you're dismally distress'd,
 Would give the world to be released.
 But, by your leave, Sir, I shall still
 Stick to your skirts, do what you will.
 Pray which way does your journey tend?"—
 "O 'tis a tedious way, my friend.
 Across the Thames, the Lord knows where,
 I would not trouble you so far."—
 "Well, I'm at leisure to attend you."—
 "Are you? (thought I) the De'il befriend you."
 No ass with double panniers rack'd,
 Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,
 E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull
 As I, nor half so like a fool.
 "Sir, I know little of myself,
 (Proceeds the pert conceited elf,
 If Gray or Mason you will deem
 Than me more worthy your esteem.
 Poems I write by folios
 As fast as other men write prose;
 Then I can sing so loud, so clear,
 That Beard cannot with me compare.
 In dancing too I all surpass,
 Not Cooke can move with such a grace."

Here I made shift with much ado
 To interpose a word or two.—
 “Have you no parents, Sir, no friends,
 Whose welfare on your own depends?”—
 “Parents, relations, say you? No.
 They’re all disposed of long ago.”—
 “Happy to be no more perplex’d!
 My fate too threatens, I go next.
 Dispatch me, Sir, ’tis now too late,
 Alas! to struggle with my fate!
 Well, I’m convinced my time is come—
 When young, a gipsy told my doom.
 The beldame shook her palsied head,
 As she perused my palm, and said:
 Of poison, pestilence, or war,
 Gout, stone, defluxion, or catarrh,
 You have no reason to beware.
 Beware the coxcomb’s idle prate;
 Chiefly, my son, beware of that.
 Be sure when you behold him, fly
 Out of all earshot, or you die.”

To Rufus’ Hall we now draw near;
 Where he was summon’d to appear,
 Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,
 Or suffer judgment by default.
 “For Heav’n’s sake, if you love me, wait
 One moment! I’ll be with you straight.”
 Glad of a plausible pretence—
 “Sir, I must beg you to dispense
 With my attendance in the court,
 My legs will surely suffer for’t.”—
 “Nay, prithee, Carlos, stop awhile!”—
 “Faith, Sir, in law I have no skill.
 Besides I have no time to spare,
 I must be going you know where.”—
 “Well, I protest, I’m doubtful now,
 Whether to leave my suit or you!”—
 “Me without scruple! (I reply)
 Me, by all means, Sir!”—“No, not I.
Allons, Monsieur!” ’Twere vain (you know)
 To strive with a victorious foe.
 So I reluctantly obey,
 And follow, where he leads the way.

“You and Newcastle are so close,
 Still hand and glove, Sir—I suppose.”—

" Newcastle (let me tell you, Sir)
 Has not his equal every where."—
 " Well. There indeed your fortune's made
 Faith, Sir, you understand your trade.
 Would you but give me your good word!
 Just introduce me to my lord.
 I should serve charmingly by way
 Of second fiddle, as they say:
 What think you, Sir? 'twere a good jest.
 'Slife, we should quickly scout the rest."—
 " Sir, you mistake the matter far,
 We have no second fiddles there.—
 Richer than I some folks may be;
 More learned, but it hurts not me.
 Friends tho' he has of diff'rent kind,
 Each has his proper place assign'd."—
 " Strange matters these alleged by you!"—
 " Strange they may be, but are true."—
 " Well then, I vow, 'tis mighty clever,
 Now I long ten times more than ever
 To be advanced extremely near
 One of his shining character.
 Have but the will—there wants no more
 'Tis plain enough you have the pow'r.
 His easy temper (that's the worst)
 He knows, and is so shy at first.—
 But such a cavalier as you—
 Lord, Sir, you'll quickly bring him to!—
 Well; if I fail in my design,
 Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.
 If by the saucy servile tribe
 Denied, what think you of a bribe?
 Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,
 But try my luck again to-morrow.
 Never attempt to visit him
 But at the most convenient time,
 Attend him on each levee day,
 And there my humble duty pay;—
 Labour, like this, our want supplies;
 And they must stoop, who mean to rise."^o

While thus he wittingly harangued,
 For which you'll guess I wish'd him hang'd.
 Campley, a friend of mine, came by,
 Who knew his humour more than I.

We stop, salute, and—"why so fast,
 Friend Carlos? Whither all this haste?"
 Fired at the thoughts of a reprieve,
 I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,
 Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,
 Do every thing but speak plain out:
 While he, sad dog, from the beginning
 Determined to mistake my meaning,
 Instead of pitying my curse,
 By jeering made it ten times worse.
 "Campley, what secret (pray!) was that
 You wanted to communicate?"—
 "I recollect. But 'tis no matter.
 Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.
 E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell
 Another time, Sir, just as well."

Was ever such a dismal day?
 Unlucky cur, he steals away,
 And leaves me, half bereft of life,
 At mercy of the butcher's knife;
 When sudden, shouting from afar,
 See his antagonist appear!
 The bailiff seized him quick as thought,
 "Ho, Mr. Scoundrel! Are you caught?
 Sir, you are witness to th' arrest."—
 "Ay, marry, Sir, I'll do my best."
 The mob huzzas. Away they trudge,
 Culprit and all before the judge.
 Meanwhile I luckily enough
 (Thanks to Apollo) got clear off.

ADDRESSED TO MISS MACARTNEY,¹

ON READING THE PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE. 1762

AND dwells there in a female heart,
 By bounteous Heav'n design'd
 The choicest raptures to impart,
 To feel the most refined—

¹ Afterwards Mrs. Greville. Mrs. Piozzi ("British Synonymy," i. 37) calls the ode "exquisitely pretty." Her husband, Mr. Falko Greville, of Welberry, Wilts, was the author of a clever book of Maxims, Characters, and Reflections.

Dwells there a wish in such a breast
 Its nature to forego,
 To smother in ignoble rest
 At once both bliss and woe!

Far be the thought, and far the strain,
 Which breathes the low desire,
 How sweet soe'er the verse complain,
 Tho' Phæbus string the lyre.

Come then, fair maid (in nature wise)
 Who, knowing them, can tell
 From gen'rous sympathy what joys
 The glowing bosom swell.

In justice to the various pow'rs
 Of pleasing, which you share,
 Join me, amid your silent hours,
 To form the better pray'r.

With lenient balm, may *Ob'ron* hence
 To fairy-land be driv'n;
 With ev'ry herb that blunts the sense
 Mankind received from heav'n.

"Oh! if my Sov'reign Author please,
 Far be it from my fate,
 To live, unblest, in torpid ease,
 And slumber on in state.

Each tender tie of life defied
 Whence social pleasures spring,
 Unmoved with all the world beside,
 A solitary thing—"

Some Alpine mountain, wrapt in snow,
 Thus braves the whirling blast,
 Eternal winter doom'd to know,
 No genial spring to taste.

In vain warm suns their influence shed,
 The zephyrs sport in vain,
 He rears unchanged his barren head,
 Whilst beauty decks the plain.

What tho' in scaly armour drest,
Indifference may repel
 The shafts of woe—in such a breast
 No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan.
 And fix'd by Heav'n's decree,
 That all the true delights of man
 Should spring from *Sympathy*.

'Tis nature bids, and whilst the laws
 Of nature we retain,
 Our self-approving bosom draws
 A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear,
 The sordid never know;
 And ecstasy attends the tear,
 When virtue bids it flow.

For, when it streams from that pure source
 No bribes the heart can win,
 To check, or alter from its course
 The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,
 Who, if from labour eased,
 Extend no care beyond themselves,
 Unpleasing and unpleas'd.

Let no low thought suggest the pray'r
 Oh! grant, kind Heav'n, to me,
 Long as I draw ethereal air
 Sweet Sensibility.

Where'er the heav'nly nymph is seen.
 With lustre-beaming eye,
 A train, attendant on their Queen,
 (Her rosy chorus) fly.

The jocund Loves in Hymen's band,
 With torches ever bright,
 And gen'rous Friendship hand in
 With Pity's wat'ry sight

The gentler virtues too are join'd,
 In youth immortal warm,
 The soft relations, which, combined,
 Give life her ev'ry charm.

The Arts come smūing in the close,
 And lend celestial fire,
 The marble breathes, the canvas glows,
 The Muses sweep the lyre.

"Still may my melting bosom cleave
 To suff'rings not my own,
 And still the sigh responsive heave,
 Where'er is heard a groan.

So pity shall take Virtue's part,
 Her natural ally,
 And fashioning my soften'd heart,
 Prepare it for the sky."

This artless vow may Heav'n receive,
 And you, fond maid, approve;
 So may your guiding angel give
 Whate'er you wish or love.

So may the rosy-finger'd hours
 Lead on the various year,
 And ev'ry joy, which now is yours,
 Extend a larger sphere.

And suns to come, as round they wheel,
 Your golden moments bless,
 With all a tender heart can feel,
 Or lively fancy guess

TABLE TALK.

Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ

Abjicito.

HOR. LIB. I. EPIC. 12

[COWPER was just recovering his usual spirits, after a dark and dreary season, when Mrs. Unwin, in the words which Hayley took down from her lips, "strongly solicited him" to undertake a poem of considerable length, and suggested the subject of it—"The Progress of Error." The proposal came at a time that needed it most; and the frosty windows of Olney shone, of a sudden, with a poetical light that struck a pleasant warmth into the interior. The winter of 1780 was an epoch in Cowper's life. "When I can find no other occupation I think, and when I think I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland."¹ And the garland was to be hung in the eyes of the Public. To Unwin he wrote—"You ask me how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication? Perfectly at my ease. I have had in view two principal objects; first, to amuse myself; and secondly, to compass that point in such a manner that others might possibly be the better for my amusement." So we deceive ourselves in poetry and life. The letters of Cowper show that his "ease" was only in the expression of it, and that he might have applied to his own anxiety the confession of Southey,— "Young lady never felt more desire to see herself in a new ball-dress, than I do to see my own performance in print." Often hindered, the book at length appeared, and kind voices rewarded and encouraged the writer. Unwin sent news of his wife's smiles and tears; Newton gave him hints of kingly approbation and court favour; and the prosaic mind of Franklin added its praise. The opposite column was not empty; the *Critical Review* dubbed him a dunce, and the Chancellor disregarded his poems and his letter. But neither friend nor foe can intermeddle much, or long, with the joy of a true poet. To Cowper, these verses had been the chimes of a Sabbath, soothing his troubled thoughts to rest, and opening scenes of blessedness and hope.

The volume was in many respects remarkable; but it scarcely

¹ TO HILL, May 9, 1781.

gave a promise of the "Task." When Cowper, after the lapse of many years, began to compose heroic lines, he sought a model in the most popular and reckless versifier of the age. Churchill was the object of his wonder and imitation. He had no sympathy with what he calls "the musical finesse of Pope." Now and then we catch a faint echo of Dryden's organ-notes; but the structure of the verse, the homeliness of the imagery, and the strength, not to say the occasional coarseness of the idioms, are clearly borrowed from Churchill. Even the Serio-Comic sketches, which lend the most popular feature to Cowper's poetry, were, doubtless, suggested by the same pen. The portrait of the "Cit," in "Night," belongs to the Series that fills the Molière gallery of Cowper. In Churchill he found, also, hints of those religious illustrations which he employed with so much greater fitness; for the satirist preserved his Pulpit knowledge when he put off his gown.

Cowper has given his own view of versification, in comparing it to the stately progress of a swan, and to the cottage beauty who touches the heart by the naturalness of her charms. The swan, conquering the current by force, may be the emblem of Churchill, as it certainly is of Dryden; but there is a melody, a grace, in words, of which a representative may be discovered in the same swan floating upon her own shadow, and hardly ruffling the gleams which the setting sun sheds into the water. In perfect verses we look for a calm as well as for a tide. A poem had lately appeared with this sweetness conspicuous in every line. I allude to "The Deserted Village," which, coming out in the last week of May, 1770, had gone into a fourth edition before the end of June. But no tidings of Auburn came to Olney, and Churchill retained the undivided allegiance of Cowper. The work was injured by it; and the sectarian temper, so frequent and bitter, left a stronger blemish. Miss Sewall said that no reader could have expected the diamonds of Cowper, who had only seen the Scotch pebbles which he offered for sale at the beginning of his career; but angry prejudice alone could have denounced the poems as "an uncharitable volume in cramp rhyme." The hand was often harsh, and the harp wanted tuning; but cunning soon came to the one, and music to the other. The characteristic of the book is masculine sense. "Table Talk" he thought the best to begin with, as being the most popular in its subject, and wishing at "first setting out to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as long as possible."]

A. You told me, I remember, glory built
 On selfish principles, is shame and guilt.
 The deeds that men admire as half divine,
 Stark¹ naught, because corrupt in their design.
 Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tear
 The laurel that the very lightning spares,
 Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
 And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

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

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
 Reward his mem'ry, dear to ev'ry muse,
 Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
 In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
 Plants it upon the line that justice draws,
 And will prevail or perish in her cause.
 'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
 His portion in the good that Heav'n bestows,
 And when recording history displays
 Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
 Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died
 Where duty placed them, at their country's side,
 The man that is not moved with what he reads,
 That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
 Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
 Is base in kind, and born to be a slave

But let eternal infamy pursue
 The wretch to nought but his ambition true,
 Who for the sake of filling with one blast
 The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
 Think yourself station'd on a tow'ring rock,
 To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
 Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
 With all the savage thirst a tiger feels,
 Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette,
 Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet,
 The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
 Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
 The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
 And death's own scythe would better speak his pow'r,

¹ *Stark* was used by our earlier writers to give intensity to an expression. Sidney has Cowper's use of the phrase. We still hear of people who are "stark mad."

Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
 With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade,
 Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
 The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man,
 Kings do but reason on the selfsame plan,
 Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
 Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

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

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

A. Guard what you say, the patriotic tribe
 Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A bribe?
 The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
 To lure me to the baseness of a lie.
 And of all lies (be that one poet's boast)
 The lie that flatters I abhor the most.

Those arts be theirs that hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

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

B. Quevedo,¹ as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd, when in hell, to see the royal jail,
Approved their method in all other things,
But where, good Sir, do you confine your kings?
There—said his guide, the group is full in view.
Indeed? replied the Don—there are but few.
His black interpreter the charge disdain'd—
Few, fellow? There are all that ever reign'd.
Wit undistinguishing is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty, both alike.

I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here,
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's grace th' historic page.

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

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureat pays
His quit-rent ode, his pepper-corn of praise,
And many a dunce whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite;
A subject's faults, a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game.
Thus free from censure, over-awed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage,
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask with busy scorn, Was this the man?

I pity kings whom worship waits upon
Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne,
Before whose infant eyes the flatt'rer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows.
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;

¹ According to Southey, the story is not contained in "Quevedo."

If the gilt carriage and the pumper'd steed,
 That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
 If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
 Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks;
 Should ring and standing as if struck to stone,
 While condescending majesty looks on;
 If monarchy consist in such base things,
 Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
 Ev'n when he labours for his country's good
 To see a band call'd patriot for no cause,
 But that they catch at popular applause,
 Careless of all th' anxiety he feels,
 Hook disappointment on the public wheels,
 With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
 Most confident, when palpably most wrong,—
 If this be kingly, then farewell for me
 All kingship, and may I be poor and free.

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

A. Thus men whose thoughts contemplative have
 dwelt,

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

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

B. Not Brindley¹ nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way;
Nor would the nine consent, the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stock-jobbers and Jews.

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

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

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

B. The cause, tho' worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Lib'ral in all things else, yet nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flow'rs,
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungential blasts attending, curl the streams,
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work,
Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
She rears her fav'rite man of all mankind.
His form robust, and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,

¹ It was about the year 1758 that Brindley began his scientific labours for the Duke of Bridgewater. One anecdote of Brindley is well known. When a member of a committee asked him, for what purpose he considered rivers to have been made, he answered, after a short pause,—“To feed navigable canals.”

Supplies with warm activity and force
 A mind well lodged, and masculine of course,
 Hence liberty, sweet liberty inspires,
 And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
 Patient of constitutional control,
 He bears it with meek manliness of soul,
 But if authority grow wanton, woe
 To him that treads upon his free-born toe.¹
 One step beyond the bound'ry of the laws
 Fires him at once in freedom's glorious cause.
 Thus proud prerogative, not much revered,
 Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard
 And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
 Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
 Not form'd like us, with such Herculean pow'rs,
 The Frenchman, easy, debonair and brisk,
 Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
 Is always happy, reign whoever may,
 And laughs the sense of mis'ry far away.
 He drinks his simple bev'rage with a gust,
 And feasting on an onion and a crust,
 We never feel th' alacrity and joy
 With which he shouts and carols, *Vive le Roy*,
 Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee,
 As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

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

A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
 Stand on a level, and you prove too much.
 If all men indiscriminately share
 His fost'ring pow'r and tutelary care,
 As well be yoked by despotism's hand,
 As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
 That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.

¹ Cowper, giving Mr. Unwin an account of a visitor, writes—"He said that one passage in particular had absolutely electrified him, meaning the description of the Briton, in 'Table Talk.' I was glad to have that picture noticed, because I had always thought well of it myself."

The mind attains beneath her happy reign,
 The growth that nature meant she should attain
 The varied fields of science, ever new,
 Op'ning and wider op'ning on her view,
 She ventures onward with a prosp'rous force,
 While no base fear impedes her in her course.
 Religion, richest favour of the skies,
 Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes;
 No shades of superstition blot the day,
 Liberty chases all that gloom away;
 The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,
 Free to prove all things and hold fast the best,
 Learns much, and to a thousand list'ning minds,
 Communicates with joy the good she finds.
 Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
 His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;
 Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
 His spirits rising as his toils increase,
 Guards well what arts and industry have won,
 And freedom claims him for her first-born son.
 Slaves fight for what were better cast away,
 The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway,
 But they that fight for freedom, undertake
 The noblest cause mankind can have at stake,
 Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
 A blessing, freedom is the pledge of all.
 O liberty! the pris'ner's pleasing dream,
 The poet's muse, his passion and his theme,
 Genius is thine, and thou art fancy's nurse,
 Lost without thee th' ennobling pow'rs of verse,
 Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
 Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires;
 Place me where winter breathes its keenest air,
 And I will sing if liberty be there;
 And I will sing at liberty's dear feet,
 In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please, in such a cause I grant
 An English Poet's privilege to rant,
 But is not freedom, at least is not ours
 Too apt to play the wanton with her pow'rs,
 Grow freakish, and o'erleaping ev'ry mound
 Spread anarchy and terror all around?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
 For bounding and curvetting in his course;
 Or, if, when ridden with a careless rein,
 He break away, and seek the distant plain?

No. His high mettle under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let discipline employ her wholesome arts,
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desp'rate task;
Let active laws apply the needful curb
To guard the peace that riot would disturb,
And liberty preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress,
When tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set Plebeian thousands in a roar,
When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face,
When the rude rabble's watch-word was, destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy,
Liberty blush'd and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread,
Blush'd that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem! thy worth untold,
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when
sold;

May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend;
Prize it ye ministers, ye monarchs spare,
Ye patriots guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene, when Chatham died.

B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him, Demosthenes was heard again,
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain:
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,¹

¹ Of the monument by Bacon he says—"I think the figure of Chatham singularly graceful, and his countenance full of the character that belongs to him. It speaks not only great ability and consummate skill, but a tender and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the charge committed to him." (October 22, 1783.) The reader of political history will remember the stories of Chatham's face-rhetoric, if such a word may be suffered, which made the boldest speakers quail before him.

He stood, as some inimitable hand
 Would strive to make a Paul, or Tully stand.
 No sycophant or slave that dared oppose
 Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose,
 And every venal stickler for the yoke,
 Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,
 When Providence means mercy to a land.
 He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
 Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
 To manage with address, to seize with power
 The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
 So Gideon¹ earn'd a vict'ry not his own,
 Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
 Beset with ev'ry ill but that of fear.
 The nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey,
 They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.
 Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd,
 Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next?
 Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
 All that should be the boast of British song.
 'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
 The prize of happier times will serve thee now.
 Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
 Patterns of ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace,
 Confess'd a God, they kneel'd before they fought,
 And praised him in the victories he wrought.
 Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
 Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
 Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
 Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
 The stream that feeds the well-spring of the hear,
 Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
 Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine,
 The pow'rs that sin has brought to a decline.
 A. Th' inestimable estimate of Brown,²
 Rose like a paper kite, and charm'd the town;

¹ See the history of Gideon, Judges vi. vii. viii.

² Dr. John Brown. His Essay on "Satire," introduced him to Warburton, by whose influence he obtained the rectory of Hockley, near Colchester, which a quarrel with the patron's family soon caused him to resign. Hurd calls him a man of honour and probity, but suspicious and ungrateful in temper. His errors had a deeper seat. He died by his own hand in 1766. The estimate did, indeed, rise "like a paper kite," seven editions having been demanded in one year; and Voltaire attributed to its publication the sudden burst of English valour and patriotism.

But measures plann'd and executed well
 Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
 He trod the very selfsame ground you tread,
 And victory refuted all he said.

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

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
 Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must,
 And that a nation shamefully debased,
 Will be despised and trampled on at last,
 Unless sweet penitence her pow'rs renew,
 Is truth, if history itself be true.
 There is a time, and justice marks the date,
 For long-forbearing clemency to wait,
 That hour elapsed, th' incurable revolt
 Is punish'd, and down comes the thunder-bolt.
 If mercy *then* put by the threat'ning blow,
 Must she perform the same kind office *now*?
 May she, and if offended Heav'n be still
 Accessible, and pray'r prevail, she will.
 'Tis not however insolence and noise,
 The tempest of tumultuary joys,
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay,
 Will win her visits, or engage her stay,
 Pray'r only, and the penitential tear,
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.
 But when a country (one that I could name)
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame
 When infamous venality, grown bold,
 Writes on his bosom, *to be let or sold*;
 When perjury, that heav'n-defying vice,
 Sells oaths by tale,¹ and at the lowest price,
 Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made
 To turn a penny in the way of trade;
 When av'rice starves, and never hides his face,
 Two or three millions of the human race,
 And not a tongue inquires, how, where, or when,
 Though conscience will have twinges now and then;
 When profanation of the sacred cause,
 In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
 Bespeaks a land once Christian, fall'n and lost
 In all that wars against that title most,

¹ By number.

What follows next let cities of great name,
 And regions long since desolate proclaim :
 Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
 Speak to the present times and times to come,
 They cry aloud in every careless ear,
 Stop, while ye may, suspend your mad career ;
 O learn from our example and our fate,
 Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late.¹

Not only vice disposes and prepares
 The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
 To stoop to tyranny's usurp'd command,
 And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand,
 (A dire effect, by one of nature's laws
 Unchangeably connected with its cause,)
 But Providence himself will intervene
 To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
 All are his instruments ; each form of war,
 What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
 Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
 The storms that overset the joys of life,
 Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
 And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
 He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores,
 The standards of all nations are unfurl'd,
 She has one foe, and that one foe, the world.
 And if he doom that people with a frown,
 And mark them with the seal of wrath, press'd down
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof :
 Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars above,
 But nothing scares them from the course they love ;
 To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
 With mad rapidity and unconcern,
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.
 They trust in navies and their navies fail,
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail ;
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies,
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;
 But all they trust in, withers, as it must,
 When He commands in whom they place no trust.

¹ "It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation ; and in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. But the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees." 178.

Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast,
 A long despised, but now victorious host,
 Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege,
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock,
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?

B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
 The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
 If human woes her soft attention claim,
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
 She pours a sensibility divine
 Along the nerve of ev'ry feeling line.
 But if a deed not tamely to be borne,
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
 The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.
 So when remote futurity is brought
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
 A terrible sagacity informs
 The poet's heart, he looks to distant storms,
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,
 And, arm'd with strength surpassing human powers,
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
 Of prophet and of poet was the same,
 Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
 And ev'ry hallow'd druid was a bard.
 But no prophetic fires to me belong,
 I play with syllables, and sport in song.

A. At Westminster,¹ where little poets strive
 To set a distich upon six and five,
 Where discipline helps opening buds of sense,
 And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
 I was a poet too—but modern taste
 Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
 That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
 Without a creamy smoothness has no charms
 Thus, all success depending on an ear,
 And thinking I might purchase it too dear,

¹ He speaks of having received a "silver grant" from the Master as a reward for an exercise

If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
 And truth cut short to make a period round,
 I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse,
 Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.¹

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
 And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
 Give me the line, that ploughs its stately course
 Like a proud swan, conq'ring the stream by force
 That like some cottage beauty strikes the heart,
 Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
 When labour and when dullness, club in hand,
 Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
 Beating alternately, in measured time,
 The clock-work tintinnabulum of rhyme,
 Exact and regular the sounds will be,
 But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

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

To dally much with subjects mean and low,
 Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
 Neglected talents rust into decay,
 And ev'ry effort ends in push-pin play.
 The man that means success, should soar above
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove,
 Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
 The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream.
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
 Stoop'd from his highest pitch to pounce a wren
 As if the poet purposing to wed,
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed e'er Homer's lamp appear'd
 And ages e'er the Mantuan swan was heard.

¹ Butler has—

“ A morris-dancer, dressed in bells,
 Only to serve for noise, and nothing else.”

To carry nature lengths unknown before,
 To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
 Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,
 And shot a day-spring into distant climes
 Ennobling ev'ry region that he chose,
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose,
 And tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
 Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.
 Thus lovely Halcyons dive into the main,
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

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

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

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

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
 Had faded, poetry was not an art;
 Language above all teaching, or if taught,
 Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
 Elegant as simplicity, and warm
 As ecstasy, unmanacled by form.
 Not prompted as in our degen'rate days,
 By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
 Was natural as is the flowing stream,
 And yet magnificent, a God the theme.
 That theme on earth exhausted, though above
 'Tis found as everlasting as his love,
 Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things,
 The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings,
 But still, while virtue kindled his delight,
 The song was moral, and so far was right.
 'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind,
 To joys less innocent, as less refined,
 Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crown'd
 The brimming goblet seized the thyrusua bound

His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
 Of wild imagination, and there reel'd
 The victim of his own lascivious fires,
 And dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.
 Anacreon, Horace, play'd in Greece and Rome
 This Bedlam part; and others nearer home.
 When Cromwell fought for pow'r, and while he reign'd
 The proud protector of the pow'r he gain'd,
 Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
 Parent of manners like herself severe,
 Drew a rough copy of the Christian face
 Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
 The dark and sullen humour of the time
 Judged ev'ry effort of the muse a crime;
 Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,
 Was lumber in an age so void of taste:
 But when the second Charles assumed the sway,
 And arts revived beneath a softer day,
 Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
 The mind released from too constrain'd a nerve,
 Flew to its first position with a spring
 That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
 His court, the dissolute and hateful school
 Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
 Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
 With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
 From these a long succession, in the rage
 Of rank obscenity debauch'd their age,
 Nor ceased, till ever anxious to redress
 Th' abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
 The muse instructed a well nurtured train
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
 And claim the palm for purity of song,
 That lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.
 Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense
 That neither gave nor would endure offence,
 Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,
 The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.
 In front of these came Addison. In him
 Humour in holiday and slightly trim,
 Sublimity and Attic taste, combined
 To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
 Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
 In verse well disciplin'd, complete, compact,
 Gave virtue and moral'y a grace
 That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face

To carry nature lengths unknown before,
 To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
 Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,
 And shot a day-spring into distant climes
 Ennobling ev'ry region that he chose,
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose,
 And tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
 Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.
 Thus lovely Halcions dive into the main,
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

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 Was graced with many an undulating light;
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 While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
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 'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind,
 To joys less innocent, as less refined,
 Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crown'd
 The brimming goblet seized the thyrus bound

Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

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

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

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

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

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

Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
 Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
 Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
 Can trace her mazy windings to their end,
 Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
 Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
 The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
 Falls soporific on the listless ear,
 Like quicksilver, the rhet'ric they display,
 Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at slips away.¹

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
 From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
 Free in his will to choose, or to refuse,
 Man may improve the crisis, or abuse.
 Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
 Say, to what bar amenable were man?
 With nought in charge, he could betray no trust,
 And, if he fell, would fall because he must;
 If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
 His recompence in both, unjust alike.

¹ I think that Cowper recollected Young's most ingenious comparison of pleasure to quicksilver.

Fancy has sported all her pow'rs away
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
 And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
 Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
 'Twere new indeed, to see a bard all fire,
 Touch'd with a coal from heav'n, assume the lyre,
 And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,
 That he who died below, and reigns above,
 Inspires the song, and that his name is love.

For after all, if merely to beguile
 By flowing numbers and a flow'ry style,
 The tedium that the lazy rich endure,
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure,
 Or if to see the name of idol self,
 Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
 To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
 Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim.
 Debased to servile purposes of pride,
 How are the powers of genius misapplied?
 The gift whose office is the Giver's praise,
 To trace him in his word, his works, his ways,
 Then spread the rich discov'ry, and invite
 Mankind to share in the divine delight,
 Distorted from its use and just design,
 To make the pitiful possessor shine,
 To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
 Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
 Is profanation of the basest kind,
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

A. Hail Sternhold then and Hopkins hail! B. Amen
 If flatt'ry, folly, lust employ the pen,
 If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce;
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,¹
 With all that fancy can invent to please,

¹ Cowper's admiration of Prior had begun in boyhood, and grown with his growth. "I learned," he said, Dec. 4, 1781, "when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice." And again (January 17, 1782):—"To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic; to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior."

Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

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

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

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

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

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

Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end,
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear,
Like quicksilver, the rhet'ric they display,
Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at slips away.¹

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose, or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse.
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say, to what bar amenable were man?
With nought in charge, he could betray no trust,
And, if he fell, would fall because he must;
If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
His recompence in both, unjust alike.

¹ I think that Cowper recollected Young's most ingenious comparison of pleasure to quicksilver.

Divine authority within his breast
 Brings every thought, word, action to the rest,
 Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
 As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.
 Heav'n from above, and conscience from within,
 Cry in his startled ear, Abstain from sin.
 The world around solicits his desire,
 And kindles in his soul a treach'rous fire,
 While all his purposes and steps to guard,
 Peace follows virtue as its sure reward,
 And pleasure brings as surely in her train
 Remorse, and sorrow, and vindictive pain.
 Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
 Must be supplied with objects of his choice.
 Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
 Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight;
 These open on the spot their honey'd store,
 Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.
 His unexhausted mine, the sordid vice
 Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
 Here, various motives his ambition raise,
 Pow'r, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise;
 There, beauty woos him with expanded arms;
 E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
 Might well allure the most unguarded mind,
 Seek to supplant his unexperienced youth,
 Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
 Hourly allurements on his passions press,
 Safe in themselves, but dang'rous in th' excess.

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

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent
 That virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
 Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
 Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies
 Ye devotees to your adored employ,
 Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
 Love makes the music of the blest above,
 Heav'n's harmony is universal love;

And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
 And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
 Leave vice and folly unsubdu'd behind.

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

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
 Lights of the world, and stars of human race—
 But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
 Prodigious, ominous, and view'd with fear.
 The comet's baneful influence is a dream,
 Yours real, and pernicious in th' extreme.
 What then—are appetites and lusts laid down,
 With the same ease the man puts on his gown?
 Will av'rice and concupiscence give place,
 Charm'd by the sounds, your rev'ence, or your
 grace?

No. But his own engagement binds him fast,
 Or if it does not, brands him to the last
 What atheists call him, a designing knave.
 A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
 Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
 A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest;
 He from Italian songsters takes his cue,
 Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
 He takes the field, the master of the pack
 Cries, Well done, saint—and claps him on the back.
 Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
 To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
 Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,
 His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
 Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
 Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth Street,
 The sacred function, in your hands is made,
 Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade.

Occidius¹ is a pastor of renown;
 When he has pray'd and preach'd the sabbath down,
 With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
 Quav'ring and semiquav'ring care away.
 The full concerto swells upon your ear;
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
 The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
 Had summon'd them to serve his golden god;
 So well that thought th' employment seems to suit,
 Psalt'ry and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
 Oh fie! 'Tis evangelical and pure;
 Observe each face, how sober and demure,
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on ev'ry mien,
 Chins fall'n, and not an eyeball to be seen.
 Still I insist, though music heretofore
 Has charm'd me much, not ev'n Occidius more,
 Love, joy, and peace, make harmony, more meet
 For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
 Will not the sickliest sheep of ev'ry flock,
 Resort to this example as a rock,
 There stand and justify the foul abuse
 Of sabbath hours, with plausible excuse?
 If apostolic gravity be free
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
 If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.
 Oh Italy! Thy sabbaths will be soon
 Our sabbaths, closed with mumm'ry and buffoon;
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
 Ours parcell'd out, as thine have ever been,
 God's worship and the mountebank between.

¹ "I am sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Occidius is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Ansten has been at his sabbatical concerts, which, it seems, are composed of song-tunes and of psalm-tunes indiscriminately—music without words; and I suppose I may say, consequently, without devotion. He seems to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music." (To Mr. Newton, Sept. 9, 1781.) "Occidius" was CHARLES WESLEY, one of the religious rivals of Whitefield. Charles had a livelier temperament than his brother. In the earlier days of their religious ardour they were accustomed to spend part of the Sunday in country walks and singing of psalms. Upon one occasion, when they were beginning to set a stave, a sense of the ridiculous situation came upon Charles, and he burst into loud laughter. "I asked him," says John, "if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces; but were forced to go home without singing another line."

What says the prophet?¹ Let that day be blest
 With holiness and consecrated rest;
 Pastime and bus'ness both it should exclude,
 And bar the door the moment they intrude,
 Nobly distinguish'd above all the six,
 By deeds in which the world must never mix.
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,²
 A day of luxury, observed aright,
 When the glad soul is made heav'n's welcome guest,
 Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
 But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

Oh the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again.
 Cards with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
 Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
 Where night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
 Views constellations brighter than her own.
 'Tis innocent, and harmless and refined,
 The balm of care, elysium of the mind.
 Innocent! Oh if venerable time
 Slain at the foot of pleasure, be no crime,
 Then with his silver beard and magic wand,
 Let Comus³ rise Archbishop of the land,
 Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
 Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
 The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
 Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,
 Not of the moral, but the dancing school,
 Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
 As tragical as others at his own.
 He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
 Then kill a constable, and drink five more;
 But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
 And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
 Go fool, and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
 Your cause before a bar you little dread;

¹ "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you."—
 Exodus xxxi. 14.

² Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

³ The god of night-feasting, whose torch falling from his hand was the
 emblem of his riot.

But know, the law that bids the drunkard die
 Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
 Both baby-featured and of infant size,
 View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
 Folly and innocence are so alike,
 The diff'rence, though essential, fails to strike.
 Yet folly ever has a vacant stare,
 A simp'ring countenance, a trifling air;
 But innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
 Delights us, by engaging our respect.

Man, nature's guest by invitation sweet,
 Receives from her both appetite and treat,
 But if he play the glutton and exceed,
 His benefactress blushes at the deed.
 For nature, nice, as lib'ral to dispense,
 Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
 Daniel ate pulse by choice, example rare!
 Heav'n bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and
 fair,¹

Gorgonius sits abdominous and wan,
 Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan.
 He snuffs far off th' anticipated joy,
 Turtle and ven'son all his thoughts employ,
 Prepares for meals, as jockeys take a sweat,
 Oh nauseous! an emetic for a whet—
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
 Temperance were no virtue if he could.

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

Is man then only for his torment placed,
 I' the centre of delights he may not taste?
 Like fabled Tantalus condemn'd to hear
 The precious stream still purling in his ear,
 Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
 With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
 No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense,
 The precept, that enjoins him abstinence,
 Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
 Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.

¹ "Then said Daniel, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."—Daniel i. 11, 15.

Remorse, the fatal egg by pleasure laid
 In every bosom where her nest is made,
 Hatch'd by the beams of truth denies him rest,
 And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
 No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead?
 Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
 Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame
 Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good
 fame?

All these belong to virtue, and all prove
 That virtue has a title to your love.
 Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
 Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
 Or if yourself too scantily supplied
 Need help, let honest industry provide.
 Earn, if you want, if you abound, impart,
 These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
 No pleasure? Has some sickly eastern waste
 Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
 Can British paradise no scenes afford
 To please her sated and indifferent lord?
 Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
 Quite to the lees? And has religion none?
 Brutes capable, should tell you 'tis a lie,
 And judge you from the kennel and the sty.
 Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
 Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain;
 Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
 Obscene, to swill and wallow at a trough?
 Envy the beast, then, on whom heav'n bestows
 Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.
 Pleasure admitted in undue degree
 Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
 'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice,
 Unnerves the moral pow'rs, and mars their use;
 Ambition, av'rice, and the lust of fame,
 And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
 The heart, surrender'd to the ruling pow'r
 Of some ungovern'd passion ev'ry hour,
 Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway,
 And all their deep impression wear away:
 So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,
 Till Caesar's image is effaced at last.¹
 The breach, though small at first, soon op'ning wide,
 In rushes folly with a full-moon tide.

Then welcome errors of whatever size,
 To justify it by a thousand lies.
 As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
 And hides the ruin that it feeds upon,
 So sophistry cleaves close to, and protects
 Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
 Mortals whose pleasures are their only care,
 First wish to be imposed on, and then are;
 And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
 Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
 Not more industrious are the just and true
 To give to virtue what is virtue's due,
 The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
 And call her charms to public notice forth,
 Than vice's mean and disingenuous race,
 To hide the shocking features of her face.
 Her form with dress and lotion they repair,
 Then kiss their idol and pronounce her fair.

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

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
 Footing it in the dance that fancy leads,
 Ye novelists who mar what ye would mend,
 Sniv'ling and driv'ling folly without end,
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
 With sentimental frippery and dream,
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net
 By some lewd Earl, or rake-hell Baronet;
 Ye pimps, who under virtue's fair pretence,
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,
 And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
 To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;
 Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire,
 Though all your engineering proves in vain,
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again;
 Oh! that a verse had power, and could command,
 Far, far away, these flesh flies of the land,
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there.
 Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
 And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil,

Such writers and such readers owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

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

Petronius!¹ all the muses weep for thee,
But ev'ry tear shall scald thy memory.

The graces too, while virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,

Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,

Graybeard corrupter of our list'ning youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,

That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son

To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own*.
Now while the poison all high life pervades,

Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,

That thy worst part, thy principles live yet;
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind

Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,

Our most important are our earliest years,
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease

Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue

That education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong,

Man's coltish disposition asks the thong,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.

But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow,

We give some Latin and a smatch² of Greek,
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week,

And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome.

¹ Lord Chesterfield and his Letters.

² Cowper remembered Shakspeare's

"— life that had some smatch of honour in it."

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
 And wisdom falls before exterior grace;
 We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
 And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
 A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
 Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
 Are qualities that seem to comprehend
 Whatever parents, guardians, schools intend;
 Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
 Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
 Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
 With indolence and luxury, is trash;
 While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
 Seems verging fast towards the female side.

Learning itself, received into a mind
 By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
 Serves but to lead philosophers astray
 Where children would with ease discern the way.
 And of all arts sagacious dupes invent
 To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
 The worst is Scripture warp'd from its intent.

The carriage bowls along and all are pleased
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased,
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far,
 Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
 It suffers interruption and delay,
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
 When some hypothesis absurd and vain
 Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,
 The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
 The will made subject to a lawless force,
 All is irregular, and out of course,
 And judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
 Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.
 A critic, on the sacred book, should be
 Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free.
 Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
 From fancy's influence, and intemp'rate zeal.
 But, above all, (or let the wretch refrain,
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane,
 Free from the domineering pow'r of lust,
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy pow'r address,
 Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?

With rev'rend tutor, clad in habit lay,
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day
 With memorandum-book for ev'ry town,
 And ev'ry post, and where the chaise broke down;
 His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
 With much to learn, but nothing to impart,
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
 Sets off a wand'rer into foreign lands;
 Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair
 With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
 And steeples tow'ring high, much like our own,
 But show peculiar light by many a grin,
 At Popish practices observed within.

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

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

By thee, religion, liberty, and laws,
 Exert their influence, and advance their cause,
 By thee worse plagues, than Pharaoh's land beset,
 Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell:
 Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies,
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
 Till half mankind were like himself possess'd
 Philosophers, who darken and put out
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt,
 Church quacks, with passions under no command,
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
 Discov'ers of they know not what, confined
 Within no bounds, the blind that lead the blind,
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,
 Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
 The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
 Pois'ning the waters where their swarms abound;
 Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge th' unwholesome food
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,
 E'en Lewenhoek¹ himself would stand aghast,
 Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,
 And own his crab-computing pow'rs o'ercome.
 Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
 Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
 From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes,
 And therefore prints. Himself but half-deceived,
 'Till others have the soothing tale believed.
 Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
 As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.
 Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey,
 Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
 If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
 Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend;
 If languages and copies all cry, No—
 Somebody proved it centuries ago.
 Like trout pursued, the critic, in despair,
 Darts to the mud and finds his safety there.

¹ A Dutch naturalist, born at Delft in 1632. With single lenses, of extreme polish, he made some very curious microscopic investigations. In 1688, he showed to Peter the Great the circulation of the blood in the tail of an eel. He died in 1723.

Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
 The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),
 With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
 Admire his learning, and almost adore.
 Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
 With such fine words familiar to his tongue.
 Ye ladies! (for, indiff'rent in your cause,
 I should deserve to forfeit all applause.)
 Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence
 To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
 (Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)
 Nor has, nor can have Scripture on its side.
 None but an author knows an author's cares,
 Or fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
 Committed once into the public arms,
 The baby seems to smile with added charms;
 Like something precious ventured far from shore,
 'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
 He views it with complacency supreme,
 Solicits kind attention to his dream,
 And daily more enamour'd of the cheat,
 Kneels, and asks Heav'n to bless the dear deceit,
 So one,¹ whose story serves at least to show
 Men loved their own productions long ago,
 Woo'd an unfeeling statue for his wife,
 Nor rested till the gods had giv'n it life.
 If some more driv'ler suck the sugar'd fib,
 One that still needs his leading-string and bib,
 And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
 In praise applied to the same part, his head;
 For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
 Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.
 Patient of contradiction as a child,
 Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,
 Such was Sir Isaac,² and such Boyle, and Locke
 Your blund'rer is as sturdy as a rock;
 The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
 A muleteer's the man to set him right.
 First appetite enlists him truth's sworn foe,
 Then obstinate self-will confirms him so.
 Tell him he wanders, that his error leads
 To fatal ills; that though the path he treads

¹ Pygmalion, a sculptor of Cyprus, who, becoming enamour'd of a marble statue, prevailed on Venus to turn it into a woman, whom he married.

² Newton.

Be flow'ry, and he see no cause of fear,
 Death and the pains of hell attend him there;
 In vain; the slave of arrogance and pride,
 He has no hearing on the prudent side.
 His still refuted quirks he still repeats,
 New-raised objections with new quibbles meets,
 Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
 He dies disputing, and the contest ends;
 But not the mischiefs: they still left behind,
 Like thistle-seeds are sown by every wind.

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

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

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

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup,
 He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
 Habits are soon assumed, but when we strive
 To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.
 Call'd to the temple of impure delight,
 He that abstains, and he alone does right.
 If a wish wander that way call it home,
 He cannot long be safe, whose wishes roam.
 But if you pass the threshold, you are caught.
 Die then, if pow'r Almighty save you not.
 There hard'ning by degrees, till double steel'd.
 Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd.

Then laugh at all you trembled at before,
 And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar
 Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense,
 That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense :
 If clemency revolted by abuse
 Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.

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

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

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

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

 TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ.

HOR. LIB. II. EP. I.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
 His ship half founder'd and his compass lost,
 Sees, far as human optics may command,
 A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land :
 Spreads all his canvass, ev'ry sinew plies,
 Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies.

Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
 His well-built systems, philosophic dreams,
 Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!
 He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.

Hard lot of man! to toil for the reward
 Of virtue, and yet lose it—wherefore hard?
 He, that would win the race, must guide his horse
 Obedient to the customs of the course,
 Else, though unquall'd to the goal he flies,
 A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
 Grace leads the right way, if you choose the wrong,
 Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue;
 Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
 Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

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

Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
 Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
 Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
 Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
 Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
 From the strict duties of the sacred day?
 Sit long and late at the carousing board?
 (Such were the sins with which he charged his
 Lord)

No—the man's morals were exact, what then?
 'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
 His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
 Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
 He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
 A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
 The self-applauding bird, the peacock see—
 Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
 Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
 His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold;
 He treads as if, some solemn music near,
 His measured step were govern'd by his ear,
 And seems to say, Ye meaner fowl, give place;
 I am all splendour, dignity, and grace.

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
 Though he, too, has a glory in his plumes;
 He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien,
 To the close copse or far sequester'd green,
 And shines without desiring to be seen.
 The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
 Heav'n turns from with abhorrence and disdain:
 Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
 Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
 What is all righteousness that men devise,
 What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
 But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
 As stoop from heav'n to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
 Book, beads, and maple-dish his meagre stock,
 In shirt of hair and weeds of canvass dress'd,
 Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd,
 Adust¹ with stripes told out for ev'ry crime,
 And sore tormented long before his time,
 His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid,
 His praise postponed, and never to be paid,
 See the sage hermit by mankind admired,
 With all that bigotry adopts, inspired,
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,
 'Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
 His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
 You think him humble, God accounts him proud,
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
 Of all his conduct, this the genuine sense—
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood
 Have purchased heav'n, and prove my title good.

¹ Burnt up. Dryden has "choler adust."

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply,
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
 The Bramin kindles on his own bare head
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade,
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,
 Would give a barb'rous air to British song,
 Nor grand inquisitor could worse invent,
 Than he contrives to suffer, well content.

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

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
 And prejudice have left a passage clear)
 Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
 And poison'd every virtue in them both.
 Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean,
 Humility may clothe an English Dean;
 That grace was Cowper's—his confess'd by all—
 Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
 Not all the plenty of a Bishop's board,
 His palace, and his lackeys, and, 'my Lord!
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice.
 It thrives in misery, and abundant grows
 In misery fools upon themselves impose.

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

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
 She might be young some forty years ago,
 Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
 Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
 To watch yon am'rous couple in their play,
 With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
 And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs,
 Duly at clink of bell, to morning pray'rs.
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
 She yet allows herself that boy behind;

The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,
 With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
 Which future pages are yet doom'd to share,
 Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

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

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

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

What purpose has the King of Saints in view?
 Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew?
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
 From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
 To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
 Or if a chain, the golden one of love,

No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
 What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
 Shall he for such deliv'rance freely wrought,
 Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought;
 His master's int'rest and his own combined,
 Prompt ev'ry movement of his heart and mind;
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

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

Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
 Tom quits you, with, Your most obedient, Sir—
 The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
 Watches your eye, anticipates command,
 Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail,
 And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
 Consults all day your int'rest and your ease,
 Richly rewarded if he can but please,
 And proud to make his firm attachment known,
 To save your life would nobly risk his own.
 Now, which stands highest in your serious thought?
 Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought;
 One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,
 Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
 Thus Heav'n approves, as honest and sincere,
 The work of gen'rous love and filial fear,
 But with averted eyes th' omniscient Judge,
 Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.
 Where dwell these matchless saints? Old Curio cries—
 Ev'n at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
 The favour'd few, th' enthusiasts you despise,
 And pleased at heart because on holy ground,
 Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,

Reproach a people with his single fall,
 And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
 Attend—an apt similitude shall show,
 Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.
 See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
 Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
 Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
 Shakes it again and faster to the ground,
 Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
 Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away;
 Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
 And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed,
 Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case
 He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace;
 Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
 Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
 Some mansion neat and elegantly dress'd,
 By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
 Offer him warmth, security, and rest,
 Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
 He hears the tempest howling in the trees,
 What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ
 While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
 So fares it with the sinner when he feels,
 A growing dread of vengeance at his heels,
 His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
 Lash'd into foaming waves begins to roar,
 The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
 Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong.
 Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
 And death, or restitution, is the word;
 The last impossible, he fears the first,
 And having well deserved, expects the worst.
 Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home,
 Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!
 Crush me ye rocks, ye falling mountains hide.
 Or bury me in ocean's angry tide—
 The scrutiny of those all seeing eyes
 I dare not—and you need not, God replies;
 The remedy you want I freely give,
 The Book shall teach you, read, believe, and live:
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore,
 And justice, guardian of the dread command,
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.

A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise,
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,
And the world's hatred as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblamable and just,
Their own dear virtue, their unshaken trust
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the Pope has lost his int'rest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground:
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek,
Mercy is infinite and man is weak,
The future shall obliterate the past,
And heav'n no doubt shall be their home at last.

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

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare,
Learning is one, and wit, however rare:
The Frenchman first in literary fame,
(Mention him if you please—Voltaire? the same)
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died:
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew:
An infidel in health, but what when sick?
Oh then a text would touch him at the quick:
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on ev'ry side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Content though mean, and cheerful, if not gay
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit.

Receives no praise, but (though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

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

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

Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice,
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heav'nly call,
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all ;
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they ;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss, (how strange soe'er it seem,)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open and ye cannot enter—why ?
Because ye will not, Conyers¹ would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
Oh bless'd effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant !
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.

¹ I suppose the allusion is to Dr. Richard Conyers, rector of St. Paul's, Deptford; on whose death Mr. Newton preached a sermon, May 7, 1786. One passage is singularly applicable to Cowper himself:—"Through the agitation of his spirits, he spent his days, and almost every hour, in trepidation and alarm. The slightest incidents were sufficient to fill him with fears, which, though he knew to be groundless, he could not overcome."—

Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
 To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head;
 To them, the sounding jargon of the schools
 Seems what it is, a cap and bells for fools;
 The light they walk by, kindled from above,
 Shows them the shortest way to life and love:
 They, strangers to the controversial field,
 Where deists always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
 And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
 Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.
 Envy ye great the dull unletter'd small;
 Ye have much cause for envy—but not all;
 We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
 And one that wears a coronet and prays:
 Like gleanings of an olive-tree they show,
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough.
 How readily upon the Gospel plan,
 That question has its answer—what is man?
 Sinful and weak, in ev'ry sense a wretch,
 An instrument whose chords upon the stretch,
 And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
 Yield only discord in his Maker's ear:
 Once the blest residence of truth divine,
 Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
 Where in his own oracular abode,
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;
 But made long since, like Babylon of old,
 A den of mischiefs never to be told:
 And she, once mistress of the realms around,
 Now scatter'd wide and nowhere to be found,
 As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
 By native pow'r and energy her own,
 As nature, at her own peculiar cost,
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.
 Go bid the winter cease to chill the year,
 Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,
 Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)
 The self-restoring arm of human pow'r.
 But what is man in his own proud esteem?
 Hear him, himself the poet and the theme;
 A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
 Grace in his mien and glory in his eyes,
 Supreme on earth and worthy of the skies,
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a god.

So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form.
 The song magnificent, the theme a worm :
 Himself so much the source of his delight,
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight :
 See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
 His passions tamed and all at his control,
 How perfect the composure of his soul !
 Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
 O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail :
 His books well trimm'd and in the gayest style,
 Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves :
 The Bible only stands neglected there,
 Though that of all most worthy of his care,
 And like an infant, troublesome awake,
 Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

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

Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.
 But the same word, that, like the polish'd share,
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
 Kills, too, the flow'ry weeds where'er they grow,
 That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
 Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
 Sad messenger of mercy from above,
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear :
 His will and judgment at continual strife,
 That civil war embitters all his life ;
 In vain he points his pow'rs against the skies,
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes.
 Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware—
 And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
 Though various foes against the truth combine
 Pride above all opposes her design ;
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
 The subtlest serpent, with the loftiest crest,
 Swells at the thought, and kindling into rage,
 Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.
 And is the soul indeed so lost, she cries,
 Fall'n from her glory and too weak to rise,
 Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
 Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own ?
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call
 Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all—
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
 Some love of virtue, and some pow'r to praise
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,
 And soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
 Possess herself of all that's good or true,
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
 And if the youth, unmelior'd yet by time,
 Bore on his branch, luxuriant, and rude,
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce
 And meliorate the well concocted juice.
 Then conscious of her meritorious zeal,
 To Justice she may make her bold appeal,
 And leave to Mercy with a tranquil mind,
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
 Hear then how Mercy slighted and defied,
 Retorts th' affront against the crown of pride

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

Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both,
 Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
 For ignorance of what they could not know?
 That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
 Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
 Truly not I—the partial light men have,
 My creed persuades me, well employ'd may save,
 While he that scorns the noontide beam perverse,
 Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.
 Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
 Left sensuality and dross behind,
 Possess for me their undisputed lot,
 And take unenvied the reward they sought.
 But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
 Not blind by choice, but destined not to see;
 Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
 Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
 Derived from the same source of light and grace
 That guides the Christian in his swifter race;
 Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law,
 That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
 Led them, however falt'ring, faint and slow,
 From what they knew, to what they wish'd to know;
 But let not him that shares a brighter day,
 Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
 Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
 And deem his base stupidity no crime;
 The wretch that slights the bounty of the skies,
 And sinks while favour'd with the means to rise,
 Shall find them rated at their full amount,
 The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
 Thunder and earthquake and devouring flame,

From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
 Life for obedience, death for ev'ry flaw.
 When the great Sov'reign would his will express,
 He gives a perfect rule; what can he less?
 And guards it with a sanction as severe
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
 Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
 And man might safely trifle with his name:
 He bids him glow with unremitting love
 To all on earth, and to himself above;
 Condemns the injurious deed, the sland'rous tongue,
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:
 Brings not alone, the more conspicuous part,
 His conduct to the test, but tries his heart.

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

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

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

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

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
 Dona sines?

VIRGIL.

WHY weeps the muse for England? What appears
 In England's case to move the muse to tears?
 From side to side of her delightful isle,
 Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
 Can nature add a charm or art confer
 A new-found luxury not seen in her?
 Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,
 Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
 Her fields, a rich expanse of wavy corn,
 Pour'd out from plenty's overflowing horn,
 Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
 The fervour and the force of Indian skies;
 Her peaceful shores, where busy commerce waits
 To pour his golden tide through all her gates,
 Whom fiery suns that scorch the russet spice
 Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
 Forbid in vain to push his daring way
 To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
 Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
 From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
 The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
 Her vaults below, where every vintage meets.
 Her theatres, her revels, and her sports,
 The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
 But age in spite of weakness and of pain
 Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again:
 All speak her happy—let the muse look round
 From East to West, no sorrow can be found,
 Or only what, in cottages confined,
 Sighs unregarded to the passing wind;
 Then wherefore weep for England, what appears
 In England's case to move the muse to tears?
 The prophet wept¹ for Israel, wish'd his eyes
 Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;

¹ "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears."—
 Jeremiah ix. 1.

For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong,
 There were the scorner's and the sland'rer's tongue,
 Oaths used as playthings or convenient tools,
 As int'rest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools,
 Adult'ry neighing at his neighbour's door,
 Oppression labouring hard to grind the poor,
 The partial balance and deceitful weight,
 The treach'rous smile, a mask for secret hate,
 Hypocrisy, formality in pray'r,
 And the dull service of the lip were there.
 Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
 By vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
 Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
 To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art;
 Were just such trifles without worth or use,
 As silly pride and idleness produce,
 Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd and flounced around,
 With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
 They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,
 And sigh'd for ev'ry fool that flutter'd by.¹
 He saw his people slaves to ev'ry lust,
 Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust,
 He heard the wheels of an avenging God
 Groan heavily along the distant road;
 Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
 To let the military deluge pass;
 Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
 Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd;
 Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
 Stamp'd with his foot and smote upon his thigh;
 But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain
 Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
 And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
 Ears long accusom'd to the pleasing lute;
 They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
 Pronounc'd him frantic and his fears a dream,
 With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
 Till the foe found them, and down fell the tow'rs.
 Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
 Till penitence had purged the public stain,
 And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
 Return'd them happy to the land they loved:
 There, proof against prosperity, awhile
 They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,

And had the grace, in scenes of peace to show
 The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe.
 But man is frail and can but ill sustain
 A long immunity from grief and pain,
 And after all the joys that plenty leads,
 With tiptoe step vice silently succeeds.

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

When nations are to perish in their sins,
 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins :
 The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
 To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
 Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
 While others poison what the flock must drink ;
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
 Infuses lies and errors of his own :
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
 And tainted by the very means of cure,
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,
 The foul forerunner of a general rot :
 Then truth is hush'd that heresy may preach,
 And all is trash that reason cannot reach ;
 Then God's own image on the soul impress'd,
 Becomes a mock'ry and a standing jest,
 And faith, the root whence only can arise
 The graces of a life that wins the skies,
 Loses at once all value and esteem,
 Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream :
 Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
 Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,
 While truths, on which eternal things depend,
 Find not, or hardly find a single friend :
 As soldiers watch the signal of command,
 They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand,
 Happy to fill religion's vacant place
 With hollow form and gesture and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
 People and priest, the sons of Israel were.

Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
 And import of their oracles divine,
 Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
 And yet exalted above God's own word,
 They drew a curse from an intended good,
 Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
 He judg'd them with as terrible a frown,
 As if, not love, but wrath had brought him down.
 Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
 Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs.
 Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran,
 Rhet'ric is artifice, the work of man,
 And tricks and turns that fancy may devise,
 Are far too mean for him that rules the skies.
 Th' astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore
 The mask from faces never seen before;
 He stripp'd th' impostors in the noonday sun,
 Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun,
 Their pray'rs made public, their excesses kept
 As private as the chambers where they slept;
 The temple and its holy rites profaned
 By mumm'ries he that dwelt in it disdain'd;
 Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
 Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
 Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
 And free from ev'ry taint but that of vice.
 Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
 When obstinacy once has conquer'd grace.
 They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored
 In answer to the fiat of his word,
 Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue,
 Blasphem'd th' authority from which it sprung.
 They knew by sure prognostics seen on high,
 The future tone and temper of the sky,¹
 But grave dissemblers, could not understand
 That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.
 Ask now of history's authentic page,
 And call up evidence from ev'ry age,
 Display, with busy and laborious hand,
 The blessings of the most indebted land,
 What nation will you find, whose annals prove
 So rich an int'rest in Almighty love?

¹ "He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"—Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
 A people planted, water'd, blest as they?
 Let Egypt's plagues, and Canaan's woes proclaim
 The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name;
 Their freedom purchased for them, at the cost
 Of all their hard oppressors valued most,
 Their title to a country not their own,
 Made sure by prodigies till then unknown,
 For them, the state they left made waste and void,
 For them, the states to which they went, destroy'd.
 A cloud to measure out their march by day,
 By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way,
 That moving signal summoning, when best,
 Their host to move, and when it stay'd, to rest.
 For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
 The dews condensed into angelic food;
 Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
 And time forbid to touch them as he flew;
 Streams swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand,
 While they pass'd through to their appointed land;
 Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
 And graced with clear credentials from above,
 Themselves secured beneath th' Almighty wing,
 Their God their captain,¹ lawgiver, and king.
 Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last
 Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
 In peace possessing what they won by war,
 Their name far publish'd and revered as far;
 Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
 With all that man e'er wish'd, or Heav'n bestow'd?

They, and they only amongst all mankind,
 Received the transcript of th' Eternal Mind,
 Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
 And constituted guardians of his cause;
 Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
 And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
 In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
 With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
 Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
 By power divine, and skill that could not err,
 Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
 And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
 Then the proud eagles of all-conqu'ring Rome
 Had found one city not to be o'ercome,

¹ See *Jochuz* v. 14.

And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
 Had bid defiance to the warring world.
 But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
 As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds;
 Cured of the golden calves their fathers' sin,
 They set up self, that idol-god within,
 View'd a Deliv'rer with disdain and hate,
 Who left them still a tributary state,
 Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
 From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree:
 There was the consummation and the crown,
 The flow'r of Israel's infamy full blown;
 Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
 Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

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

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
 The last of nations now, though once the first,
 They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn—
 Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn:
 If we escaped not, if Heav'n spared not us,
 Peel'd,¹ scatter'd, and exterminated thus;
 If vice received her retribution due
 When we were visited, what hope for you?
 When God arises with an awful frown,
 To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
 When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
 Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,

¹ Burke (on a Regicide Peace) gives a good explanation of the word—
 "Whether its territory had a little more or a little less peeled from 'its
 surface."

Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand
 To pour down wrath upon a thankless land,
 He will be found impartially severe,
 Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

O Israel, of all nations most undone!

Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;
 Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
 And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst;
 Thy services, once holy without spot,
 Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
 Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
 No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
 And thou thyself o'er ev'ry country sown,
 With none on earth that thou canst call thine
 own;

Cry aloud thou that sittest in the dust,
 Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust,
 Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears,
 Say wrath is coming and the storm appears,
 But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
 And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
 Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
 And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
 Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
 Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?
 Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
 None interposes now to succour thee;
 Countries indebted to thy pow'r, that shine
 With light derived from thee, would smother thine;
 Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
 A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face:
 Thy rulers load thy credit year by year
 With sums Peruvian mines could never clear,
 As if like arches built with skilful hand,
 The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.
 The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
 Speed us away to battle and to fame.
 Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
 Impatient to descry the flags of France;
 But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
 Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought:
 Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
 Chaos of contrarieties at war,
 Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
 Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight;

Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
 To disconcert what policy has plann'd;
 Where policy is busied all night long
 In setting right what faction has set wrong;
 Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
 That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
 Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
 Tax'd till the brow of labour sweats in vain;
 War lays a burden on the reeling state,
 And peace does nothing to relieve the weight,
 Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
 And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
 So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
 Thou canst not read with readiness and ease,
 Providence adverse in events like these?
 Know then, that heav'nly wisdom on this ball
 Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all:
 That while laborious and quick-thoughted man
 Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
 He first conceives, then perfects his design,
 As a mere instrument in hands divine:
 Blind to the working of that secret power
 That balances the wings of ev'ry hour,
 The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
 Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
 States thrive or wither, as moons wax and wane,
 Even as his will and his decrees ordain;
 While honour, virtue, piety bear sway,
 They flourish, and as these decline, decay.
 In just resentment of his injured laws,
 He pours contempt on them and on their cause,
 Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
 The web of every scheme they have at heart,
 Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
 The pillars of support in which they trust,
 And do his errand of disgrace and shame
 On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
 None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
 None bars him out from his most secret thought;
 Darkness itself before his eye is light,
 And Hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
 Stand now and judge thyself—hast thou incurr'd
 His anger who can waste thee with a word,
 Who poises and proportions sea and land,
 Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,

And in whose awful sight all nations seem
 As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
 Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
 Claim'd all the glory of thy prosp'rous wars,
 Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
 Of his just praise to lavish it on them?
 Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
 That no success attends on spears and swords
 Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
 That courage is his creature, and dismay
 The post that at his bidding speeds away,
 Ghastly in feature, and his stamm'ring tongue,
 With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
 And teach the combatant a woman's part?
 That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
 Saves as he will by many, or by few,
 And claims for ever as his royal right
 Th' event and sure decision of the fight.

Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast,
 Exported slav'ry to the conquer'd East,
 Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
 And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead,
 Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
 A despot big with pow'r obtain'd by wealth,
 And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
 With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
 But left their virtues and thine own behind,
 And, having *truck'd*^d thy soul, brought home the fee,
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?

Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
 And made the symbols of atoning grace
 An office key, a picklock to a place,
 That infidels may prove their title good
 By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
 Of all that grave apologists may write,
 And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.

¹ *Bartered*—sc Churchill in the "Duellist":—

"Lived with men infamous and vile,
Truck'd his salvation for a smile."

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

Hast thou, when Heav'n has clothed thee with dis-
 grace,

And long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
 (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow,
 And never of a sabler hue than now,)
 Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience sear'd,
 Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
 And, having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
 That cried repent—and gloried in thy choice?
 Thy fastings, when calamity at last
 Suggests th' expedient of a yearly fast,
 What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a pow'r
 In lighter diet, at a later hour,
 To charm to sleep the threat'nings of the skies,
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
 The fast that wins deliv'rance, and suspends
 The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
 Is to renounce hypocrisy, to draw
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law,
 To war with pleasures idolized before,
 To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
 All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
 's wooing mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
 Brought fire from heav'n. the sex-abusing crime,
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace
 Baboons are free from, upon human race?
 Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
 Where paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,¹
 Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
 Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
 Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:
 Then nature, injured, scandalized, defiled,
 Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smiled,
 Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
 And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

¹ "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord."—Genesis xiii. 10.

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

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
 From mean self-int'rest and ambition clear,
 Their hope in heav'n, servility their scorn,
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
 Their wisdom pure, and giv'n them from above,
 Their usefulness insured by zeal and love,
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal
 As bold as, in Agrippa's presence, Paul,
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
 Holy and unpolluted—are thine such?
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.¹

Where shall a teacher look in days like these,
 For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
 Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain;
 Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
 Speak but the word, will listen and return:
 Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock,
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
 Are more intelligent at least, try them:
 Oh vain inquiry! They, without remorse,
 Are altogether gone a devious course,
 Where beck'ning pleasure leads them, wildly stray,
 Have burst the bands and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
 Review thy dim original and prime;
 This island spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
 The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
 Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
 And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd;

¹ See 1 Samuel ii. iii.

For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
 And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
 While yet thou wast a grov'ling puling chit,
 Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,
 The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
 Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now:
 His victory was that of orient light,
 When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night
 Thy language at this distant moment shows
 How much the country to the conqu'ror owes;
 Expressive, energetic, and refined,
 It sparkles with the gems he left behind:
 He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
 He found thee savage, and he left thee tame,
 Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
 And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride,
 He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
 Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
 And while he ruled thee by the sword alone,
 Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
 Religion, if in heav'nly truths attired,
 Needs only to be seen to be admired,
 But thine, as dark as witch'ries of the night,
 Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight:
 Thy Druids struck the well-strung harps they bore
 With fingers deeply dyed in human gore,
 And, while the victim slowly bled to death,
 Upon the tolling chords rung out his dying breath.
 Who brought the lamp that with awak'ning beams
 Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
 Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
 Babblers of ancient fables, leaves a doubt;
 But still light reach'd thee; and those gods of thine
 Woden and Thor, each tott'ring in his shrine,
 Fell broken and defaced at his own door,
 As Dagon in Philistia long before.¹
 But Rome with sorceries and magic wand,
 Soon raised a cloud that darken'd ev'ry land,
 And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
 Of Tiber's marshes, and the Papal bog;
 Then priests with bulls, and briefs, and shaven crowns,
 And griping fists and unrelenting frowns,

¹ "And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground, before the ark of the Lord: and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold, only the stump of Dagon was left to him."—1 Samuel v. 4.

Legates and delegates with pow'rs from hell,
 Though heav'nly in pretension, fleeced thee well;
 And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
 Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.¹
 Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,
 Were train'd beneath his lash and knew the smack,
 And when he laid them on the scent of blood,
 Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.²
 Lavish of life to win an empty tomb,
 That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
 They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
 His worthless absolution all the prize.
 Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,
 That ever dragg'd a chain, or tugg'd an oar;
 Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
 Themselves the slaves of bigotry, or lust,
 Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
 Found thee a goodly sponge for pow'r to press.
 Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
 Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee,
 Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
 Domestic happiness and rural joy,
 To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
 In causeless feuds and bick'rings of their own:
 Thy Parliaments adored on bended knees
 The sovereignty they were convened to please;
 Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
 Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd:
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
 Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
 He was a traitor by the gen'ral voice.
 Oh slave! with pow'rs thou didst not dare exert,
 Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert,
 It shakes the sides of splenetic disdain,
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
 To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
 That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee,
 When other nations flew from coast to coast,
 And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
 Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust,
 Blush if thou canst, not petrified, thou must.
 Act but an honest and a faithful part,
 Compare what then thou wast, with what thou art,

¹ Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.—C.

² The Crusades.

And God's disposing providence confess'd,
 Obduracy itself must yield the rest—
 Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove
 Hour after hour thy gratitude and love.

Has he not hid thee and thy favour'd land
 For ages safe beneath his shelt'ring hand,
 Giv'n thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
 Bid nations leagu'd against thee stand aloof,
 And charged hostility and hate to roar
 Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
 His pow'r secured thee when presumptuous Spain
 Baptized her fleet invincible in vain;
 Her gloomy monarch, doubtful, and resign'd
 To ev'ry pang that racks an anxious mind,
 Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,
 What tidings? and the surge replied—all lost!
 And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,
 Then too much fear'd and now too much forgot,
 Pierced to the very centre of thy realm,
 And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
 'Twas but to prove how quickly with a frown,
 He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down
 Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,
 Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
 Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
 And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
 'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
 Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
 While his own Heav'n surveys the troubled scene,
 And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
 Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
 Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
 Thou hast as bright an int'rest in her rays,
 As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
 True freedom is, where no restraint is known
 That scripture, justice, and good sense disown
 Where only vice and injury are tied,
 And all from shore to shore is free beside:—
 Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary tow'rs
 Stood trembling at the boldness of thy pow'rs
 That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
 Like her the fabled Phœbus woo'd in vain;
 He found the laurel only—happier you
 Th' unfading laurel and the virgin too.¹

¹ Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the Barons at Runnymede, near Windsor.—C.

Now think, if pleasure have a thought to spare,
 If God himself be not beneath her care ;
 If bus'ness, constant as the wheels of time,
 Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme ;
 If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
 Or expectation of the next give leave ;—
 Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
 For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
 How much though long neglected, shining yet,
 The beams of heav'nly truth have swell'd the debt.
 When persecuting zeal made royal sport
 With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
 And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
 Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake ;
 The sacred Book its value understood,
 Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
 Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
 Seem to reflection of a diff'rent race,
 Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
 In such a cause they could not dare to fear,
 They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
 Nor spare a life too short to reach the skies.
 From them to thee convey'd along the tide,
 Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died,
 Those truths which neither use nor years impair,
 Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
 What dotage will not vanity maintain,
 What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?
 The moles and bats in full assembly find,
 On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
 And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?
 Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
 Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart
 Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
 So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
 Ere nature rose from her eternal sleep,
 And this delightful earth and that fair sky
 Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High,
 By such a change thy darkness is made light,
 Thy chaos order, and thy weakness, might,
 And he whose power mere nullity obeys,
 Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise
 To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
 Doing and suff'ring his unquestion'd will,
 'Tis to believe what men inspired of old.
 Faithful and faithfully inform'd, unfold ;

Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
 To take for truth what cannot but be true,
 To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
 And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart:
 Happy the man there seeking and there found,
 Happy the nation where such men abound.

How shall a verse impress thee? By what name
 Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
 By theirs, whose bright example unimpeach'd
 Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
 Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
 Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires?
 Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age
 Whom all the vanities they scorn'd, engage,
 And his that seraphs tremble at, is hung
 Disgracefully on ev'ry trifler's tongue,
 Or serves the champion in forensic war,
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
 If int'rest move thee, to persuade ev'n thee:
 By ev'ry charm that smiles upon her face,
 By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,
 If dear society be worth a thought,
 And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
 Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
 Held by the tenure of his will alone,
 Like angels in the service of their Lord,
 Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word;
 That gratitude and temp'rance in our use
 Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
 Secure the favour and enhance the joy,
 That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.

But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
 Those rights that millions envy thee appear,
 And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
 The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
 That blessings truly sacred, and when giv'n
 Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heav'n,
 The word of prophecy, those truths divine
 Which make that Heav'n, if thou desire it, thine;
 'Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
 Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved.)
 Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
 With cold disgust, or philosophic pride,
 And that judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
 P^{er} and darkness occupy their place.

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

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
 Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
 What nation amongst all my foes is free
 From crimes as base as any charged on me?
 Their measure fill'd—they too shall pay the debt
 Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
 But know, that wrath divine, when most severe,
 Makes justice still the guide of his career,
 And will not punish in one mingled crowd,
 Them without light, and thee without a cloud.
 Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
 Still murmur'ing with the solemn truths I teach,
 And while, at intervals, a cold blast sings
 Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
 My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
 A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
 I know the warning song is sung in vain,
 That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain:
 But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
 A blessing to my country and mankind,
 Reclaim the wand'ring thousands, and bring home
 A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
 Then place it once again between my knees,
 The sound of truth will then be sure to please,
 And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
 In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
 Shall be my theme, my glory to the last

HOPE.

— doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.—VIRGIL, *En. vi*

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,
 With disappointment low'ring in his eyes,
 A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
 A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
 A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
 Closing at last in darkness and despair.—
 The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
 Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
 And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
 Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
 Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
 As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
 As in a dance the pair that take the lead
 Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
 So shifting and so various is the plan,
 By which Heav'n rules the mix'd affairs of man;
 Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
 The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;
 Bus'ness is labour, and man's weakness such,
 Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,
 The very sense of it foregoes its use,
 By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.
 Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore
 Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore;
 Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
 Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane¹ about, and taking snuff,
 Lothario cries, what philosophic stuff!
 Oh querulous and weak! whose useless brain
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain,
 Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
 Whose prospect shows thee a disheart'ning waste,
 Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
 And youth invigorate that frame again,
 Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
 Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
 For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
 That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,

¹ How much happier is Pope—

"And the nice conduct of a clouded cane."

See nature gay as when she first began,
 With smiles alluring her admirer, man,
 She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
 Earth glitters with the drops the night distills,
 The sun obedient at her call appears
 To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears,
 Banks clothed with flow'rs, groves fill'd with sprightly
 sounds,

The yellow tilth,¹ green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
 Streams edged with osiers, fatt'ning ev'ry field
 Where'er they flow, now seen, and now conceal'd,
 From the blue rim where skies and mountains meet,
 Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
 Ten thousand charms that only fools despise,
 Or pride can look at with indiff'rent eyes,
 All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
 Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice.
 Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
 And she gives largely more than he requires,
 Not that his hours devoted all to care,
 Hollow-eyed abstinence and lean despair,
 The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
 She holds a paradise of rich delight,
 But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
 To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere,
 To banish hesitation, and proclaim
 His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
 'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
 That Heav'n's intentions are not what they seem,
 That only shadows are dispensed below,
 And earth has no reality but woe.

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

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
 To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
 'Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
 To fill the dull vacuity till four,
 And just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
 To spend two hours in dressing for the day,
 To make the sun a bauble without use,
 Save for the fruits his heav'nly beams produce,

¹ *Tilth* is any kind of country work which "tilleth," or turns up the earth.

Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
 Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not,
 Through mere necessity to close his eyes
 Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise,
 Is such a life, so tediously the same,
 So void of all utility or aim,

That poor JONQUIL, with almost ev'ry breath
 Sighs for his exit, vulgarly call'd death:
 For he, with all his follies, has a mind
 Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
 But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
 Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
 By which he reads that life, without a plan,
 As useless as the moment it began,
 Serves merely as a soil for discontent
 To thrive in, an incumbrance, e'er half spent.
 Oh weariness beyond what asses feel,
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel,
 A dull rotation never at a stay,
 Yesterday's face twin image of to-day,
 While conversation, an exhausted stock,
 Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
 No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
 With academic dignity devout,
 To read wise lectures, vanity the text;
 Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next,
 For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,
 Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
 Yet seldom sought, where only to be found,
 While passion turns aside from its due scope
 Th' inquirer's aim, that remedy, is Hope.
 Life is his gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
 And ev'ry good and perfect gift proceeds,
 Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
 Royally, freely, for his bounty sake.
 'Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
 And yet the seed of an immortal flow'r,
 Design'd in honour of his endless love,
 To fill with fragrance his abode above.
 No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
 And howsoever shadowy, no dream,
 Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
 Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.

Men deal with life, as children with their play,
 Who first misuse, then cast their toys away;

Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator has no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, pow'r, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wand'ring notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reas'ning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature employ'd in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace,
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood.
That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture with a glow
Bright as the covenant-insuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use,
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives with chymic art
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wing sails through th' immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bow'rs of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast;
Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure;
Hope! let the wretch once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.

Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
 That boasts the treasure, all at his command,
 The fragrant grove, th' inestimable mine,
 Were light when weigh'd against one smile of thine
 Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms,
 He shine with all a cherub's artless charms,
 Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
 Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;
 His passions, like the wat'ry stores that sleep
 Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
 Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
 To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
 From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
 Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
 The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
 The free republic of the whip-gig state.
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
 Dares step across his arbitrary views,
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues.
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
 Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand, prevails.
 Now see him launch'd into the world at large ;
 If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
 Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
 Though short, too long, the price he pays for all ;
 If lawyer, loud, whatever cause he plead,
 But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
 Perhaps a grave physician, gath'ring fees,
 Punctually paid for length'ning out disease,
 No Cotton,¹ whose humanity sheds rays
 That make superior skill his second praise.
 If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
 His date of life, so likely to be short,
 A soldier may be anything, if brave,
 So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
 Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind
 To passion, int'rest, pleasure, whim resign'd,
 Insist on, as if each were his own Pope,
 Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope ;
 But conscience, in some awful silent hour,
 When captivating lusts have lost their power,
 Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream
 Reminds him of religion, hated theme !

¹ This admirable person died at St. Alban's in 1788. His "Fire-side" is still read ; but Cowper has given to him a brighter memory.

Starts from the down on which she lately slept,
 And tells of laws despised, at least not kept;
 Shows with a pointing finger, and no noise,
 A pale procession of past sinful joys,
 All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
 And life abused—and not to be suborn'd.
 Mark these, she says, these summon'd from afar,
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar.
 There find a judge, inexorably just,
 And perish there, as all presumption must.

Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
 Who live in pleasure, dead ev'n while they live,
 Born capable indeed of heav'nly truth,
 But down to latest age from earliest youth,
 Their mind a wilderness, through want of care,
 The plough of wisdom never ent'ring there.
 Peace (if insensibility may claim
 A right to the meek honours of her name)
 To men of pedigree, their noble race
 Emulous always of the nearest place
 To any throne, except the throne of grace.
 Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
 Reverse the laws they dream that Heav'n ordains,
 Resort on Sundays to the house of pray'r,
 And ask, and fancy they find blessings there;
 Themselves perhaps, when weary they retreat
 T'enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
 T'exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
 For clumps and lawns and temples and cascades,
 May now and then their velvet cushions take,
 And seem to pray for good example sake;
 Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
 Pious enough, and having need of none.
 Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
 What they themselves without remorse despise;
 Nor hope have they nor fear of aught to come,
 As well for them had prophecy been dumb;
 They could have held the conduct they pursue,
 Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
 And truth proposed to reas'ners wise as they,
 Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.

They die—Death lends them, pleased and as in
 sport,

All the grim honours of his ghastly court;
 Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
 Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow;

The busy heralds hang the sable scene
 With mournful 'scutcheons and dim lamps between,
 Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
 But they, that wore them, move not at the sound;
 The coronet placed idly at their head,
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead.
 And ev'n the star that glitters on the bier,
 Can only say, Nobility lies here.
 Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend
 By useless censure whom we cannot mend,
 Life without hope can close but in despair,
 'Twas there we found them and must leave them there

As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way,
 So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
 In vain opinion's waste and dang'rous wild;
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong:
 But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
 And he, that blames what they have blindly chose,
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

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

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
 Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
 Himself as bountiful as April rains,
 Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
 Would give relief of bed and board to none,
 But guests that sought it in th' appointed ONE.
 And they might enter at his open door,
 Ev'n till his spacious hall would hold no more.

He sent a servant forth by ev'ry road,
 To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
 That all might mark, knight, menial, high and
 low,

An ord'nance it concern'd them much to know.
 If after all, some headstrong, hardy lout
 Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
 Could he with reason murmur at his case,
 Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
 No! the decree was just and without flaw,
 And he that made, had right to make the law;
 His sov'reign power and pleasure unrestrain'd
 The wrong was his, who wrongfully complain'd.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
 With him, the donor of eternal life,
 Because the deed, by which his love confirms
 The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
 Compliance with his will your lot insures,
 Accept it only, and the boon is yours;
 And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
 As with a frown to say, Do this and live.
 Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold,
 He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold,
 His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
 And him as deeply who abhors it not;
 He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
 That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
 Will trust him for a faithful gen'rous part,
 Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
 Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
 To place you where his saints his presence share,
 This only can—for this plain cause, express'd
 In terms as plain; himself has shut the rest.
 But oh, the strife, the bick'ring, and debate,
 The tidings of unpurchased heav'n create!
 The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
 All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
 From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound,
 And beaus, adepts in ev'ry thing profound,
 Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
 Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
 Th' explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
 Where mould'ring abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;
 The screaming nations hov'ring in mid air,
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,

And seem to warn him never to repeat
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.
 Adieu, Vinoso cries, e'er yet he sips,
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
 Adieu to all morality! if grace
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
 The Christian hope is—waiter, draw the cork—
 If I mistake not—blockhead! with a fork!
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
 That heav'n will weigh man's virtues and his crimes,
 With nice attention in a righteous scale,
 And save, or damn, as these, or those, prevail.
 I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
 And silence every fear with—God is just;
 But if perchance on some dull drizzling day,
 A thought intrude that says, or seems to say,
 If thus th' important cause is to be tried,
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side—
 I soon recover from these needless frights,
 And, God is merciful—sets all to rights.
 Thus between justice, as my prime support,
 And mercy fled to, as the last resort,
 I glide and steal along with heav'n in view,
 And—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.
 I never will believe, the Col'nel cries,
 The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
 Who make the good Creator, on their plan,
 A being of less equity than man.
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,
 Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
 Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure?
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
 If sentence of eternal pain belong
 To ev'ry sudden slip and transient wrong,
 Then heav'n enjoins the fallible and frail,
 An hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
 By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene)
 My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.
 Right, says an ensign, and for aught I see,
 Your faith and mine substantially agree:
 The best of ev'ry man's performance here,
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.

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

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

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

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

But above all, in her own light array'd,
 See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd!
 The sacred Book no longer suffers wrong,
 Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue,
 But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
 What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
 God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
 Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound:
 That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
 The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
 'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
 And in the gulphs of her Cornubian mines.

And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
 Her¹ sons to pour it on the farthest north:
 Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

Oh blest within th' inclosure of your rocks,
 Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks,
 No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
 That show reversed the villas on their side;
 No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
 Or voice of turtle in your land is heard,
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
 Of those that walk at ev'ning where ye dwell—
 But winter arm'd with terrors, here unknown,
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne,
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
 And bids the mountains he has built, stand fast,
 Beckons the legions of his storms away
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey,
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
 And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
 —Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle,
 And peace, the genuine offspring of her smile;
 The pride of letter'd ignorance that binds,
 In chains of error, our accomplish'd minds,
 That decks with all the splendour of the true
 A false religion, is unknown to you.
 Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight,
 The sweet vicissitudes of day and night,
 Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
 Field, fruit, and flow'r, and ev'ry creature here,

¹ The Moravian missionaries in Greenland. See KRANTZ.—C.

But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,
 Have ris'n at length on your admiring eyes,
 That shoot into your darkest caves the day
 From which our nicer optics turn away.

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

What are they now?—morality may spare
 Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there.
 The wretch, that once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,
 And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
 Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
 Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays;
 Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
 And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
 Well spake the prophet,¹ Let the desert sing.
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring.
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,
 If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
 The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
 Glist'ning at once with pity and surprise,
 Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
 Of one whose birth was in a land of light,

¹ Jer'ah' v. 12, 13.

Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood—
Yet charge not heav'nly skill with having plan'd
A plaything world unworthy of his hand—
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works,
Deem life a blessing with its num'rous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.

Hard task indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?
Yes, but an object bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride and moves our envy less.

Leuconomos¹ (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age,
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For ev'ry dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mention'd *him* at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense,
A knave when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd,
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

Now truth perform thine office, waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride.

¹ Whitefield; among the stories which Perjury authenticated was, I suppose, the following tale of Walpole, in a letter to the Earl of Stafford, July 5, 1761:—"The apostle Whitefield is come to some shame. He went to Lady Huntingdon lately and asked for forty pounds for some distressed saint or other. She said she had not so much money in the house, but would give it him the first time she had. He was very pressing, but in vain. At last he said, 'There's your watch and trinkets, you don't want such vanities,—I will have that.' She would have put him off; but he persisting, she said, 'Well, if you must have it, you must.' About a fortnight afterwards, going to his house, and being carried to his wife's chamber, among the paraphernalia of the latter, the countess found her own offering. This has made a terrible rebvva. She tells the story herself."

Reveal (the man is dead)¹ to wond'ring eyes,
This more than monster in his proper guise.

He loved the world that hated him: the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere.
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's int'rest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed;
He follow'd Paul: his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same;
Like him cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he labour'd, and like him, content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.

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

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he that must have pleasure, come what will;
He laughs, whatever weapon truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain, but God and he
On scripture-ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than that his Maker has seen fit to give,
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain,
Contriv'd to suit frail nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.

¹ Whitefield died (1770) in his fifty-seventh year. The late Mr. Foster (*Contributions to Eclectic Review*, ii. 290) observes:—"According to the testimony of all his hearers that have left memorials of him, he had an energy and happy combination of the passions, so very extraordinary as to constitute a commanding species of sublimity of character. In their swell, their fluctuations, their very turbulence, these passions so faithfully followed the nature of the subject, and with such irresistible evidence of being clear of all design of oratorical management, that they bore all the dignity of the subject along with them, and never appeared in their most ungovernable emotions, either extravagant or ludicrous, to any but minds of the coldest or profanest order." Unquestionably Whitefield was a great actor, but thoroughly identified with, and intensely believing, his part. George Story, one of the earliest and cleverest of the Methodists, was in the habit of frequenting Whitefield's Chapel on Sundays, and the play-house during the week. "Nor could I," he says, "discern any difference between Mr. Whitefield's preaching, and seeing a good tragedy." This was before his conversion.

By this, with nice precision of design,
 He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
 That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
 And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
 By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
 His well-poised estimate of right and wrong,
 And finds the modish manners of the day,
 Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
 With what materials, on what ground you please,
 Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
 If not that hope the Scripture has required:
 The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams
 With which hypocrisy for ever teems,
 (Though other follies strike the public eye,
 And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by;
 But if unblamable in word and thought,
 A man arise, a man whom God has taught,
 With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
 And all the love of the beloved John,
 To storm the citadels they build in air,
 And smite th' untemper'd wall, 'tis death to spare;
 To sweep away all refuge of lies,
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
 LAMA SABACHTHANI before their eyes,
 To prove that without Christ, all gain is loss,
 All hope, despair, that stands not on his Cross;
 Except the few his God may have impress'd,
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

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

Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels,
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
 Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
 Pow'rs of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
 Insensible of truth's almighty charms,
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
 While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
 Mighty to parry, and push by God's word
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of hope, immortal Truth, make known
 Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own
 The silent progress of thy pow'r is such,
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
 And none can teach them but whom thou has
 taught.

Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command
 A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
 That while I trembling trace a work divine,
 Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
 And light and shade and ev'ry stroke be thine

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
 If ever, when he sigh'd, hast sigh'd again,
 If ever on thine eyelid stood the tear
 That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
 This man was happy—had the world's good word
 And with it ev'ry joy it can afford;
 Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
 Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
 Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
 Good-breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
 And, whether at the toilette of the fair
 He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there;
 Or, if in masculine debate he shared,
 Insured him mute attention and regard.
 Alas how changed! expressive of his mind,
 His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined,
 Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin,
 Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within
 That conscience there performs her proper part,
 And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart;
 Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
 He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends

Hard task! for one who lately knew no care
 And harder still as learnt beneath despair:
 His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
 A dark importance saddens every day,
 He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd,
 And cries,—Perhaps eternity strikes next.
 Sweet music is no longer music here,
 And laughter sounds like madness in his ear,
 His grief the world of all her pow'r disarms,
 Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:
 God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
 Now, by the voice of his experience, true,
 Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
 Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad,
 Say, man's a worm, and pow'r belongs to God.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws
 Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
 Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
 The shameful close of all his misspent years,
 If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
 A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
 Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
 The thunder seems to summon him away,
 The warder at the door his key applies,
 Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
 If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
 When hope, long ling'ring, at last yields the ghost,
 The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
 He drops at once his fetters and his fear,
 A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
 And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
 Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
 The comfort of a few poor added days,
 Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
 Of him whom hope has with a touch made whole:
 'Tis heav'n, all heav'n descending on the wings
 Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
 'Tis more—'tis God diffused through ev'ry part,
 'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
 Oh, welcome now, the sun's once hated light,
 His noonday beams were never half so bright,
 Not kindred minds alone are call'd t'employ
 Their hours, their days in list'ning to his joy,
 Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
 Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
 The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth:
 These move the censure and illib'ral grin
 Of fools that hate thee, and delight in sin:
 But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,
 And heav'n is all departed as a scroll:
 And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
 This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
 Then these thy glorious works, and they that share
 That Hope which can alone exclude despair,
 Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
 The brightest wonders of an endless day.

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

CHARITY.

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

Hor. Lib. iv. Ode u.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
 On man's most dignified, and happiest state,
 Whether we name thee Charity, or love,
 Chief grace below, and all in all above,
 Prosper (I press thee with a pow'ful plea)
 A task I venture on, impell'd by thee:

Oh, never seen but in thy blest effects,
 Nor felt but in the soul that Heav'n selects,
 Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
 To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
 Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
 Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
 And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
 A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,
 By various ties attaches man to man:
 He made at first, though free and unconfined,
 One man the common father of the kind,
 That ev'ry tribe, though placed as he sees best,
 Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
 Diff'ring in language, manners, or in face,
 Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
 When Cook¹—lamented, and with tears as just
 As ever mingled with heroic dust,
 Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
 And in his country's glory sought his own;
 Wherever he found man, to nature true,
 The rights of man were sacred in his view:
 He sooth'd with gifts and greeted with a smile
 The simple native of the new-found isle,
 He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
 The tender argument of kindred blood,
 Nor would endure that any should control
 His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,
 That none shall with impunity neglect,
 In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
 To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
 While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
 See Cortez odious for a world enslaved!
 Where wast thou then sweet Charity, where then
 Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
 Wast thou in Monkish cells and nunn'ries found,
 Or building hospitals on English ground?
 No—Mammon makes the world his legatee
 Through fear, not love, and Heav'n abhors the fee;
 Wherever found (and all men need thy care)
 Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.

¹ Killed at Owhyhee, 1779. "These Voyages (pointing to the three large volumes of "Voyages to the South Sea," which were just come out), who will read them through? A man had better work his way before the mast."—"Johnson," by Croker, viii. 311.) Cowper found more abundant enter-
 tainment.

The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,
 Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore;
 Their prince, as justly seated on his throne,
 As vain imperial Philip on his own,¹
 Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
 That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
 Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
 For scorning what they taught him to detest.
 How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
 Of Heav'n's mysterious purposes and ways;
 God stood not, though he seem'd to stand aloof,
 And at this hour the conqu'ror feels the proof.
 The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
 The fretting plague is in the public purse,
 The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
 Starved by that indolence their mines create.
 Oh, could their ancient Incas rise again,
 How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
 Art thou too fall'n, Iberia? Do we see
 The robber and the murth'rer weak as we?
 Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
 Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
 Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
 Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
 We come with joy from our eternal rest,
 To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
 Art thou the God the thunder of whose hand
 Roll'd over all our desolated land,
 Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
 And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
 The sword shall light upon thy boasted pow'rs,
 And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
 'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
 And vengeance executes what justice wills.
 Again—the band of commerce was design'd
 T' associate all the branches of mankind,
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe:
 Wise to promote whatever end he means,
 God opens fruitful nature's various scenes,
 Each climate needs what other climes produce
 And offers something to the gen'ral use;

¹ Charles the Fifth was the "imperial" despot, for Philip had not yet replaced him upon the Spanish throne. The picture of Montezuma, here only poetically true, may be read in the eloquent page of Prescott, or in Robertson's "America," ii. 177. Edit. 1801.

No land but listens to the common call,
 And in return receives supply from all;
 This genial intercourse and mutual aid,
 Cheers what were else an universal shade,
 Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den,
 And softens human rockwork into men.
 Ingenious Art with her expressive face
 Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,
 Not only fills necessity's demand,
 But overcharges her capacious hand;
 Capricious taste itself can crave no more,
 Than she supplies from her abounding store;
 She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
 And gains new vigour at her endless task.
 Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
 The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
 From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
 And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
 She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
 Gives difficulty all the grace of ease.
 And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
 Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of art, and art thrives most,
 Where commerce has enrich'd the busy coast;
 He catches all improvements in his flight,
 Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
 Imports what others have invented well,
 And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
 'Tis thus reciprocating each with each,
 Alternately the nations learn and teach;
 While Providence enjoins to every soul
 An union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heav'n speed the canvass gallantly unfurl'd
 To furnish and accommodate a world;
 To give the Pole the produce of the sun,
 And knit the unsocial climates into one.—
 Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
 Impel the fleet whose errand is to save,
 To succour wasted regions, and replace
 The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.—
 Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
 Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
 The gems of India, nature's rarest birth,
 That flies like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
 A herald of God's love, to pagan lands.—

But, ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
 For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
 The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
 All bonds of nature in that moment end,
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
 The sable warrior, frantic with regret
 Of her he loves, and never can forget,
 Loses in tears the far receding shore,
 But not the thought that they must meet no more,
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
 What has he left that he can yet forego?
 Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind,
 Puts off his gen'rous nature, and, to suit
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.

Oh, most degrading of all ills that wait
 On man, a mourner in his best estate!
 All other sorrows virtue may endure,
 And find submission more than half a cure;
 Grief is itself a med'cine, and bestow'd
 T' improve the fortitude that bears the load,
 To teach the wand'rer, as his woes increase,
 The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace.
 But slav'ry!—virtue dreads it as her grave,
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave:
 Or if the will and sovereignty of God
 Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see
 That has a heart and life in it, Be free;
 The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack,
 And, conscious of an unencumber'd back,
 Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein;
 Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane,
 Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs,
 Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
 He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
 Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian
 name,
 Buy what is woman-bought, and feel no shame?

Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
 So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
 To quit the forest and invade the fold;
 So may the ruffian who with ghostly glide,
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
 Not he, but his emergence¹ forced the door,
 He found it inconvenient to be poor.

Has God then giv'n its sweetness to the cane
 Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain?
 Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
 Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd?
 Impudent blasphemy! so folly pleads,
 And, av'rice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
 That man make man his prey because he *must*.
 Still there is room for pity to abate
 And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
 A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
 The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
 That souls have no discriminating hue,
 Alike important in their Maker's view,
 That none are free from blemish since the fall,
 And love divine has paid one price for all.
 The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
 Has one that notices his silent grief,
 He, from whose hands alone all pow'r proceeds,
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
 Considers *all* injustice with a frown,
 But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
 Begone, the whip and bell in that hard hand,
 Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command,
 Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
 To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
 Remember, Heav'n has an avenging rod;
 To smite the poor is treason against God.
 Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
 While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd.
 We wander o'er a sun-burnt thirsty soil,
 Murmuring and weary of our daily toil.

¹ A very uncommon form of *emergency*; Brooke uses it in his apostrophe
 to Venus Urania—

“When from the deep thy bright emergence sprung,
 And nature on thy form divinely hung.”

Universal Beauty, b. i.

Forget t' enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
 Or taste the fountain in the neighb'ring glade:
 Else who would lose, that had the pow'r t' improve,
 Th' occasion of transmuting fear to love?
 Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
 And he that scorns it is himself a slave.—
 Inform his mind, one flash of heav'nly day,
 Would heal his heart and melt his chains away;
 'Beauty for ashes' is a gift indeed,
 And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed:
 Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
 While gratitude and love made service sweet,—
 My dear deliv'rer out of hopeless night,
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
 I was a bondman on my native plain,
 Sin forged and ignorance made fast the chain;
 Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
 Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;¹
 Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
 For Africa's once loved, benighted shore,
 Serving a benefactor I am free,
 At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
 A stream of lib'ral and heroic deeds,
 The swell of pity, not to be confined
 Within the scanty limits of the mind,
 Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
 A rich deposit, on the bord'ring lands:
 These have an ear for *his* paternal call,
 Who makes some rich for the supply of all,
 God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ,
 And THORNTON² is familiar with the joy.

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

¹ "What conscience dictates to be done,
 Or warns me not to do;
 This, teach me more than hell to shun;
 That, more than heaven pursue."

FORB'S *Universal Prayer*.

² The name of a London merchant, whose prayers and alms went up for a memorial of him during a busy and Christian life. The stream of his charity flowed abundantly upon Olney. He died in 1790.

Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
 The peep of morning shed a dawning light ;
 Again, when evening in her sober vest
 Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
 My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days :
 But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
 But His who gave thee and preserves thee mine :
 Else I would say, and as I spake, bid fly
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,
 This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home ;
 We feel thy force still active, at this hour
 Enjoy immunity from priestly pow'r,
 While conscience, happier than in ancient years,
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.
 Propitious spirit ! yet expunge a wrong
 Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long,
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care ;
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
 To bind the lawless and to punish guilt ;
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood,
 And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
 Where covert guile and artifice abound :
 Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind,
 The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
 But let insolvent innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men,
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;
 Verse, like the laurel its immortal meed,
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed,
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
 I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
 To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,¹
 To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
 To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home—
 Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,

¹ Cardington, near Bedford, the home of his infancy and his manhood, and to which his heart always turned with deep affection.

But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
 And only sympathy like thine could reach;
 That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
 Might smooth her feathers and enjoy her cage;—
 Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal
 The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
 Oh, that the voice of clamour and debate,
 That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
 Were hush'd in favour of thy gen'rous plea,
 The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee.

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

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

Suppose (when thought is warm and fancy flows—
 What will not argument sometimes suppose?)
 An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
 Let supposition lend her aid once more,
 And land some grave optician on the shore;
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
 Close to the part where vision ought to be,
 But finds that, though his tubes assist the sight,
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
 He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud,
 A sense they know not, to the wond'ring crowd,
 He talks of light and the prismatic hues,
 As men of depth in erudition use,
 But all he gains for his harangue is—Well—
 What monstrous lies some travellers will tell!

The soul, whose sight all-quick'ning grace renews,
 Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
 As di'monds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
 Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
 She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,
 Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
 In language warm as all that love inspires,
 And, in the glow of her intense desires,
 Pants to communicate her noble fires.
 She sees a world stark blind to what employs
 Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys,
 Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
 Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
 Herself as weak as her support is strong,
 She feels that frailty she denied so long,
 And from a knowledge of her own disease,
 Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
 Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
 The reign of genuine Charity commence;
 Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
 She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
 The truth she loves, a sightless world blaspheme,
 'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream,
 The danger they discern not, they deny,
 Laugh at their only remedy, and die:
 But still a soul, thus touch'd, can never cease
 Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace,
 Pure in her aim and in her temper mild,
 Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child,
 She makes excuses where she might condemn,
 Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
 Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
 The worst suggested, she believes the best;
 Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
 And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased,
 She rather waives than will dispute her right,
 And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
 Such was the portrait an apostle¹ drew,
 The bright original was one he knew,
 Heav'n held his hand, the likeness must be true.
 When one, that holds communion with the skies,
 Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,
 'Tis ev'n as if an angel shook his wings;

¹ St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.

Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,¹
 That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
 So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
 The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
 Has dropp'd her anchor and her canvass furl'd,
 In some safe haven of our western world,
 'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
 The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queazy conscience has its qualms,
 To lull the painful malady with alms;
 But Charity, not feign'd, intends alone
 Another's good—theirs centres in their own;
 And too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,
 Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
 Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
 Is rather careless of a sister's fame,
 Her superfluity the poor supplies,
 But if she touch a character, it dies.²
 The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
 She deems all safe, for she has paid the price,
 No charity but alms aught values she,
 Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.³
 How many deeds, with which the world has rung,
 From pride in league with ignorance have sprung?
 But God o'errules all human follies still,
 And bends the tough materials to his will.
 A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
 Has left some hundreds without home or food,
 Extravagance and av'rice shall subscribe,
 While fame and self-complacence are the bribe;
 The brief proclaim'd, it visits ev'ry pew,
 But first the Squire's, a compliment but due:
 With slow deliberation he unties
 His glitt'ring purse, that envy of all eyes,
 And while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
 Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm,
 'Till finding, what he might have found before,
 A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
 Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
 He half exhibits, and then drops the sum;

¹ Cowper remembered the beautiful description of the angel in "Paradise Lost," v. 209.

² "At every word a reputation dies."—*Rape of the Lock*, iii. 16.

³ A mantel to a fireplace. "Upon the mantel-tree, for I am a pretty curious observer, stood a pot of Cambative electuary, with a stick of liquorish."—*Tatler*, No. 266.

Gold to be sure!—throughout the town 'tis told
 How the good Squire gives never less than gold.
 From motives such as his, though not the best,
 Springs in due time supply for the distress'd,
 Not less effectual than what love bestows,
 Except that office clips it as it goes.

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

Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
 Satire is more than those he brands, to blame,
 He hides behind a magisterial air
 His own offences, and strips others bare,
 Affects indeed a most humane concern
 That men if gently tutor'd will not learn,
 That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd
 By softer methods, must be made ashamed,
 But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)¹
 Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
 Most sat'rists are indeed a public scourge,
 Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge,
 Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
 The milk of their good purpose all to curd,
 Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
 By lean despair upon an empty purse;
 The wild assassins start into the street,
 Prepared to poinarg whomsoe'er they meet;
 No skill in swordsmanship, however just,
 Can be secure against a madman's thrust,
 And even virtue so unfairly match'd,
 Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd
 When scandal has new minted an old lie,
 Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,
 'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
 Gath'ring around it with erected ears;
 A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd,
 Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud
 Just as the sapience² of an author's brain
 Suggests it safe or dang'rous to be plain.

¹ Swift.

² Wisdom; so, in *Hudibras*, Sidrophel, looking wise,
 "——— put his face into a posture
 Of sapience, and began to bluster."

Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
 Quickens a market, and helps off the trash,
 Th' important letters, that include the rest,
 Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd,
 Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
 The world is charm'd, and Scrib. escapes the law,
 So when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
 Worms may be caught by either head or tail,
 Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
 They meet with little pity, no redress;
 Plunged in the stream they lodge upon the mud,
 Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform that gives offence
 To peace and charity, is mere pretence:
 A bold remark, but which if well applied,
 Would humble many a tow'ring poet's pride:
 Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
 And had no other play-place for his wit;
 Perhaps enchanted with the love of fame,
 He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame;
 Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
 The cause of virtue could not be his view.
 At ev'ry stroke wit flashes in our eyes,
 The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
 But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
 That while they please possess us with alarms:
 So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight
 On all the wings of holiday delight),
 Where stands that monument of ancient pow'r,
 Named with emphatic dignity, the Tow'r,
 Guns, halberts, swords and pistols, great and small
 In starry forms disposed upon the wall;
 We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
 That brass and steel should make so fine a show;
 But though we praise th' exact designer's skill,
 Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day,
 When all disguises shall be rent away,
 That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
 Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
 As he ordains things sordid in their birth
 To be resolved into their parent earth,
 And though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
 Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs,
 So self starts nothing but what tends apace
 Home to the goal, where it began the race.

Such as our motive is our aim must be,
 If this be servile, that can ne'er be free;
 If self employ us, whatso'er is wrought,
 We glorify that self, not him we ought:
 Such virtues had need prove their own reward.
 The judge of all men owes them no regard.
 True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
 Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
 Thrives against hope and in the rudest scene,
 Storms but enliven its unfading green;
 Exub'rant is the shadow it supplies,
 Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
 To look at him who form'd us and redeem'd,
 So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd,
 To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
 T' uphold the boundless scenes of his command,
 To recollect that in a form like ours,
 He bruised beneath his feet th' infernal pow'rs,
 Captivity led captive, rose to claim
 The wreath he won so dearly, in our name;
 That throned above all height, he condescends
 To call the few that trust in him his friends,
 That in the heav'n of heav'ns, that space he deems
 Too scanty for th' exertion of his beams,
 And shines as if impatient to bestow
 Life and a kingdom upon worms below;
 That sight imparts a never dying flame,
 Though feeble in degree, in kind the same;
 Like him, the soul, thus kindled from above,
 Spreads wide her arms of universal love.
 And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
 Includes creation in her close embrace.
 Behold a Christian—and without the fires
 The founder of that name alone inspires,
 Though all accomplishments, all knowledge meet,
 To make the shining prodigy complete,
 Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat.
 Were love in these the world's last dotting years
 As frequent, as the want of it appears,
 The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
 Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
 Relenting forms would lose their pow'r or cease,
 And ev'n the dipt and sprinkled live in peace;
 Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
 And flow in free communion with the rest.

The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep,
 Might burn his useless Machiavel,¹ and sleep;
 His budget, often fill'd yet always poor,
 Might swing at ease behind his study-door,
 No longer prey upon our annual rents,
 Nor scare the nation with its big contents:
 Disbanded legions freely might depart,
 And slaying man would cease to be an art.
 No learned disputants would take the field,
 Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield,
 Both sides deceived if rightly understood,
 Pelting each other for the public good.
 Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
 A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love,
 And I might spare myself the pains to show
 What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
 Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
 With many a wild, indeed, but flow'ry spray,
 In hopes to gain what else I must have lost,
 Th' attention pleasure has so much engross'd
 But if unhappily deceived I dream,
 And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
 Let Charity forgive me a mistake
 That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
 And spare the poet for his subject sake.

CONVERSATION.

*Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
 Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quae
 Saxosae inter decurrunt flumina valles.*

VIRGIL, *Ecl. v.*

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

¹ The reader, who is willing to hear a few words in arrest of the popular judgment, may turn to Mr. Hallam's "Literature of Europe," i. 557.

As alphabets in ivory employ
 Hour after hour the yet unletter'd boy,
 Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
 Those seeds of science called his A B C,
 So language in the mouths of the adult,
 Witness its insignificant result,
 Too often proves an implement of play,
 A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
 Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
 Compress the sum into its solid worth,
 And if it weigh th' importance of a fly,
 The scales are false, or Algebra a lie.
 Sacred interpreter of human thought,
 How few respect or use thee as they ought!
 But all shall give account of ev'ry wrong
 Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue,
 Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
 Or sell their glory at a market-price,
 Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
 The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.

There is a prurience in the speech of some,
 Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb
 His wise forbearance has their end in view,
 They fill their measure and receive their due.
 The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
 Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
 Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
 And shut up ev'ry satyr in his den.
 Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
 Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
 Infectious as impure, your blighting pow'r
 Taints in its rudiments the promised flow'r,
 Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,
 Thenceforth 'tis hateful for it smells of you.
 Not ev'n the vigorous and headlong rage
 Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
 Affords a plea allowable or just,
 For making speech the pamperer of lust;
 But when the breath of age commits the fault,
 'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
 So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
 No longer fruitful and no longer green,
 The sapless wood divested of the bark,
 Grows fungous, and takes fire at ev'ry spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
 Some men have surely then a peaceful life,

Whatever subject occupy discourse,
 The feats of Vestris,¹ or the naval force,
 Asseveration blust'ring in your face
 Makes contradiction such an hopeless case;
 In every tale they tell, or false, or true,
 Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
 They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
 With oaths like rivets forced into the brain,
 And even when sober truth prevails throughout,
 They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
 A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
 Who though devout yet bigotry had none,
 Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
 With adjurations every word impress,
 Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
 God's name so much upon his lips, a priest,
 Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
 And begg'd an int'rest in his frequent pray'rs.

Go quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
 Henceforth associate in one common herd,
 Religion, virtue, reason, common sense
 Pronounce your human form a false pretence,
 A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,
 Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
 Ye pow'rs who rule the tongue, if such there are,
 And make colloquial happiness your care,
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
 A duel in the form of a debate:
 The clash of arguments and jar of words,
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
 Decide no question with their tedious length,
 For opposition gives opinion strength,
 Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
 And put the peaceably-disposed to death.
 Oh thwart me not, Sir Soph. at ev'ry turn,
 Nor carp at ev'ry flaw you may discern,
 Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
 I am not, surely, always in the wrong;
 'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
 A fool must now and then be right, by chance,
 Not that all freedom of dissent I blame,
 No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
 A disputable point is no man's ground,
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around,

¹ A celebrated Italian dancer, who died in 1806.

Discourse may want an animated—No—
 To brush the surface and to make it flow,
 But still remember, if you mean to please,
 To press your point with modesty and ease.
 The mark at which my juster aim I take,
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake ;
 Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
 Knots and impediments make something hitch,
 Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
 Your thread of argument is snapp'd again ;
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
 Will judge *himself* deceived, and prove it too.
 Vociferated logic kills me quite,
 A noisy man is always in the right,
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
 Reply discreetly—to be sure—no doubt.

DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man—
 Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can
 He would not, with a peremptory tone,
 Assert the nose upon his face his own ;
 With hesitation admirably slow,
 He humbly hopes, presumes it may be so.
 His evidence, if he were call'd by law,
 To swear to some enormity he saw,
 For want of prominence and just relief,
 Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
 Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
 He ties up all his hearers in suspense,
 Knows what he knows as if he knew it not,
 What he remembers seems to have forgot,
 His sole opinion, whatso'er befall,
 Centring at last in having none at all.
 Yet though he tease and balk your list'ning ear,
 He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;
 Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme,
 A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
 Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
 Would only prove him a consummate fool,
 Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
 Fate having placed all truth above his reach ;
 His ambiguities his total sum,
 He might as well be blind and deaf and dumb.
 Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
 The Positive pronounce without dismay,

Their want of light and intellect supplied
 By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride;
 Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
 They always are decisive, clear, and strong;
 Where others toil with philosophic force,
 Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,
 Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
 And gains remote conclusions at a jump:
 Their own defect, invisible to them,
 Seen in another they at once condemn,
 And though self-idolized in every case,
 Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
 The cause is plain and not to be denied,
 The proud are always most provoked by pride,
 Few competitions but engender spite,
 And those the most, where neither has a right.
 The point of honour has been deem'd of use,
 To teach good manners and to curb abuse;
 Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
 Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
 And at the bottom, barb'rous still and rude,
 We are restrain'd indeed, but not subdued;
 The very remedy, however sure,
 Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
 And savage in its principle appears,
 Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
 'Tis hard indeed if nothing will defend
 Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end,
 That now and then a hero must decease,
 That the surviving world may live in peace.
 Perhaps at last, close scrutiny may show
 The practice dastardly and mean and low,
 That men engage in it compell'd by force,
 And fear, not courage, is its proper source,
 The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
 Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer;
 At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
 And hazard life, for any or no cause,
 To rush into a fixt eternal state,
 Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
 Or send another shiv'ring to the bar,
 With all the guilt of such unnat'ral war,—
 Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,
 On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
 Am I to set my life upon a throw
 Because a bear is rude and surly? No—

A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
 Will not affront me, and no other can.
 Were I empow'r'd to regulate the lists,
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists,
 A Trojan combat would be something new,
 Let DARES beat ENTELLUS black and blue.
 Then each might show to his admiring friends
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,
 And carry in contusions of his skull,
 A satisfactory receipt in full.
 A story in which native humour reigns
 Is often useful, always entertains,
 A graver fact enlisted on your side,
 May furnish illustration, well applied;
 But sedentary weavers of long tales
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
 'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
 And echo conversations dull and dry,
 Embellish'd with, *he said*, and, *so said I*.
 At ev'ry interview their route the same,
 The repetition makes attention lame,
 We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
 And in the saddest part cry—Droll indeed!
 The path of narrative with care pursue,
 Still making probability your clue,
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,
 And let *them* guide you to a decent end.
 Of all ambitions man may entertain,
 The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
 Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies,
 Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,¹
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
 A great retailer of this curious ware,
 Having unloaded and made many stare,
 Can this be true? an arch observer cries—
 Yes, rather moved, I saw it with these eyes.
 Sir! I believe it on that ground alone,
 I could not, had I seen it with my own.
 A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct,
 The language plain, and incidents well-link'd,

¹ The construction requires, *is fittest auditor*.

Tell not as new what ev'rybody knows,
 And new or old, still hasten to a close,
 There, centring in a focus round and neat,
 Let all your rays of information meet:
 What neither yields us profit or delight,
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night,
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
 Or giant-killing Jack would please me more.
 The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
 Such often like the tube they so admire,
 Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
 Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
 Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
 The sex whose presence civilizes ours:
 Thou art indeed the drug a gard'ner wants,
 To poison vermin that infest his plants;
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
 As to despise the glory of our kind,
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms
 As little mercy, as he, grubs and worms?
 They dare not wait the riotous abuse,
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
 When wine has giv'n indecent language birth,
 And forced the flood-gates of licentious mirth;
 For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
 Still to that element from which she rose,
 And, with a quiet which no fumes disturb,
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

Th' emphatic speaker dearly loves t'oppose
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
 Touch'd with a magnet had attracted his.
 His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
 An extract of his diary—no more,
 A tasteless journal of the day before.
 He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain
 Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stopt home again,
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
 Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
 His odoriferous attempts to please,
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees,
 But we that make no honey though we sting,
 Poets, are sometimes apt to mawl the thing.
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mixt resort,
 What makes some sick, and others *à la mort*,
 An argument of cogence, we may say,
 Why such an one should keep *himself* away.
 A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see
 Quite as absurd though not so light as he:
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
 An oracle within an empty cask,
 The solemn fop; significant and budge;¹
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge;
 He says but little, and that little said
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,
 But when you knock it never is at home:
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage,
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
 An absent friend's fidelity and love,
 But when unpack'd, your disappointment groans
 To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
 In making known how oft they have been sick,
 And give us in recitals of disease
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees:
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
 How an emetic or cathartic sped,
 Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
 Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
 Now the distemper spite of draught or pill
 Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill;
 And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
 They put on a damp nightcap, and relapse;
 They thought they must have died they were so bad,
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
 Some fretful tempers wince at ev'ry touch,
 You always do too little, or too much:

¹ Rigid, or austere; so Milton speaks of—

“ — those budge doctors of the stoic fur.”

You speak with life in hopes to entertain,
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
 You fall at once into a lower key,
 That's worse—the drone-pipe of a humble bee.
 The southern sash admits too strong a light,
 You rise and drop the curtain—now it's night.
 He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
 To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
 Serve him with ven'son and he chooses fish,
 With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish
 He takes what he at first profess'd to loathe,
 And in due time feeds heartily on both;
 Yet still o'erclouded with a constant frown,
 He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
 Your hope to please him, vain on ev'ry plan,
 Himself should work that wonder if he can—
 Alas! his efforts double his distress,
 He likes yours little, and his own still less,
 Thus always teasing others, always teased,
 His only pleasure is—to be displeas'd.¹
 I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
 Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
 And bear the marks upon a blushing face
 Of needless shame and self-imposed disgrace.
 Our sensibilities are so acute,
 The fear of being silent makes us mute.
 We sometimes think we could a speech produce
 Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose,
 But being tied, it dies upon the lip,
 Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip:
 Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
 Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
 Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd,
 It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd,
 By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
 To fear each other, fearing none beside.
 The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
 Self-searching with an introverted eye,
 Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,
 The vainest corner of our own vain heart:
 For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
 Our self-importance ruins its own scheme,

¹ "He paints the ludicrous characters of common life with the comic force of Molière; particularly in his exquisite portrait of a fretful temper—a piece of moral painting highly finished, and happily calculated to promote good humour."—HAYLEY.

In other eyes our talents, rarely shown,
 Become at length so splendid in our own,
 We dare not risk them into public view,
 Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
 True modesty is a discerning grace,
 And only blushes in the proper place,
 But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear
 Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t'appear;
 Humility the parent of the first,
 The last by vanity produced and nurst.
 The circle form'd we sit in silent state,
 Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate,
 Yes, ma'am, and no, ma'am, utter'd softly, show
 Ev'ry five minutes, how the minutes go;
 Each individual suffering a constraint
 Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,
 As if in close committee on the sky,
 Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
 And finds a changing clime a happy source
 Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.

We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
 Like conservators of the public health,
 Of epidemic throats if such there are,
 And coughs and rheums and pthisic and catarrh.
 That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
 Fill'd up at last with interesting news,
 Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
 And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed,
 But fear to call a more important cause,
 As if 'twere treason against English laws.
 The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
 As from a seven years' transportation, home,
 And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
 Recov'ring what we lost we know not how,
 The faculties that seem'd reduced to nought,
 Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
 I give him over as a desp'rate case.
 Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
 Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
 And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
 A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd.
 Some farrier should prescribe his proper course
 Whose only fit companion is his horse,
 Or if, deserving of a better doom
 The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.

Yet ev'n the rogue that serves him, though he
 stand
 To take his honour's orders cap in hand,
 Prefers his fellow-grooms with much good sense,
 Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
 If neither horse nor groom affect the 'squire,
 Where can at last his jockeyship retire?
 Oh to the club, the scene of savage joys,
 The school of coarse good fellowship and noise;
 There in the sweet society of those
 Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
 Let him improve his talent if he can,
 Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.
 Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,
 Like theirs that cleave the flood, or graze the field,
 Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
 Giv'n him a soul and bade him understand.
 The reas'ning pow'r, vouchsafed, of course inferr'd
 The pow'r to clothe that reason with his word,
 For all is perfect that God works on earth,
 And he that gives conception, adds the birth.
 If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood
 What uses of his boon the Giver would.
 The mind despatched upon her busy toil
 Should range where Providence has blest the soil;
 Visiting ev'ry flow'r with labour meet,
 And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
 She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
 And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
 That good diffused may more abundant grow,
 And speech may praise the pow'r that bids it flow.
 Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
 That fills the list'ning lover with delight,
 Forget his harmony with rapture heard,
 To learn the twitt'ring of a meaner bird,
 Or make the parrot's mimickry his choice,
 That odious libel on a human voice?
 No—nature, unsophisticate by man,
 Starts not aside from her Creator's plan,
 The melody that was at first design'd
 To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
 Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
 In the last scene of her six thousand years:
 Yet Fashion, leader of a chatt'ring train,
 Whom man for his own hurt permits to reign,

Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
 And would degrade her vot'ry to an ape,
 The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
 Holds an usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue:
 There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
 Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
 And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
 Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
 'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree
 That none could frame, or ratify, but she,
 That heav'n, and hell, and righteousness, and sin,
 Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
 God and his attributes (a field of day
 Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),
 Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
 Be never named in ears esteem'd polite.
 That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
 Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,
 A close designer not to be believed,
 Or if excused that charge, at least deceived.
 Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
 Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
 Is it incredible, or can it seem
 A dream to any except those that dream,
 That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire
 Warming his heart should at his lips transpire?
 Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
 And veil your daring crest that braves the skies.
 That air of insolence affronts your God,
 You need his pardon, and provoke his rod.
 Now, in a posture that becomes you more
 Than that heroic strut assumed before,
 Know, your arrears with ev'ry hour accrue
 For mercy shown while wrath is justly due.
 The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
 Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
 Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
 By fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
 And having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
 Have proved them truths too big to be express'd:
 Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
 Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
 Touch'd by that pow'r that you have dared to
 mock,
 That makes seas stable and dissolves the rock.

Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
 That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.
 It happen'd on a solemn even-tide,¹
 Soon after He that was our surety died,
 Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
 The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
 Sought their own village, busied as they went
 In musings worthy of the great event:
 They spake of him they loved, of him whose life
 Though blameless had incurr'd perpetual strife,
 Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
 A deep memorial graven on their hearts;
 The recollection, like a vein of ore,
 The farther traced enrich'd them still the more,
 They thought him, and they justly thought him one
 Sent to do more than he appear'd t' have done,
 T' exalt a people, and to place them high
 Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
 Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
 A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
 And ask'd them, with a kind engaging air,
 What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
 Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,
 And truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
 Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well,
 The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
 That reaching home, The night, they said, is near,
 We must not now be parted, sojourn here—
 The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
 And made so welcome at their simple feast,
 He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
 And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
 Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say,
 Did they not burn within us by the way?
 Now theirs was converse such as it behoves
 Man to main'tain, and such as God approves;
 Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
 But yet successful, being aim'd at him.
 Christ and his character their only scope,
 Their object and their subject and their hope,
 They felt what it became them much to feel,
 And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,

¹ "And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; and they talked together of all these things which had happened."—St. Luke xxiv. 13, 14.

Found him as prompt¹ as their desire was true,
 To spread the new-born glories in their view.
 Well, what are ages and the lapse of time
 Match'd against truths as lasting as sublime?
 Can length of years on God himself exact,
 Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
 No—marble and recording brass decay,
 And like the graver's mem'ry pass away;
 The works of man inherit, as is just,
 Their author's frailty and return to dust;
 But truth divine for ever stands secure,
 Its head as guarded as its base is sure;
 Fixt in the rolling flood of endless years,
 The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
 The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
 Built by that Architect who built the skies.
 Hearts may be found that harbour, at this hour,
 That love of Christ in all its quick'ning pow'r,
 And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
 Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
 Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
 A Jordan for th' ablution of our woes.
 Oh days of heav'n and nights of equal praise,
 Serene and peaceful as those heav'nly days,
 When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
 Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
 Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
 Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
 And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
 Upon the lap of covenanted rest.

What, always dreaming over heav'nly things,
 Like angel-heads in stone, with pigeon-wings?
 Canting and whining out all day the word,
 And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
 Mine be the friend less frequent in his pray'rs,
 Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
 Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
 And chase the splenetic dull hours away,
 Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
 Who waits for heav'n e'er he becomes divine,
 Leaves saints t'enjoy those altitudes they teach,
 And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

¹ "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."—St. Luke xiv. 15.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
 Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
 Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right,
 The fixt fee-simple of the vain and light?
 Can hopes of heav'n, bright prospects of an hour,
 That come to waft us out of sorrow's pow'r,
 Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
 Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
 Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
 And brings the trifler under rig'rous sway,
 But gives it usefulness unknown before,
 And purifying makes it shine the more.
 A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
 A beam that aids but never grieves the sight,
 Vig'rous in age as in the flush of youth,
 'Tis always active on the side of truth,
 Temp'rance and peace ensure its healthful state,
 And make it brightest at its latest date.
 Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain
 Ere life go down to see such sights again)
 A vet'ran warrior in the Christian field,
 Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
 Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
 Exact yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed,
 A man that would have foil'd at their own play,
 A dozen would-be's of the modern day:
 Who, when occasion justified its use,
 Had wit as bright as ready, to produce,
 Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
 Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page
 His rich materials, and regale your ear
 With strains it was a privilege to hear;
 Yet above all his luxury supreme,
 And his chief glory was the Gospel theme;
 There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
 His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
 Ambitious, not to shine or to excel,
 But to treat justly what he loved so well.
 It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
 When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
 Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,
 And wiser men's ability pretence.
 Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
 Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
 Their fragrant mem'ry will outlast their tomb,
 Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume:

And to say truth, though in its early prime,
 And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
 Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
 That in the valley of decline are lost,
 And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
 Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years;
 Yet age by long experience well inform'd,
 Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
 That fire abated which impels rash youth,
 Proud of his speed to overshoot the truth,
 As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
 Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
 And claims a rev'rence in its short'ning day,
 That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
 The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
 Than those a brighter season pours around,
 And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
 Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
 And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
 I grant it dang'rous, and approve your fear,
 That fire is catching if you draw too near,
 But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
 And give true piety that odious name.
 To tremble (as the creature of an hour
 Ought at the view of an almighty pow'r)
 Before His presence, at whose awful throne
 All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
 To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
 And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
 Though common sense allow'd a casting voice,
 And free from bias, must approve the choice,
 Convicts a man fanatic in th' extreme,
 And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
 But that disease when soberly defined
 Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
 It views the truth with a distorted eye,
 And either warps or lays it useless by,
 'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
 Its sordid nourishment from man's applause,
 And, while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
 Presumes itself chief fav'rite of the skies.
 'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
 In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feed
 Shines in the dark, but usher'd into day,
 The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
 Of hearts in union mutually disclosed:
 And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
 Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright
 Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
 Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
 A dark confed'racy against the laws
 Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause.
 They build each other up with dreadful skill,
 As bastions set point-blank against God's will,
 Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
 Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out,
 Call legions up from hell to back the deed,
 And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed:
 But souls that carry on a blest exchange
 Of joys they meet with in their heav'nly range,
 And with a fearless confidence make known
 The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
 Daily derive increasing light and force
 From such communion in their pleasant course,
 Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
 Meet their opposers with united strength,
 And one in heart, in int'rest, and design,
 Gird up each other to the race divine.

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

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

Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
 From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
 Their very language of a kind that speaks
 The soul's sure int'rest in the good she seeks,
 Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
 As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
 And in the silent watches of the night,
 And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
 The social walk, or solitary ride,
 Keep still the dear companion at their side?
 No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
 God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
 With such a jest, as fill'd with hellish glee
 Certain invisibles as shrewd as he,
 But veneration or respect finds none,
 Save from the subjects of that work alone.
 The world, grown old, her deep discernment shows,
 Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
 Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
 And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace,
 Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
 And finds hypocrisy close-lurking there,
 And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
 Concludes his unfeign'd love of him, a feint.
 And yet God knows, look human nature through,
 (And in due time the world shall know it too,)
 That since the flow'rs of Eden felt the blast,
 That after man's defection laid all waste,
 Sincerity towards th' heart-searching God,
 Has made the new-born creature her abode,
 Nor shall be found in unregen'rate souls,
 Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
 Sincerity! Why 'tis his only pride,
 Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
 He knows that God demands his heart entire,
 And gives him all his just demands require.
 Without it, his pretensions were as vain
 As, having it, he deems the world's disdain;
 That great defect would cost him not alone
 Man's favourable judgment, but his own,
 His birthright shaken and no longer clear,
 Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
 Retort the charge, and let the world be told
 She boasts a confidence she does not hold,
 That conscious of her crimes, she feels instead,
 A cold misgiving, and a killing dread,

That while in health, the ground of her support
 Is madly to forget that life is short,
 That sick, she trembles, knowing she must die,
 Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
 That while she dotes and dreams that she believes,
 She mocks her Maker and herself deceives,
 Her utmost reach, historical assent,
 The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant;
 That truth itself is in her head as dull
 And useless as a candle in a skull,
 And all her love of God a groundless claim,
 A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
 Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
 And all her censures of the work of grace,
 Are insincere, meant only to conceal
 A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel.
 That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
 And, while she seems to scorn him, only fears.

A poet does not work by square or line,
 As smiths and joiners perfect a design,
 At least we moderns, our attention less,
 Beyond th' example of our sires, digress,
 And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
 Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
 The world and I fortuitously met,
 I owed a trifle and have paid the debt;
 She did me wrong, I recompens'd the deed,
 And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
 Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd
 Since she and I conversed together last,
 And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
 Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
 Great changes and new manners have occur'd,
 And blest reforms that I have never heard,
 And she may now be as discreet and wise,
 As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
 Sobriety perhaps may now be found,
 Where once intoxication press'd the ground,
 The subtle and injurious may be just,
 And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust;
 Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd,
 Charity may relax the miser's fist,
 The gamester may have cast his cards away,
 Forgot to curse and only kneel to pray.
 It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
 How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)

That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,
 Revived are hast'ning into fresh repute,
 And gods and goddesses discarded long,
 Like useless lumber or a stroller's song,
 Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
 And Jupiter bids fair to rule again.
 That certain feasts are instituted now,
 Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow,
 That all Olympus through the country roves,
 To consecrate our few remaining groves,
 And echo learns politely to repeat,
 The praise of names for ages obsolete;
 That having proved the weakness, it should seem
 Of revelation's ineffectual beam,
 To bring the passions under sober sway,
 And give the moral springs their proper play,
 They mean to try what may at last be done
 By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
 And whether Roman rites may not produce
 The virtues of old Rome for English use.
 May much success attend the pious plan,
 May Mercury once more embellish man,
 Grace him again with long forgotten arts,
 Reclaim his taste and brighten up his parts,
 Make him athletic as in days of old,
 Learn'd at the bar, in the palaestra bold,
 Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
 And teach the softer not to copy theirs.
 The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
 Who works the wonder if it be but wrought.
 'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
 For us plain folks and all who side with us,
 To build our altar, confident and bold,
 And say as stern Elijah said of old,
 The strife now stands upon a fair award,
 If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord--
 If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
 Then Baal is the God, and worship him.¹
 Digression is so much in modern use,
 Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
 Some never seem so wide of their intent,
 As when returning to the theme they meant,
 As mendicants whose business is to roam,
 Make ev'ry parish but their own, their home:

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 21.

Though such continual zigzags in a book,
 Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
 And I had rather creep to what is true,
 Than rove and stagger with no mark in view,
 Yet to consult a little, seem'd no crime,
 The freakish humour of the present time.
 But now, to gather up what seems dispersed,
 And touch the subject I design'd at first,
 May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
 Best for the public, and my wisest part.
 And first, let no man charge me that I mean
 To clothe in sables every social scene,
 And give good company a face severe
 As if they met around a father's bier;
 For tell some men that pleasure all their bent,
 And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
 Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
 Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
 To find the medium asks some share of wit,
 And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
 But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
 A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
 Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
 Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening
 shades,
 And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
 The language of the land she seeks, inspires.
 Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
 Of all that was absurd, profane, impure,
 Held within modest bounds the tide of speech
 Pursues the course that truth and nature teach,
 No longer labours merely to produce
 The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use;
 Where'er it winds, the salutary stream
 Sprightly and fresh, enriches ev'ry theme,
 While all the happy man possess'd before,
 The gift of nature, or the classic store,
 Is made subservient to the grand design
 For which Heav'n form'd the faculty divine.
 So should an idiot, while at large he strays,
 Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
 With rash and awkward force the chords he
 shakes,
 And grins with wonder at the jar he makes;
 But let the wise and well-instructed hand
 Once take the shell beneath his just command.

In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
 Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
 Till, tuned at length to some immortal song,
 It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

 RETIREMENT.

— studiis florens ignobilis oti.—VING. GEOR. LIB. IV.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar
 Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
 But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
 All wish, or seem to wish they could forego,
 The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
 Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
 Where, all his long anxieties forgot
 Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
 Or recollected only to gild o'er
 And add a smile to what was sweet before,
 He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
 Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
 Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
 And, having lived a trifler, die a man.
 Thus conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
 Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
 And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
 For Heaven's high purposes and not his own,
 Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
 From what debilitates and what inflames,
 From cities humming with a restless crowd,
 Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
 Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
 The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
 Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
 And works of God are hardly to be found,
 To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,
 Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
 Remind him of his Maker's pow'r and love.
 'Tis well if look'd for at so late a day,
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,
 True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
 Souls that have long despised their heav'nly birth,
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,

For threescore years, employ'd with ceaseless care
In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Invet'rate habits choke th' unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tend'rest part,
And, draining its nutritious pow'rs to feed
Their noxious growth, starve ev'ry better seed.
Happy if full of days—but happier far
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the Sov'reign we were born t'obey.
Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
(Infinite skill) in all that he has made!
To trace in nature's most minute design,
The signature and stamp of pow'r divine,
Contrivance intricate express'd with ease;
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point,
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work who speaks and it is done,
Th' invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,
To whom an atom is an ample field.
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
More hideous foes than fancy can devise;
With helmed head and dragon scales adorn'd,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorn'd,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd at his command
From urns that never fail, through ev'ry land,
These, like a deluge, with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales,
Seas on which ev'ry nation spreads her sails,
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night,

Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
 Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
 At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
 And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
 These are thy glorious works, thou Source of good,
 How dimly seen, how faintly understood!—
 Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
 This universal frame, thus wond'rous fair;
 Thy pow'r divine, and bounty beyond thought,
 Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought;
 Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
 I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee;
 Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
 Thy words, more clearly than thy works display,
 That while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
 I may resemble thee and call thee mine.

Oh blest proficiency! surpassing all
 That men erroneously their glory call,
 The recompence that arts or arms can yield,
 The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
 Compared with this sublimest life below,
 Ye kings and rulers what have courts to show?
 Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,
 Whatever *is*, seems form'd indeed for us,
 Not as the plaything of a froward child,
 Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
 Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
 Of pride, ambition, or impure desires;
 But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
 From mighty means to more important ends,
 Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
 Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
 And sees by no fallacious light or dim,
 Earth made for man, and man himself for him.

Not that I mean t' approve, or would enforce
 A superstitious and monastic course:
 Truth is not local,¹ God alike pervades
 And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
 And may be fear'd amid the busiest scenes,
 Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
 But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
 Conscious of weakness in its noblest pow'rs,

¹ There can be no doubt in the remark of his kinsman, Mr. Johnson, that had his mind been the repository of less exquisitely tender sensibilities, he would have returned to his duties in the Inner Temple.

And in a world where (other ills apart)
 The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
 To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
 Wherever freakish fancy points the way,
 To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
 Resign our own, and seek our Maker's will;
 To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
 Our conduct with the laws engraven there,
 To measure all that passes in the breast,
 Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
 To dive into the secret deeps within,
 To spare no passion and no fav'rite sin,
 And search the themes important above all,
 Ourselves and our recovery from our fall.
 But leisure, silence, and a mind released
 From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
 How to secure in some propitious hour,
 The point of int'rest, or the post of power,
 A soul serene, and equally retired,
 From objects too much dreaded, or desired,
 Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
 At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Op'ning the map of God's extensive plan,
 We find a little isle, this life of man,
 Eternity's unknown expanse appears
 Circling around and limiting his years;
 The busy race examine and explore
 Each creek and cavern of the dang'rous shore,
 With care collect what in their eyes excels,
 Some, shining pebbles, and some, weeds and shells;
 Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
 And happiest he that groans beneath his weight;
 The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
 And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
 They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep;
 A few forsake the throng, with lifted eyes
 Ask wealth of Heav'n, and gain a real prize,
 Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
 Seal'd with His signet whom they serve and love,
 Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
 A kind release from their imperfect state,
 And, unregretted, are soon snatch'd away
 From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
 Who seek retirement for its proper use,

The love of change that lives in every breast,
Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its vot'ry to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys ;
The lure of av'rice, or the pompous prize,
That courts display before ambitious eyes,
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flow'ry stem,
Whate'er enchants them are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief fav'rites share.
With eager step and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased fancy claps her pinions at the sight ;—
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
Oh nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,
Next to that Pow'r who form'd thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains,
Still as I touch the lyre do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page whose every line
Bears proofs of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use.
Glitt'ring in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by,
His hours of leisure and recess employs,
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,

Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
 Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.
 The lover too shuns business and alarms,
 Tender idolater of absent charms ;
 Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers,
 That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;
 'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
 And every thought that wanders is a crime.
 In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
 And weeps a sad libation in despair,
 Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
 Wins in return an answer of disdain.
 As woodbine weds the plants within her reach,
 Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,
 In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
 Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
 But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
 Strait'ning its growth by such a strict embrace :
 So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
 Forbids th' advancement of the soul he binds ;
 The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
 And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
 Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
 Refines his speech and fashions his address ;
 But farewell promises of happier fruits,
 Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits,
 Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
 His only bliss is sorrow for her sake,
 Who will may pant for glory and excel,
 Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !
 Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
 May least offend against so pure a flame,
 Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
 Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
 And lovers of all creatures, tame or wild,
 Can least brook management, however mild ;
 Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
 The fiercest animals with magic charms)
 Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
 And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
 Pastoral images and still retreats,
 Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
 Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
 Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day-dreams,
 Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
 Conspire against thy peace with one design,

Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
 And feed the fire that wastes thy pow'rs away.
 Up—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue,
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
 Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
 Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
 When he design'd a paradise below,
 The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
 Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
 Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
 No longer give an image all thine heart,
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
 'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN!¹ whose skill
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
 Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
 And sends the patient into purer air.
 Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove,
 Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
 Lips busy, and eyes fixt, foot falling slow,
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
 Interpret to the marking eye, distress
 Such as its symptoms can alone express.
 That tongue is silent now, that silent tongue
 Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
 Could give advice, could censure, or commend,
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
 Renounced alike its office and its sport,
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short,
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
 And like a summer-brook are past away.
 This is a sight for pity to peruse
 Till she resemble faintly what she views,
 Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
 Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
 This of all maladies that man infest,
 Claims most compassion and receives the least;
 Job felt it when he groan'd beneath the rod,
 And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God,

¹ It was of him that Johnson, being asked, in his fatal sickness, what physician he had sent for, replied,—"Dr. Heberden, *ultimus Romanorum*, the last of our learned physicians." Churchill had already given him a

sicche in "Gotham," b. ii. :—
 "Physic, obtaining succour from the pen
 Of her soft son, the gentle Heberden."

And such emollients as his friends could spare,
 Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
 Blest (rather curst) with hearts that never feel,
 Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,
 With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
 And minds that deem derided pain a treat,
 With limbs of British oak and nerves of wire,
 And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,
 Their sov'reign nostrum is a clumsy joke,
 On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
 But with a soul that ever felt the sting
 Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing;
 Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
 A laugh at its expense, is slender praise;
 He that has not usurp'd the name of man,
 Does all, and deems too little, all he can,
 T' assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
 And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart;
 'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
 Forgery of fancy and a dream of woes;
 Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
 Each yielding harmony, disposed aright,
 The screws reversed (a task which if he please
 God in a moment executes with ease)
 Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
 Lost, till he tune them, all their pow'r and use.
 Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
 As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
 Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
 Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
 Parks in which art preceptress nature weds,
 Nor gardens interspersed with flow'ry beds,
 Nor gales that catch the scent of blooming groves,
 And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
 Can call up life into his faded eye,
 That passes all he sees unheeded by:
 No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
 No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
 And thou, sad suff'rer under nameless ill
 That yields not to the touch of human skill,
 Improve the kind occasion, understand
 A father's frown, and kiss his chast'ning hand:
 To thee the day-spring and the blaze of noon,
 The purple evening and resplendent moon,
 The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
 Seem drops descending in a show'r of light.

Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
 Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
 Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,
 All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound:
 Then heav'n, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth
 Shall seem to start into a second birth;
 Nature assuming a more lovely face,
 Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
 Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
 Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,
 And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
 The sound shall run along the winding vales,
 And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves, (the statesman at his desk exclaims
 Sick of a thousand disappointed aims)
 My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
 Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
 Receive me languishing for that repose
 The servant of the public never knows.
 Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
 When boyish innocence was all my praise)
 Hour after hour delightfully allot
 To studies then familiar, since forgot,
 And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
 Catching its ardour as I mused along;
 Nor seldom, as propitious Heav'n might send,
 What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
 Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
 His undissembling virtue to my breast;
 Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
 Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
 But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay
 A fallen empire, hasten its decay.
 To the fair haven of my native home,
 The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come,
 For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
 And make the course he recommends, my choice;
 We meet at last in one sincere desire,
 His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
 'Tis done,—he steps into the welcome chaise,
 Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
 That whirl away from bus'ness and debate,
 The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
 Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
 First shakes the glitt'ring drops from ev'ry thorn.

Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
 Sits linking cherry-stones, or plating rush,
 How fair is freedom?—he was always free—
 To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
 To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
 To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook,
 Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
 His flock the chief concern he ever knew :
 She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
 The good we never miss, we rarely prize.
 But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
 Escaped from office and its constant cares,
 What charms he sees in freedom's smile express'd,
 In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd,
 The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,
 Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
 Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
 Or plead its silence as its best applause.
 He knows indeed that whether dress'd or rude,
 Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
 Nature in ev'ry form inspires delight,
 But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
 Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
 With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
 Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that
 spreads

Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
 Downs that almost escape th' inquiring eye,
 That melt and fade into the distant sky,
 Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
 Seem all created since he travell'd last.
 Master of all th' enjoyments he design'd,
 No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
 What early philosophic hours he keeps,
 How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
 Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
 While morning kindles with a windy red,
 Begins a long look-out for distant land,
 Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,
 Then, swift descending with a seaman's haste,
 Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
 He chooses company, but not the 'squire's,
 Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding
 tires;

Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come
 Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;

Nor can he much affect the neighb'ring peer,
 Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
 But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
 With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend,
 A man whom marks of condescending grace
 Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place;
 Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws
 Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause
 Some plain mechanic, who without pretence
 To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence,
 On whom he rests well pleased his weary pow'rs,
 And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
 The tide of life, swift always in its course,
 May run in cities with a brisker force,
 But nowhere with a current so serene,
 Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
 Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
 What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss!
 Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
 But short the date of all we gather here;
 No happiness is felt, except the true,
 That does not charm the more for being new.
 This observation, as it chanced, not made,
 Or, if the thought occur'd, not duly weigh'd,
 He sighs—for after all, by slow degrees,
 The spot he loved has lost the pow'r to please;
 To cross his ambling pony day by day,
 Seems at the best, but dreaming life away,
 The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
 He views it not, or sees no beauty there;
 With aching heart and discontented looks,
 Returns at noon, to billiards, or to books,
 But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
 A secret thirst of his renounced employ,
 He chides the tardiness of every post,
 Pants to be told of battles won, or lost,
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
 Flies to the levee; and, received with grace,
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.
 Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
 That dread th' encroachment of our growing streets,
 Tight boxes, neatly sash'd, and in a blaze,
 With all a July sun's collected rays,
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.

Oh, sweet Retirement, who would balk the thought,
 That could afford retirement, or could not?
 'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate,
 A step if fair, and, if a show'r approach,
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
 There prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
 The man of bus'ness and his friends compress'd,
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
 From ev'ry window, and the fields are green,
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
 And what could a remoter scene show more?
 A sense of elegance we rarely find
 The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
 And ignorance of better things makes man,
 Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can;
 And he that deems his leisure well bestow'd
 In contemplations of a turnpike road,
 Is occupied as well, employs his hours
 As wisely, and as much improves his pow'rs,
 As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
 With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
 Yet hence, alas! insolvencies, and hence
 Th' unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
 From all his wearisome engagements freed,
 Shakes hands with bus'ness, and retires indeed.
 Your prudent grandmamas, ye modern belles,
 Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,
 When health required it would consent to roam,
 Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home;
 But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
 Ingenious to diversify dull life,
 In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
 Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
 And all, impatient of dry land, agree
 With one consent to rush into the sea.—
 Ocean¹ exhibits, fathomless and broad,
 Much of the pow'r and majesty of God.

¹ "I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep. In all its various forms it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. At a time of life, when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves could preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakespeare's characters says—'I am never merry when I hear sweet music.'"

He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
 That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep.
 Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
 The breathings of the lightest air that blows;
 Curling and whit'ning over all the waste,
 The rising waves obey th' increasing blast,
 Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
 Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
 'Till he, that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,
 Then, all the world of waters sleeps again.—
 Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
 Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
 Vot'ries of pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
 Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
 Oh grant a poet leave to recommend
 (A poet fond of nature and your friend)
 Her slighted works to your admiring view,
 Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
 Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
 With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
 Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
 To waste unheard the music of his strains,
 And deaf to all th' impertinence of tongue,
 That while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,—
 Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
 The seas globose and huge, th' o'erarching vault,
 Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
 In gath'ring plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
 Till gratitude grow vocal in the praise
 Of God, beneficent in all his ways:
 Graced with such wisdom how would beauty shine?
 Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.
 Anticipated rents and bills unpaid
 Force many a shining youth into the shade
 Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
 And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
 There hid in loathed obscurity, removed
 From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
 He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
 Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
 Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme,
 Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime,

The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy, not displeasing, nor without its use."—(To Mr. Unwin, Sept. 26, 1781.)

The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
 Are musical enough in Thomson's song,¹
 And Cobham's groves and Windsor's green retreats
 When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets
 He likes the country, but in truth must own,
 Most likes it, when he studies it in town.
 Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame
 I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
 Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
 And always, e'er he mounted, kiss'd his horse;
 Th' estate his sires had own'd in ancient years,
 Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
 Jack vanish'd, was regretted and forgot,
 'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
 At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
 By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
 My lord, alighting at his usual place,
 The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
 Jack knew his friend, but hop'd in that disguise
 He might escape the most observing eyes,
 And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
 Curried his nag and look'd another way.
 Convinced at last upon a nearer view,
 'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
 O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
 He press'd him much to quit his base employ,—
 His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
 Inf'ence and pow'r were all at his command.
 Peers are not always gen'rous as well-bred,
 But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
 Jack bow'd and was obliged—confess'd 'twas strange
 That so retired he should not wish a change,
 But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
 And his old stint, three thousand pounds a year.
 Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe,
 Some seeking happiness not found below,
 Some to comply with humour, and a mind
 To social scenes by nature disinclined,
 Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust,
 Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must,
 But few that court Retirement are aware
 Of half the toils they must encounter there.
 Lucrative offices are seldom lost²
 For want of pow'rs proportion'd to the post:

¹ "The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake."—Spring, 604.

² It was upon his own appointment to an office of this kind that he wrote to Lady Hesketh—"I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men

Give ev'n a dunce th' employment he desires,
 And he soon finds the talents it requires ;
 A business, with an income at its heels,
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
 But in his arduous enterprise to close
 His active years with indolent repose,
 He finds the labours of that state exceed
 His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
 But not to manage leisure with a grace ;
 Absence of occupation is not rest,
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
 The vet'ran steed, excused his task at length
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,
 And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
 Exempt from future service all his days,
 There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind.
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,
 To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,
 He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,
 A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
 Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
 As natural, as when asleep to dream,
 But reveries (for human minds will act)
 Specious in show, impossible in fact,
 Those flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought,
 Attain not to the dignity of thought.
 Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain
 Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign,
 Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
 Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
 Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordain'd ?
 What means the drama by the world sustain'd ?
 Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
 Divide the frail inhabitants of earth,
 Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?
 Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ?
 Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture say,
 Cause to provide for a great future day,
 When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
 Man shall be summon'd and the dead attend ?
 The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise ?
 And show th' august tribunal of the skies,

that I have ever conversed with. Certainly, I am not an absolute fool ; but
 I have more weakness than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at
 present."

Where no prevarication shall avail,
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
 The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all?
 Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
 To learned cares, or philosophic toil,
 Though I revere your honourable names,
 Your useful labours and important aims,
 And hold the world indebted to your aid,
 Enrich'd with the discov'ries ye have made,
 Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
 A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
 Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
 And outline of the present transient state,
 And after poisoning her advent'rous wings,
 Settling at last upon eternal things,
 Far more intelligent, and better taught
 The strenuous use of profitable thought,
 Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
 And highest in renown, can justly boast.
 A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
 The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
 Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
 Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
 An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
 As useless if it goes, as when it stands.
 Books therefore,—not the scandal of the shelves,
 In which lewd sensualists print out themselves,
 Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,
 With what success, let modern manners show,
 Nor his,¹ who for the bane of thousands born,
 Built God a church, and laugh'd his word to scorn,
 Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
 And stab religion with a sly side-thrust;
 Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase
 A panting syllable through time and space,
 Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
 To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;—
 But such as learning without false pretence,
 The friend of truth, th' associate of sound sense,
 And such as in the zeal of good design,
 Strong judgment lab'ring in the Scripture mine,
 All such as manly and great souls produce,
 Worthy to live, and of eternal use;

¹ The allusion is to Voltaire.

Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
 Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
 Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
 And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
 Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
 Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
 Till authors hear at length one gen'ral cry,
 Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
 The loud demand, from year to year the same,
 Beggars invention and makes fancy lame,
 Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
 Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,
 And novels (witness ev'ry month's review)
 Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
 The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
 Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
 Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
 Gives truth a lustre, and makes wisdom smile.

Friends (for I cannot stint as some have done,
 Too rigid in my view, that name to one,
 Though one, I grant it, in th' gen'rous breast
 Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
 Flow'rs by that name promiscuously we call,
 But one, the rose, the regent of them all),
 Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
 But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
 Well-born, well-disciplined, who, placed apart
 From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
 And (though the world may think th' ingredients odd)
 The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
 Such friends prevent, what else would soon succeed,
 A temper rustic as the life we lead,
 And keep the polish of the manners clean,
 As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene.
 For solitude, however some may rave,
 Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
 A sepulchre in which the living lie,
 Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
 I praise the Frenchman,¹ his remark was shrewd—
 How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
 But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
 Whom I may whisper,—Solitude is sweet.²

¹ Bruyère.—C.

² "Though my life has long been like that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good-humour."—(To Unwin, Oct. 6, 1781.)

Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
 That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
 Can save us always from a tedious day,
 Or shine the dulness of still life away;
 Divine communion carefully enjoy'd,
 Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
 Oh sacred art! to which alone life owes
 Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,
 Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn
 For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
 Not knowing thee, we reap with bleeding hands
 Flow'rs of rank odour upon thorny lands,
 And, while experience cautions us in vain,
 Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
 Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
 Lost by abandoning her own relief,
 Murmuring and ungrateful discontent,
 That scorns afflictions mercifully meant;—
 Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,
 Which idleness and weariness beget,
 These and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast
 Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
 Divine communion chases, as the day
 Drives to their dens th' obedient beasts of prey.
 See Judah's promised king,¹ bereft of all,
 Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
 To distant caves the lonely wand'rer flies,
 To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
 Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
 Hear him o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice;
 No womanish or wailing grief has part,
 No, not a moment, in his royal heart;
 'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake;
 His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
 The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
 And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,
 Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before;
 'Tis love like his that can alone defeat
 The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.
 Religion does not censure or exclude
 Unnumber'd pleasures, harmlessly pursued.
 To study culture, and with artful toil
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil;

¹ David.

To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
 The grain, or herb, or plant, that each demands;
 To cherish virtue in a humble state,
 And share the joys your bounty may create;
 To mark the matchless workings of the power
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,
 Bids these in elegance of form excel,
 In colour these, and those delight the smell,
 Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
 To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
 To teach the canvas innocent deceit,
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet;—
 These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
 That leave no stain upon the wing of time.

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

 THE DOVES.¹

REAS'NING at every step he treads,
 Man yet mistakes his way,
 While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
 Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eye I wander'd late,
 And heard the voice of love;
 The turtle thus address'd her mate,
 And sooth'd the list'ning dove:

Our mutual bond of faith and truth,
 No time shall disengage,
 Those blessings of our early youth,
 Shall cheer our latest age.

While innocence without disguise,
 And constancy sincere,
 Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
 And mine can read them there;

¹ The doves were Mr. Newton and his wife.

Those ills that wait on all below,
 Shall ne'er be felt by me,
 Or gently felt, and only so,
 As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
 Or kites are hov'ring near,
 I fear lest thee alone they seize,
 And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
 And press thy wedded side,
 Resolved an union form'd for life,
 Death never shall divide.

But oh! if fickle and unchaste
 (Forgive a transient thought)
 Thou couldst become unkind at last,
 And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,
 Or kites with cruel beak,
 Denied th' endearments of thine eye
 This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
 Soft as the passing wind,
 And I recorded what I heard,
 A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
 And on her wicker-work high mounted
 Her chickens prematurely counted,
 (A fault philosopher might blame
 If quite exempted from the same,)
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day,
 'Twas April as the bumkins say,
 The legislature call'd it May.
 But suddenly a wind, as high
 As ever swept a winter sky,
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,

Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
 And spread her golden hopes below.
 But just at eve the blowing weather
 And all her fears were hush'd together:
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Raph,
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe;
 (For ravens, though as birds of omen
 They teach both conj'ers and old women
 To tell us what is to befall,
 Can't prophesy, themselves, at all;)
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,
 And destined all the treasure there
 A gift to his expecting fair,
 Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
 And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
 In every change, both mine and yours.
 Safety consists not in escape
 From dangers of a frightful shape.
 An earthquake may be bid to spare
 The man that's strangled by a hair.
 Fate steals along with silent tread,
 Found oft'nest in what least we dread,
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream,
 The silent pace with which they steal away,
 No wealth can bribe, no pray'rs persuade to stay,
 Alike irrevocable both when past,
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
 Though each resemble each in ev'ry part,
 A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
 Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound,
 How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd!
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
 Neglected, leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream that winds through yonder glade,
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid,
 Silent and chaste she steals along,
 Far from the world's gay busy throng,
 With gentle yet prevailing force,
 Intent upon her destined course ;
 Graceful and useful all she does,
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes,
 Pure-bosom'd as that wat'ry glass,
 And heav'n reflected in her face.

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK, DURING HIS
 SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
 My right there is none to dispute,
 From the centre all round to the sea,
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
 Oh solitude ! where are the charms
 That sages have seen in thy face ?
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
 I must finish my journey alone,
 Never hear the sweet music of speech,
 I start at the sound of my own.
 The beasts, that roam over the plain,
 My form with indifference see,
 They are so unacquainted with man,
 Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
 Divinely bestow'd upon man—
 Oh had I the wings of a dove,
 How soon would I taste you again !

My sorrows I then might assuage
 In the ways of religion and truth,
 Might learn from the wisdom of age,
 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
 Resides in that heavenly word!
 More precious than silver and gold,
 Or all that this earth can afford.
 But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard,
 Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smiled when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore,
 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I shall visit no more.
 My friends do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me?
 Oh tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
 Compared with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.
 When I think of my own native land,
 In a moment I seem to be there;
 But alas, recollection at hand
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
 The beast is laid down in his lair,
 Even here is a season of rest,
 And I to my cabin repair.
 There is mercy in every place,
 And mercy, encouraging thought!
 Gives even affliction a grace,
 And reconciles man to his lot.

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW ESQ TO
THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair science pour'd the light of truth,
And genius shed his rays.

See! with united wonder, cried
The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age.

Discernment, eloquence, and grace,
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise,
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain,
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

COME, peace of mind, delightful guest,
Return and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I, nor pow'r pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view,
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell if not with me
From av'rice and ambition free,
And pleasure's fatal wiles;
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
 The heav'n that thou alone canst make,
 And wilt thou quit the stream
 That murmurs through the dewy mead,
 The grove and the sequester'd shed,
 To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
 For thee I gladly sacrificed
 Whate'er I loved before,
 And shall I see thee start away,
 And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
 Farewell! we meet no more?

 HUMAN FRAILTY.

WEAK and irresolute is man;
 The purpose of to-day,
 Woven with pains into his plan,
 To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent and smart the spring
 Vice seems already slain,
 But passion rudely snaps the string,
 And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
 Finds out his weaker part,
 Virtue engages his assent,
 But pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
 Through all his art we view,
 And while his tongue the charge denies,
 His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,
 And dangers little known,
 A stranger to superior strength,
 Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
 To reach the distant coast,
 The breath of heav'n must swell the sail,
 Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day,
 I only wish 'twould come
 (As who knows but perhaps it may)
 A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys who rave and fight
 On t'other side the Atlantic,
 I always held them in the right,
 But most so, when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
 That man shall be my toast,
 If breaking windows be the sport,
 Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls
 The choicest flow'rs she bears,
 Who constitutionally pulls
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
 Though some folks can't endure 'em,
 Who say the mob are mad outright,
 And that a rope must cure 'em.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
 Such strings for all who need 'em—
 What! hang a man for going mad?
 Then farewell British freedom.

 ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE RECORDED
 IN THE "BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA."

OH fond attempt to give a deathless lot
 To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
 In vain recorded in historic page,
 They court the notice of a future age:
 Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
 Drop one by one from fame's neglecting hand;
 Lethean gulfs receive them as they fall,
 And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,
 Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
 The flame extinct, he views the roving fire, —
 There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
 There goes the parson, oh! illustrious spark,
 And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk.

REPORT

OF AN ADJUDGED CASE NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY
 OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
 The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
 The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
 To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So the Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
 With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning,
 While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
 So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose, it will quickly appear,
 And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
 That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
 Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then, holding the spectacles up to the court—
 Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
 As wide as the ridge of the Nose is, in short,
 Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again would your lordship a moment suppose
 ('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
 That the visage, or countenance, had not a Nose,
 Pray who would or who could wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
 With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
 That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose
 And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then, shifting his side as a lawyer knows how,
 He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes,
 But what were his arguments few people know,
 For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
 Decisive and clear without one if or but—
 That whenever the Nose put his spectacles on
 By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut.

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,
 TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS. BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH
 OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
 Sworn foes to sense and law,
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
 That ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
 And many a treasure more,
 The well-judged purchase and the gift
 That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
 The loss was *his alone*,
 But ages yet to come shall mourn
 The burning of *his own*.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom
 In all devouring flame,
 They tell us of the fate of Rome,
 And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the muses wept,
 They felt the rude alarm,
 Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
 His sacred head from harm.

There mem'ry, like the bee that's fed
 From Flora's balmy store,
 The quintessence of all he read
 Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd with fury blind
 Have done him cruel wrong,
 The flow'rs are gone—but still we find
 The honey on his tongue.¹

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED ;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.

Thus says the prophet of the Turk,
 Good Mussulman abstain from pork ;
 There is a part in ev'ry swine,
 No friend or follower of mine
 May taste, whate'er his inclination,
 On pain of excommunication.
 Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
 And thus he left the point at large.
 Had he the sinful part express'd
 They might with safety eat the rest ;
 But for one piece they thought it hard
 From the whole hog to be debarr'd,
 And set their wit at work to find
 What joint the prophet had in mind.

Much controversy straight arose,
 These choose the back, the belly those ;
 By some 'tis confidently said
 He meant not to forbid the head,
 While others at that doctrine rail,
 And piously prefer the tail.
 Thus, conscience freed from ev'ry clog,
 Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
 May make you laugh on t'other side.
 Renounce the world, the preacher cries—
 We do—a multitude replies ;
 While one as innocent regards
 A snug and friendly game at cards ;

¹ Cowper regarded Lord Mansfield with the warmest admiration. Writing of his monument to Hayley (August 27, 1793), he observed,—"I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was, at that time, wonderfully handsome, and would expound the most mysterious intricacies of the law, or recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause, as long as from hence to Earsham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it."

And one, whatever you may say,
 Can see no evil in a play;
 Some love a concert or a race,
 And others, shooting and the chase.
 Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd
 Thus bit by bit the world is swallow'd;
 Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
 Yet likes a slice as well as he,
 With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
 Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.¹

THE nymph must lose her female friend
 If more admired than she—
 But where will fierce contention end
 If flow'rs can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
 Appear'd two lovely foes,
 Aspiring to the rank of queen,
 The lily and the rose.

The rose soon redden'd into rage,
 And, swelling with disdain,
 Appeal'd to many a poet's page
 To prove her right to reign.

The lily's height bespoke command,
 A fair imperial flow'r,
 She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
 The sceptre of her pow'r.

This civil bick'ring and debate
 The goddess chanced to hear,
 And flew to save, e'er yet too late,
 The pride of the parterre.

¹ "I must refer you to those unaccountable gaddings and caprices of the human mind for the cause of this production, for in general, I believe, there is no man who has less to do with the ladies' cheeks than I have. I suppose it would be best to antedate it, and to imagine that it was written twenty years ago, for my mind was never in more butterfly trim than when I composed it, even in the earliest parts of my life."—(To Unwin.)

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
 And yours the statelier mien,
 And till a third surpasses you,
 Let each be deem'd a queen.

Thus sooth'd and reconciled each seeks
 The fairest British fair,
 The seat of empire is her cheeks,
 They reign united there.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Hæc inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
 Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest?
 Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit,
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessûs
 Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas,
 Hic sibi regales amaryllis candida cultûs,
 Illic purpureo vindicat ore rosa.

Ira rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,
 Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinû,
 Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatûm,
 Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,
 Ceu flores inter non habitura parem.
 Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usûs
 Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
 Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opea.
 Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tuari,
 Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit,
 Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color,
 Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
 Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham
 Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit;
 Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius,
 hujus
 Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
 Had cheer'd the village with his song,
 Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
 Nor yet when eventide was ended,
 Began to feel, as well he might,
 The keen demands of appetite;
 When, looking eagerly around,
 He spied far off upon the ground,
 A something shining in the dark,
 And knew the glow-worm by his spark,
 So stooping down from hawthorn top,
 He thought to put him in his crop:
 The worm, aware of his intent,
 Harangued him thus right eloquent.
 Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
 As much as I your minstrelsy,
 You should abhor to do me wrong,
 As much as I to spoil your song;
 For 'twas the self-same Pow'r divine,
 Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
 That you with music, I with light,
 Might beautify and cheer the night.
 The songster heard his short oration,
 And warbling out his approbation,
 Released him as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.
 Hence jarring sectaries may learn
 Their real interest to discern:
 That brother should not war with brother,
 And worry and devour each other;

But sing and shine by sweet consent,
 Till life's poor transient night is spent,
 Respecting in each other's case
 The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name
 Who studiously make peace their aim;
 Peace, both the duty and the prize
 Of him that creeps and him that flies.

ON A GOLDFINCH

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

Time was when I was free as air,
 The thistle's downy seed my fare,
 My drink the morning dew:
 I perch'd at will on ev'ry spray,
 My form genteel, my plumage gay,
 My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
 And form genteel were all in vain
 And of a transient date;
 For, caught and caged and starved to death,
 In dying sighs my little breath
 Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
 And thanks for this effectual close
 And cure of ev'ry ill!
 More cruelty could none express,
 And I, if you had shown me less,
 Had been your pris'ner still.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

The pine apples in triple row,
 Were basking hot and all in blow,
 A bee of most discerning taste
 Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd.

On eager wing the spoiler came,
 And search'd for crannies in the frame,
 Urged his attempt on ev'ry side,
 To ev'ry pane his trunk applied,
 But still in vain, the frame was tight
 And only pervious to the light.
 Thus having wasted half the day,
 He trimm'd his flight another way.
 Methinks, I said, in thee I find
 The sin and madness of mankind;
 To joys forbidden man aspires,
 Consumes his soul with vain desires;
 Folly the spring of his pursuit,
 And disappointment all the fruit.
 While Cynthia ogles as she passes
 The nymph between two chariot-glasses,
 She is the pine-apple, and he
 The silly, unsuccessful bee.
 The maid who views with pensive air
 The show-glass fraught with glitt'ring ware,
 Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
 But sighs at thought of empty pockets,
 Like thine her appetite is keen,
 But, ah! the cruel glass between!
 Our dear delights are often such,
 Exposed to view but not to touch;
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,
 We long for pine-apples in frames,
 With hopeless wish one looks and lingers,
 One breaks the glass and cuts his fingers;
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead,
 Can gather honey from a weed.

 H O R A C E.

BOOK THE SECOND—ODE THE TENTH.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
 So shalt thou live beyond the reach
 Of adverse fortune's pow'r:
 Not always tempt the distant deep,
 Nor always timorously creep
 Along the treach'rous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
 And lives contentedly between
 The little and the great,
 Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
 Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
 Imbitt'ring all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the pow'r
 Of wintry blast; the loftiest tow'r
 Comes heaviest to the ground;
 The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
 His cloud-capt eminence divide,
 And spread the ruin round.

The well inform'd philosopher
 Rejoices with an wholesome fear,
 And hopes in spite of pain;
 If winter bellow from the north,
 Soon the sweet spring comes dancing forth,
 And nature laughs again.

What if thine heav'n be overcast,
 The dark appearance will not last,
 Expect a brighter sky;
 The God that strings the silver bow,
 Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
 And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
 Thy magnanimity display,
 And let thy strength be seen;
 But oh! if Fortune fill thy sail
 With more than a propitious gale,
 Take half thy canvas in.

A REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

AND is this all? Can reason do no more
 Than bid me shun the deep and dread the shore?
 Sweet moralist, afloat on life's rough sea
 The Christian has a heart unknown to thee;
 He holds no parley with unmanly fears,
 Where duty bids he confidently steers,
 Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
 And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I.—THE GLOW-WORM.

[COWPER's picture of Bourne is so exquisitely painted, that it ought always to be prefixed to his verses:—"I love the memory of Vinzy Bourne; I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*. His humour is entirely original—he can speak of a magpie, or a cat, in terms so exclusively appropriated to the character he draws, that one would suppose him animated by the spirit of the creature he describes; and, with all his drollery, there is a mixture of rational, and even religious reflection, at times, and always an air of pleasantry, good-nature, and humanity, that makes him, in my mind, one of the most amiable writers in the world. It is not common to meet with an author who can make you smile, and yet at nobody's expense; who is always entertaining, and yet always harmless; and who, though always elegant and classical to a degree not always found in the classics themselves, charms more by the simplicity and playfulness of his ideas, than by the neatness and purity of his verse."¹]

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,
A worm is known to stray,
That shows by night a lucid beam,
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail
From whence his rays proceed;
Some give that honour to his tail,
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of might
That kindles up the skies,
Gives *him* a modicum of light,
Proportion'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestow'd,
To bid the trav'ler, as he went,
Be careful where he trod:

¹ To Unwin, May 23, 1781.

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
Is legible and plain,
'Tis Power almighty bids him shine,
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
And boasts its splendour too.

II. — THE JACKDAW.

THERE is a bird, who by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow ;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where, bishop-like, he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather ;
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the raree-show
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think no doubt he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall ;
No, not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout
 The world, with all its motley rout,
 Church, army, physic, law,
 Its customs and its bus'nesses
 Are no concern at all of his,
 And says, what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
 Much of the vanities of men,
 And, sick of having seen 'em,
 Would cheerfully these limbs resign
 For such a pair of wings as thine,
 And such a head between 'em.¹

III. — THE CRICKET.

LITTLE inmate, full of mirth,
 Chirping on my kitchen hearth;
 Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
 Always harbinger of good,
 Pay me for thy warm retreat,
 With a song more soft and sweet,
 In return thou shalt receive
 Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be express'd,
 Inoffensive, welcome guest!
 While the rat is on the scout,
 And the mouse with curious snout,
 With what vermin else infest
 Every dish and spoil the best;
 Frisking thus before the fire,
 Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
 Form'd as if akin to thee,
 Thou surpasses't, happier far,
 Happiest grasshoppers that are;
 Theirs is but a summer song,
 Thine endures the winter long,
 Unimpair'd and shrill and clear,
 Melody throughout the year.

¹ "You will find, in comparing the Jackdaw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point, which, though smart enough in the Latin, would in English have appeared as plain and as blunt as the tag of a lace."—(T. Boswin, May 23, 1781.)

Neither night, nor dawn of day,
 Puts a period to thy play,
 Sing then—and extend thy span
 Far beyond the date of man—
 Wretched man, whose years are spent
 In repining discontent,
 Lives not, aged though he be,
 Half a span compared with thee.

 IV. — THE PARROT.

IN painted plumes superbly drest,
 A native of the gorgeous east,
 By many a billow tost;
 Poll gains at length the British shore,
 Part of the captain's precious store,
 A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferr'd
 To teach him now and then a word,
 As Poll can master it;
 But 'tis her own important charge
 To qualify him more at large,
 And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll! his doting mistress cries,
 Sweet Poll! the mimic bird replies,
 And calls aloud for sack.
 She next instructs him in the kiss,
 'Tis now a little one like Miss,
 And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears,
 And, list'ning close with both his ears,
 Just catches at the sound;
 But soon articulates aloud,
 Much to th' amusement of the crowd,
 And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
 His hum'rous talent next employs,
 He scolds and gives the lie.
 And now he sings, and now is sick,—
 Here Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
 Poor Poll is like to die.

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
 To meet with such a well-match'd pair,
 The language and the tone,
 Each character in every part
 Sustain'd with so much grace and art,
 And both in unison.

When children first begin to speak
 And stammer out a syllable,
 We think them tedious creatures
 But difficulties soon abate,
 When birds are to be taught to prate,
 And women are the teachers.

THE SHRUBBERY.¹

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

OH happy shades! to me unblest,
 Friendly to peace, but not to me;
 How ill the scene that offers rest,
 And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
 Those alders quiv'ring to the breeze,
 Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
 And please, if anything could please.

But fixt unalterable care
 Foregoes not what she feels within,
 Shows the same sadness ev'ry where,
 And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
 While peace possess'd these silent bow'rs,
 Her animating smile withdrawn,
 Has lost its beauties and its pow'rs.

The saint or moralist should tread
 This moss-grown alley, musing slow;
 They seek like me the secret shade,
 But not like me, to nourish woe.

¹ Under the name of the Spinnie, the "Shrubbery" has gayer memories of the poet. It was a sweet spot, shaded by sycamores and a spreading tree with a Moss House in the midst.

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
 Alike admonish not to roam,
 These tell me of enjoyments past,
 And those of sorrows yet to come.

 THE WINTER NOSEGAY

WHAT nature, alas! has denied
 To the delicate growth of our isle,
 Art has in a measure supplied,
 And winter is deck'd with a smile.
 See Mary what beauties I bring
 From the shelter of that sunny shed,
 Where the flow'rs have the charms of the spring,
 Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

Tis a bow'r of Arcadian sweets,
 Where Flora is still in her prime,
 A fortress to which she retreats,
 From the cruel assaults of the climate
 While earth wears a mantle of snow,
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow
 On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
 The frowns of a sky so severe,
 Such Mary's true love that has lived
 Through many a turbulent year.
 The charms of the late-blowing rose,
 Seem graced with a livelier hue,
 And the winter of sorrow best shows
 The truth of a friend, such as you.

 MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE

THE lady thus address'd her spouse—
 What a mere dungeon is this house!
 By no means large enough; and, was it,
 Yet this dull room and that dark closet.

Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
 Are such an antiquated scene,
 They overwhelm me with the spleen.
 —Sir Humphry, shooting in the dark,
 Makes answer quite beside the mark:
 No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
 Engaged myself to be at home,
 And shall expect him at the door
 Precisely when the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf, the lady cried,
 (And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)
 You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
 What shall I do to make you hear?
 Dismiss poor Harry! he replies,
 Some people are more nice than wise,—
 For one slight trespass all this stir?
 What if he did ride, whip and spur,
 'Twas but a mile—your fav'rite horse
 Will never look one hair the worse.
 Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
 Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
 Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl,
 I tell you you can't hear at all;
 Then, with a voice exceeding low,
 No matter if you hear or no.

Alas! and is domestic strife,
 That sorest ill of human life,
 A plague so little to be fear'd,
 As to be wantonly incurr'd,
 To gratify a fretful passion,
 On ev'ry trivial provocation?
 The kindest and the happiest pair
 Will find occasion to forbear,
 And something ev'ry day they live
 To pity and, perhaps, forgive.
 But if infirmities that fall
 In common to the lot of all,
 A blemish, or a sense impair'd,
 Are crimes so little to be spared,
 Then farewell all that must create
 The comfort of the wedded state;
 Instead of harmony, 'tis jar
 And tumult, and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,
 Proof against sickness and old age,

Preserved by virtue from declension,
 Becomes not weary of attention,
 But lives, when that exterior grace
 Which first inspired the flame decays.
 'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
 To faults compassionate or blind,
 And will with sympathy endure
 Those evils it would gladly cure.
 But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
 Shows love to be a mere profession;
 Proves that the heart is none of his,
 Or soon expels him if it is.

TO THE REV. MR NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

THE swallows in their torpid state,
 Compose their useless wing,
 And bees in hives as idly wait
 The call of early spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
 The wildest wind that blows,
 Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
 Secure of their repose.

But man all feeling and awake
 The gloomy scene surveys,
 With present ills his heart must ache,
 And pant for brighter days.

Old winter halting o'er the mead,
 Bids me and Mary mourn,
 But lovely spring peeps o'er his head,
 And whispers your return.

'Then April, with her sister May,
 Shall chase him from the bow'rs,
 And weave fresh garlands ev'ry day,
 To crown the smiling hours.

AND IF a tear that speaks regret
 Of happier time appear,
 A glimpse of joy that we have met
 Shall shine and dry the tear.

TRANSLATION OF PRIOR'S CHLOË AND
 EUPHELIA.

MERCATOR, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,
 Nomine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes;
 Lenè sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis,
 Sed solam exoptant te, mea vota, Chlœ.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,
 Cum dixit mea lux, heus, cane, sume lyram.
 Namque lyram juxtâ positam cum carmine vidit,
 Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro, suspiria surgunt,
 Et miscent numeris murmura mæsta meis,
 Dumque tuæ memoro laudes, Euphelia, formæ,
 Tota anima intereâ pendet ab ore Chlœs.

Subrubet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem.
 Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo;
 Atque Cupidineâ dixit Dea cincta coronâ,
 Heu! fallendi artem quam didicere parum

BOADICEA:

AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior queen,
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,
 Sought, with an indignant mien,
 Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath a spreading oak
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
 Ev'ry burning word he spoke,
 Full of rage and full of grief.

Princess! if our aged eyes
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
 'Tis because resentment ties
 All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
 In the blood that she has spilt;
 Perish hopeless and abhorr'd,
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,
 Tramples on a thousand states,
 Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
 Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

Other Romans shall arise,
 Heedless of a soldier's name,
 Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
 Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
 From the forests of our land,
 Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
 Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
 Thy posterity shall sway,
 Where his eagles never flew,
 None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
 Pregnant with celestial fire,
 Bending as he swept the chords
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She with all a monarch's pride,
 Felt them in her bosom glow,
 Rush'd to battle, fought, and died;
 Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
 Heav'n awards the vengeance due;
 Empire is on us bestow'd,
 Shame and ruin wait for you.

HEROISM.

THERE was a time when *Ætna's* silent fire
 Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire ;
 When, conscious of no danger from below,
 She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
 No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
 The blooming groves that girdled her around.
 Her unctuous olives and her purple vines,
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
 In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,
 A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,
 She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth,
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
 Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
 And hang their horrors in the neighb'ring skies,
 While through the Stygian veil that blots the day,
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
 But, oh ! what muse, and in what pow'rs of song,
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?
 Havock and devastation in the van,
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man—
 Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
 And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
 See it an uninform'd and idle mass,
 Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,
 Or blade that might redeem it from despair.
 Yet time at length (what will not time achieve ?)
 Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
 Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
 Oh bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
 Oh charming paradise of short-lived sweets !
 The selfsame gale that wafts the fragrance round,
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound ;
 Again the mountain feels th' imprison'd foe,
 Again pours ruin on the vale below.
 Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
 That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
 Who write in blood the merits of your cause,

Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,—
 Glory your aim, but justice your pretence;
 Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires
 The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires.

Fast by the stream that bounds your just
 domain,
 And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
 A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
 Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their
 own.

Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
 Their only crime, vicinity to you!
 The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
 Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;
 At ev'ry step beneath their feet they tread
 The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
 Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
 Before them, and behind a wilderness.
 Famine, and pestilence, her first-born son,
 Attend to finish what the sword begun;
 And echoing praises such as fiends might earn,
 And folly pays, resound at your return.
 A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
 Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,
 And years of pining indigence must show
 What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
 (Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)
 Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
 Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
 Rebuilds the tow'rs that smoked upon the plain,
 And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art
 Renew the quarrel on the conqu'ror's part,
 And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,
 That wealth within is ruin at the door.

What are ye, monarchs, laurel'd heroes, say,
 But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
 Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,
 Deplores the wasted regions of her globe,
 And stands a witness at truth's awful bar,
 To prove you, there, destroyers as ye are.

Oh place me in some heav'n-protected isle,
 Where peace and equity and freedom smile;
 Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
 No crested warrior dips his plume in blood.

Where pow'r secures what industry has won,
 Where to succeed is not to be undone,
 A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
 In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

AN Oyster, cast upon the shore,
 Was heard, though never heard before,
 Complaining in a speech well worded,
 And worthy thus to be recorded:
 Ah, hapless wretch! condemn'd to dwell
 For ever in my native shell,
 Ordain'd to move when others please,
 Not for my own content or ease;
 But toss'd and buffeted about,
 Now *in* in the water, and now *out*;
 'Twere better to be born a stone,
 Of ruder shape and feeling none,
 Than with a tenderness like mine,
 And sensibilities so fine!
 I envy that unfeeling shrub,
 Fast-rooted against ev'ry rub.
 The plant he meant grew not far off,
 And felt the sneer with scorn enough;
 Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
 And with asperity replied.

When, cry the botanists, and stare,
 Did plants call'd sensitive grow there?
 No matter when—a poet's muse is
 To make them grow just where she chooses.

You shapeless nothing in a dish,
 You that are but almost a fish,
 I scorn your coarse insinuation,
 And have most plentiful occasion
 To wish myself the rock I view,
 Or such another dolt as you.
 For many a grave and learned clerk,
 And many a gay unletter'd spark,
 With curious touch examines me,
 If I can feel as well as he;
 And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
 Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think—

Thus life is spent (oh, fie upon't!)
 In being touch'd, and crying—Don't!
 A poet, in his evening walk,
 O'erheard and check'd this idle talk;
 And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
 Whatever evil it endures,
 Deserves not, if so soon offended,
 Much to be pitied or commended.
 Disputes though short, are far too long,
 Where both alike are in the wrong;
 Your feelings, in their full amount,
 Are all upon your own account.
 You in your grotto-work enclosed
 Complain of being thus exposed;
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
 Save when the knife is at your throat,
 Wherever driv'n by wind or tide,
 Exempt from every ill beside.
 And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
 Who reckon ev'ry touch a blemish,
 If all the plants that can be found
 Embellishing the scene around,
 Should droop and wither where they grow,
 You would not feel at all, not you.
 The noblest minds their virtue prove
 By pity, sympathy, and love,
 These, these are feelings truly fine,
 And prove their owner half divine.
 His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,
 And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

 TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
 The kindness of a friend,
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
 As ever friendship penn'd,
 Thy name omitted in a page
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

An union form'd, as mine with thee,
 Not rashly or in sport,
 May be as fervent in degree,
 And faithful in its sort,
 And may as rich in comfort prove,
 As that of true fraternal love

The bud, inserted in the rind,
The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
The stock whereon it grows,
With flow'r as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may—
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest this should prove the last
'Tis where it should be, in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart,
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend

THE TASK

BOOK I.—THE SOFA.¹

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

The author's vindication of the title is given in a letter to Mr. Newton, December 13, 1784: “As to the title I take it to be the best that is to be had. It is not possible that a book including such a variety of subjects, and in which no particular one is predominant, should find a title adapted to them all. In such a case, it seemed almost necessary to accommodate the name to the incident that gave birth to the poem; nor does it appear to me that because I performed more than my task, therefore the Task is not a suitable title. A house would still be a house, though the builder of it should make it ten times as big as he at first intended. I might, indeed, following the example of the Sunday newspaper, call it the Olio; but I should do myself wrong; for though it have much variety, it has, I trust, no confusion.” Newton disliked the name, but the poet was resolute in his choice.]

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa—A school-boy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude, corrected—Colonnades

¹ “None of the titles apply themselves to the contents at large of that book to which they belong. They are, every one of them, taken from the leading (I should say the introductory) passage of that particular book, or from that which makes the most conspicuous figure in it. The Sofa, being, as I may say, the starting-post from which I addressed myself to the long race, that I soon conceived a design to run, it acquired a just pre-eminence in my account, and was very worthily advanced to the titular honour it enjoys, its right being at least so far a good one, that no word in the language could pretend a better.”—(To Newton, Dec. 13, 1784.)

commended—Alcove and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to and in some instances inimitable by art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of Crazy Kate introduced upon it—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South-Sea Islanders compassionate, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

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

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
 Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
 As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
 Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
 The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
 Wash'd by the sea, or on the grav'ly bank
 Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
 Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
 Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next
 The birth-day of invention; weak at first,
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
 Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
 Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
 A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
 On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
 And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms;
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
 May still be seen, but perforated sore
 And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
 By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refined
 Improved the simple plan, made three legs four,
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd.

Induced a splendid cover green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tap'stry richly wrought
 And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
 There might ye see the piony spread wide,
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
 Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

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

United yet divided, twain at once.
 So sit two Kings of Brentford on one throne;
 And so two citizens who take the air,
 Close pack'd and smiling in a chaise and one.
 But relaxation of the languid frame
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days; so slow
 The growth of what is excellent, so hard
 T' attain perfection in this nether world.
 Thus first necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
 And luxury th' accomplished Sofa last.

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

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
 Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
 From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
 Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
 The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
 Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
 For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
 Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm
 Of thorny boughs: have loved the rural walk
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
 E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
 T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames.
 And still remember, nor without regret
 Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
 Still hung'ring penniless and far from home
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,

Or blushing crabs, or berries that imboss
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite
 Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
 By culinary arts unsav'ry deems.
 No SOFA then awaited my return,
 No SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
 His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
 Incurring short fatigue ; and though our years,
 As life declines, speed rapidly away,
 And not a year but pilfers as he goes
 Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
 A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
 Their length and colour from the locks they spare ;
 Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot
 That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
 That play of lungs inhaling and again
 Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
 Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
 Mine have not pilfer'd yet ; nor yet impair'd
 My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that sooth'd
 Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
 Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
 And witness, dear companion of my walks,
 Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
 Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
 Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
 And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
 Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
 Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
 And that my raptures are not conjured up
 To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
 But genuine, and art partner of them all.
 How oft upon yon eminence,¹ our pace

¹ "From the town of Olney, westward, over three fields, the ascent's gradual to the eminence referred to by the poet in these lines. From this elevation is seen a prospect extensive in every direction but the north, which is bounded by a quick hedge, on rising ground. To the eastward is Steventon, a Bedfordshire ; further east stands the 'square tower' of Clifton Church, and ranging still eastward, the prospect is bounded by Clifton Wood ; till due east, is seen the 'tall spire' of Olney Church, and a considerable part of the town. To the southward is the pleasant village of Emberton, on the right of which appears, when the weather is clear, Bowbrick-hill, the church on its summit, at the distance of nearly fourteen miles. Due south, in an extensive valley, appear the devious windings of the river Ouse, whose mazy and deceptive course assumes the semblance of various streams. The meadows are likewise intersected by dikes, cut for the purpose of draining floods, which give the land, even in times of drought, a delightful verdure."—*Cosper Illustrated*, 1803, p. 31.

Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
 The ruffling wind scarce conscious that it blew,
 While admiration feeding at the eye,
 And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene!
 Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
 The distant plough slow-moving, and beside
 His lab'ring team, that swerved not from the track.
 The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
 Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
 Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
 Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
 Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank
 Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms
 That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
 While far beyond and overthwart the stream
 That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
 Displaying on its varied side the grace
 Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
 Just undulates upon the list'ning ear;
 Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
 Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
 Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years;
 Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
 Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
 The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
 That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
 Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
 The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
 And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,
 Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
 And all their leaves fast flutt'ring, all at once.
 Nor less composure waits upon the roar
 Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
 Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip
 Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
 Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
 In matted grass, that with a livelier green
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated Nature sweeter still
 To soothe and satisfy the human ear.

Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one¹
 The livelong night: nor these alone whose notes
 Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
 In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
 The jay, the pie, and ev'n the boding owl
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
 Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
 More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
 The task of new discoveries falls on me.
 At such a season and with such a charge
 Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
 'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
 Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
 Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.²
 And hidden as it is, and far remote
 From such displeasing sounds as haunt the ear
 In village or in town, the bay of curs
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
 And infants clam'rous whether pleased or pain'd,
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess
 The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
 Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
 Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch
 To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,

¹ Cowper's ornithology was only poetical; the nightingale has a rival in
 the blackcap.

² It stood about half a mile from Weston House.

And heavy-laden brings his bev'rage home,
 Far-fetch'd and little worth:¹ nor seldom waits,
 Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
 Angry and sad and his last crust consumed.
 So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*.
 If solitude make scant the means of life,
 Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
 Be still a pleasing object in my view,
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
 Invites us; monument of ancient taste,
 Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen
 From sultry suns, and, in their shaded walks
 And long-protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.
 We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus²—he spares me yet
 These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
 And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge³
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence ankle-deep in moss and flow'ry thyme
 We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures earth, and plotting in the dark
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove⁴
 That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures

¹ A well was afterwards sunk. In 1847 the "peasant's nest" had grown into a farm-house, with its ricks and out-buildings.

² John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.

³ The bridge spanned a brook, which, after winding through the Park, crossed the road from Olney to Northampton, at a place called *Owens Brook*.

⁴ A graceful little structure of wood.

The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface
 The panels, leaving an obscure rude name
 In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
 So strong the zeal t'immortalize himself
 Beats in the breast of man, that ev'n a few
 Few transient years, won from th' abyss abhorr'd
 Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
 And posted on this speculative height
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
 The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees,
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
 There, from the sunburnt hay-field homeward creeps
 The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team,
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene
 Diversified with trees of ev'ry growth,
 Alike yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
 Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
 Within the twilight of their distant shades;
 There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
 Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
 No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
 Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
 And of a wannish gray; the willow such,
 And poplar that with silver lines his leaf,
 And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
 Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
 Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
 Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,
 Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
 Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
 O'er these, but far beyond, (a spacious map
 Of hill and valley interposed between)
 The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
 A little Naiad¹ her improv'rish'd urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.
 The folded gates would bar my progress now,
 But that the lord of this enclosed demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share:² the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
 Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun
 By short transition we have lost his glare,
 And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
 Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
 That yet a remnant of your race survives.
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath,
 The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
 Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
 And dark'ning and enlight'ning, as the leaves
 Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits cheer'd,
 We tread the wilderness,³ whose well-roll'd walks,
 With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
 Deception innocent—give ample space
 To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
 Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
 We may discern the thresher at his task.
 Thump after thump, resounds the constant flail
 That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
 Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
 The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
 Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
 Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
 And sleep not: see him sweating o'er his bread
 Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,

¹ The *Naiad* was a narrow channel to drain the hollow.

² Sir John Throckmorton allowed Cowper to have the key of the grounds.

³ On the left is the statue of a lion, finely carved in a recumbent posture; this is placed on a basement at the end of a grassy walk, which is shaded by yews and elms, mingled with the drooping foliage of the laburnum, and adorned with beds of painting-woodbine. (1802)

But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams
All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation: ev'n the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixt below, the more disturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,
To which he forfeits ev'n the rest he loves.
Not such th' alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
Ev'n age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The vet'ran shows, and gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
 Who oft'nest sacrifice are favour'd least.
 The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
 Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found
 Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
 Renounce the odours of the open field
 For the unscented fictions of the loom;
 Who, satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
 Prefer to the performance of a God
 Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
 Lovely indeed the mimic works of art,
 But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
 None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
 Who shows me that which I shall never see,
 Conveys a distant country into mine,
 And throws Italian light on English walls.
 But imitative strokes can do no more
 Than please the eye, sweet Nature ev'ry sense.
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
 And music of her woods—no works of man
 May rival these; these all bespeak a power
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
 Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
 'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd,
 Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
 He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
 To sallow sickness, which the vapours dank
 And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
 Escapes at last to liberty and light;
 His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
 His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
 And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
 He does not scorn it, who has long endured
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
 To gaze at Nature in her green array.
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
 With visions prompted by intense desire;
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
 The low ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
 And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
 It is the constant revolution, stale
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
 A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
 Though halt and weary of the path they tread.
 The paralytic, who can hold her cards
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
 Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
 Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
 Between supporters; and once seated, sit
 Through downright inability to rise,
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
 These speak a loud memento. Yet ev'n these
 Themselves love life, and cling to it as he,
 That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
 They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
 Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
 The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
 And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
 That dries his feathers saturate with dew
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
 The peasant too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
 But save me from the gaiety of these

Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed;
 And save me, too, from theirs whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
 From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
 Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
 Prospects however lovely may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
 Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us, happy to renounce a while,
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
 That such short absence may endear it more.
 Then forests, or the savage rock may please,
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
 Above the reach of man: his hoary head
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.
 The common' overgrown with fern, and rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd
 And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days

¹ "I never answered your question concerning my strong partiality to a common. I well remember making the speech of which you remind me, and the very place where I made it was upon a common, in the neighbourhood of Southampton. My nostrils have hardly been regaled with those wild odours from that day to the present. We have no such here, but we have a scent in the fields about Olney that to me is equally agreeable: it proceeds, so far as I can find, neither from herb, nor tree, nor shrub; I should suppose therefore that it is in the soil. I had a strong desire to describe it when I was writing the Common-scene in the Task, but feared lest the unfrequency of such a singular property in the earth should have tempted the reader to ascribe it to a fanciful nose—at least to have suspected it for a deliberate fiction."—(To Lady Hesketh, Dec. 6, 1735.)

Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
 With lace, and hat with splendid ribbon bound.
 A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
 With one who left her, went to sea and died.
 Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
 To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
 At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
 Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
 Would oft anticipate his glad return,
 And dream of transports she was not to know.
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
 And never smiled again. And now she roams
 The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
 And there, unless when charity forbids,
 The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
 More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
 A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
 And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
 Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
 Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed¹

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
 O'er top the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
 Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
 Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
 Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloin'd
 From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
 They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
 Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
 Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
 Conveying worthless dross into its place;
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
 Strange! that a creature rational, and cast

¹ "For two excellent prints, I return you my sincere acknowledgments. I cannot say that poor Kate resembles much the original, who was neither so young nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her; but she was a figure well suited to the account given of her in the *Task*, and has a face exceedingly expressive of despairing melancholy."—(*To Hill*, May 24, 1728.)

In human mould, should brutalize by choice
 His nature, and, though capable of arts
 By which the world might profit and himself,
 Self-banish'd from society, prefer
 Such squalid sloth to honourable toil.
 Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft
 They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb
 And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
 Can change their whine into a mirthful note
 When safe occasion offers, and with dance,
 And music of the bladder and the bag
 Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
 Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
 And breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
 Need other physic none to heal th' effects
 Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
 By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
 Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
 His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
 The manners and the arts of civil life.
 His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
 Is obvious; placed within the easy reach
 Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.
 Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
 Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs
 (If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
 And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,
 And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
 By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
 War and the chase engross the savage whole;
 War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
 The envied tenants of some happier spot;
 The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
 His hard condition with severe constraint
 Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
 Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
 Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
 Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
 Thus fare the shiv'ring natives of the north,
 And thus the rangers of the western world,
 Where it advances far into the deep,

Towards th' Antaretic. Ev'n the favour'd isles,¹
 So lately found, although the constant sun
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
 Can boast but little virtue; and inert
 Through plenty, lose in morals, what they gain
 In manners, victims of luxurious ease.
 These therefore I can pity, placed remote
 From all that science traces, art invents,
 Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
 In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
 By navigators uninform'd as they,
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause
 Thee, gentle savage!² whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
 Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
 Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here
 With what superior skill we can abuse
 The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
 The dream is past. And thou hast found again
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
 And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
 Their former charms? And, having seen our state,
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
 And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
 As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
 Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
 And ignorant, except of outward show)
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
 And spiritless, as never to regret
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
 Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
 And asking of the surge that bathes thy feet
 If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
 I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
 A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
 At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
 From which no power of thine can raise her up.
 Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
 Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
 She tells me too that duly ev'ry morn

¹ The South Sea.² Orui.

Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
 Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste,
 For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry speck,
 Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
 With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
 But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
 And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
 To dream all night of what the day denied.
 Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
 Disinterested good, is not our trade.
 We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
 And must be bribed to compass earth again
 By other hopes, and richer fruits than yours.¹

But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
 And genial soil of cultivated life
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
 Yet not in cities oft. In proud and gay
 And gain-devoted cities; thither flow,
 As to a common and most noisome sewer,
 The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
 In cities, foul example on most minds
 Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
 In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
 And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
 In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there,
 Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
 I do confess them nurs'ries of the arts,
 In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
 Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
 The fairest capital in all the world,
 By riot and incontinence the worst.
 There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
 A lucid mirror, in which nature sees
 All her reflected features. Bacon there

¹ Cowper wrote to Newton (October 6, 1783):—"Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. We brought away an Indian, and having debauched him, we sent him home again, to communicate the infection to his country;—fine sport, to be sure, but such as will not defray the cost. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future."

Gives more than female beauty to a stone,¹
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone
 The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as much;
 Each province of her art her equal care.
 With nice incision of her guided steel
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
 So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
 The richest scen'ry and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds philosophy her eagle eye,
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
 In London. Where her implements exact,
 With which she calculates, computes, and scans
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
 In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
 So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied,
 As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
 Increasing London? Babylon of old
 Not more the glory of the earth, than she
 A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
 That so much beauty would do well to purge;
 And show this queen of cities, that so fair
 May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
 It is not seemly, nor of good report,
 That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
 To avenge than to prevent the breach of law:
 That she is rigid in denouncing death
 On petty robbers, and indulges life
 And liberty, and ofttimes honour too,
 To speculators of the public gold:
 That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts
 Into his overgorged and bloated purse
 The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
 Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
 That through profane and infidel contempt
 Of holy writ, she has presumed t' annul
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
 The total ordinance and will of God;

¹ The allusion, I suppose, is to the figure of "Commerce," in the monument to Lord Chatham. In a letter to Newton (October 22, 1783), he calls it "a perfect beauty;" and adds, "It is a literal truth, that I felt the tears flush into my eyes while I looked at her."

Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And centring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are wellnigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs
Scared, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.