

## BOOK II.

THE TIMEPIECE.<sup>1</sup>

## ARGUMENT.

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

OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,<sup>1</sup>  
 Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
 Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
 Of unsuccessful or successful war  
 Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd,  
 My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report  
 Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.  
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,  
 It does not feel for man. The nat'ral bond  
 Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax,  
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.<sup>2</sup>  
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
 Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r  
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause  
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.  
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed

<sup>1</sup> "The Timepiece appears to me to have a degree of propriety beyond most of them. The book to which it belongs is intended to strike the hour that gives notice of approaching judgment; and dealing pretty largely in the signs of the times, seems to be denominated, as it is, with a sufficient degree of accommodation to the subject."—(To Newton, Dec. 13, 1784.)

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah ix. 2.

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

Sure there is need of social intercourse,  
 Benevolence and peace and mutual aid  
 Between the nations, in a world that seems  
 To toll the death-bell to its own decease,  
 And by the voice of all its elements  
 To preach the gen'ral doom.<sup>1</sup> When were the winds  
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?  
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap  
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?  
 Fires from beneath, and meteors<sup>2</sup> from above,  
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,  
 Have kindled beacons in the skies, and th' old

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica.—O.

<sup>2</sup> August 18, 1783.—O.

And crazy earth has had her shaking fits  
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.  
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props  
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,  
 And Nature<sup>1</sup> with a dim and sickly eye  
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end  
 More distant, and that prophecy demands  
 A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet;  
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak  
 Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth  
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.  
 And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve  
 And stand exposed by common peccancy  
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,  
 And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily!<sup>2</sup> rude fragments now  
 Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.  
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets  
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord  
 Are silent. Revelry and dance and show  
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause,  
 While God performs, upon the trembling stage  
 Of his own works, his dreadful part alone.  
 How does the earth receive him?—With what signs  
 Of gratulation and delight, her king?  
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,  
 Her sweetest flow'rs, her aromatic gums,  
 Disclosing paradise where'er he treads?  
 She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,  
 Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps  
 And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot.  
 The hills move lightly and the mountains smoke,  
 For he has touch'd them. From th' extremest point  
 Of elevation down into th' abyss,  
 His wrath is busy and his frown is felt.  
 The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise,  
 The rivers die into offensive pools,  
 And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross  
 And mortal nuisance into all the air.  
 What solid was, by transformation strange  
 Grows fluid, and the fist and rooted earth

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.—C.

<sup>2</sup> The earthquake which destroyed the city of Messina in 1782.

Tormented into billows heaves and swells,  
 Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl  
 Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense  
 The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs  
 And agonies of human and of brute  
 Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry side,  
 And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene  
 Migrates uplifted, and, with all its soil  
 Alighting in far distant fields, finds out  
 A new possessor, and survives the change.  
 Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought  
 To an enormous and o'erbearing height,  
 Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice  
 Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore  
 Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,  
 Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,  
 Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng  
 That press'd the beach and hasty to depart  
 Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,  
 Gone with the reflux wave into the deep,  
 A prince with half his people. Ancient tow'rs,  
 And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes  
 Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume  
 Life in the unproductive shades of death,  
 Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,  
 And, happy in their unforeseen release  
 From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy  
 The terrors of the day that sets them free.  
 Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,  
 Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret,  
 That ev'n a judgment, making way for thee,  
 Seems in their eyes a mercy, for thy sake.

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame  
 Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,  
 And, in the furious inquest that it makes  
 On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.  
 The very elements, though each be meant  
 The minister of man, to serve his wants,  
 Conspire against him. With his breath he draws  
 A plague into his blood; and cannot use  
 Life's necessary means, but he must die.  
 Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him: or, if stormy winds  
 Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,  
 And, needing none assistance of the storm,  
 Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.

The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,  
 Or make his house his grave; nor so content,  
 Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,  
 And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.  
 What then—were they the wicked above all,  
 And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle  
 Moved not, while theirs was rock'd like a light skiff,  
 The sport of ev'ry wave? No: none are clear,  
 And none than we more guilty. But where all  
 Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts  
 Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark,  
 May punish, if he please, the less, to warn  
 The more malignant. If he spared not them,  
 Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,  
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man who sees a God employ'd  
 In all the good and ill that chequer life!  
 Resolving all events, with their effects  
 And manifold results, into the will  
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme.  
 Did not his eye rule all things, and intend  
 The least of our concerns, (since from the least  
 The greatest oft originate) could chance  
 Find place in his dominion, or dispose  
 One lawless particle to thwart his plan,  
 Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen  
 Contingence might alarm him, and disturb  
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.  
 This truth, philosophy, though eagle-eyed  
 In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;  
 And, having found his instrument, forgets  
 Or disregards, or more presumptuous still  
 Denies the pow'r that wields it. God proclaims  
 His hot displeasure against foolish men  
 That live an atheist life: involves the hear'n  
 In tempests, quits his grasp upon the winds  
 And gives them all their fury; bids a plague  
 Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,  
 And putrefy the breath of blooming health.  
 He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend  
 Blows mildew from between his shrivel'd lips,  
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,  
 And desolates a nation at a blast.  
 Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells  
 Of homogenea' and discordant springs

And principles; of causes how they work  
 By necessary laws their sure effects;  
 Of action and reaction. He has found  
 The source of the disease that nature feels,  
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear.  
 Thou fool! will thy discov'ry of the cause  
 Suspend th' effect, or heal it? Has not God  
 Still wrought by means since first he made the world,  
 And did he not of old employ his means  
 To drown it? What is his creation less  
 Than a capacious reservoir of means  
 Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?  
 Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of him  
 Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,  
 And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
 My country! and while yet a nook is left,  
 Where English minds and manners may be found,  
 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
 Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd  
 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,  
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies  
 And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France  
 With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves  
 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.  
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
 Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;  
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
 Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart  
 As any thund'rer there. And I can feel  
 Thy follies too, and with a just disdain  
 Frown at effeminates, whose very looks  
 Reflect dishonour on the land I love.  
 How, in the name of soldiership and sense,  
 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth  
 And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er  
 With odours, and as profligate as sweet,  
 Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
 And love when they should fight; when such as  
 these  
 Presume to lay their hand upon the ark  
 Of her magnificent and awful cause?  
 Time was when it was praise and boast enough  
 In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,  
 That we were born her children. Praise enough

To fill th' ambition of a private man,  
 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,  
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
 Farewell those honours, and farewell with them  
 The hope of such hereafter. They have fall'n  
 Each in his field of glory; one in arms,  
 And one in council;—Wolfe upon the lap  
 Of smiling victory that moment won,  
 And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.<sup>1</sup>  
 They made us many soldiers, Chatham, still  
 Consulting England's happiness at home,  
 Secured it by an unforgiving frown  
 If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,  
 Put so much of his heart into his act,  
 That his example had a magnet's force,  
 And all were swift to follow whom all loved.  
 Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!  
 Or all that we have left is empty talk  
 Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float  
 Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck  
 With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,  
 That no rude savour maritime invade  
 The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft  
 Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes,  
 That winds and waters lull'd by magic sounds  
 May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.  
 True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.  
 True, we may thank the perfidy of France  
 That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,  
 With all the cunning of an envious shrew.  
 And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state.  
 A brave man knows no malice, but at once  
 Forgets in peace the injuries of war,  
 And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.  
 And shamed as we have been, to th' very beard  
 Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved  
 Too weak for those decisive blows, that once  
 Insured us mast'ry there, we yet retain  
 Some small pre-eminence, we justly boast  
 At least superior jockeyship, and claim  
 The honours of the turf as all our own.  
 Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,

<sup>1</sup> Wolfe died Sept. 13, 1759; Chatham, May 14, 1773; not many weeks after his speech on America in the House of Lords.

And show the shame ye might conceal at home,  
 In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate,  
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—  
 'Tis gen'rous to communicate your skill  
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd,  
 And, under such preceptors, who can fail?

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



Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,  
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit therefore (and I name it, fill'd  
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware  
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—  
The pulpit (when the sat'rist has at last,  
Strutting and vap'ring in an empty school,  
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—  
I say the pulpit (in the sober use  
Of its legitimate peculiar pow'rs)  
Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand  
The most important and effectual guard,  
Support and ornament of virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth: there stands  
The legate of the skies; his theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.  
By him, the violated law speaks out  
Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.  
He establishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,  
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete  
Of heav'nly temper, furnishes with arms  
Bright as his own, and trains, by ev'ry rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's elect.  
Are all such teachers? would to heav'n all were!  
But hark—the Doctor's voice—fast wedged between  
Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks  
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far  
Than all invective is his bold harangue,  
While through that public organ of report  
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,  
Announces to the world his own and theirs.  
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,  
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,  
And emphasis in score, and gives to pray'r  
Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.  
He grinds divinity of other days  
Down into modern use; transforms old print  
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes  
Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts.—  
Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware?  
Oh name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,  
That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.

He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,  
Assuming thus a rank unknown before,  
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church.

I venerate the man whose heart is warm,  
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,  
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
That he is honest in the sacred cause.  
To such I render more than mere respect,  
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.  
But, loose in morals, and in manners vain,  
In conversation frivolous, in dress  
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,  
Frequent in park with lady at his side,  
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,  
But rare at home, and never at his books  
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;  
Constant at routs, familiar with a round  
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;  
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,  
And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,  
By infidelity and love o' th' world  
To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave  
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride.—  
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands  
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

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

In mal or woman, but far most in man,  
 And most of all in man that ministers  
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe  
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;  
 Object of my implacable disgust.  
 What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge  
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form  
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,  
 And pretty face, in presence of his God?  
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,  
 As with the di'mond on his lily hand,  
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,  
 When I am hungry for the bread of life?  
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames  
 His noble office, and, instead of truth,  
 Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!  
 Therefore, avaunt! all attitude and stare  
 And start theatric, practised at the glass.  
 I seek divine simplicity in him  
 Who handles things divine; and all beside,  
 Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired  
 By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd,  
 To me is odious as the nasal twang  
 Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,  
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes  
 Through the prest nostril, spectacle-bestrid.  
 Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,  
 That task perform'd, relapse into themselves,  
 And having spoken wisely, at the close  
 Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye—  
 Whoe'er was edified themselves were not.  
 Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke  
 An eyebrow; next compose a straggling lock;  
 Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,  
 Fall back into our seat; extend an arm,  
 And lay it at its ease with gentle care,  
 With handkerchief in hand, depending low:  
 The better hand, more busy, gives the nose  
 Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye  
 With op'ra glass to watch the moving scene,  
 And recognise the slow-retiring fair.  
 Now this is fulsome, and offends me more  
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect  
 And rustic coarseness would. A heav'nly mind  
 May be indiff'rent to her house of clay,  
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care.

But how a body so fantastic, trim,  
 And quaint in its deportment and attire,  
 Can lodge a heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.

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

Oh, popular applause! what heart of man  
 Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?  
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need  
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;  
 But swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!  
 With all his canvas set, and inexpert,  
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?  
 Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald  
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean  
 And craving poverty, and in the bow  
 Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,  
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb  
 The bias of the purpose. How much more,  
 Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,  
 In language soft as adoration breathes?  
 Ah, spare your idol! think him human still;  
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too,  
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source  
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome  
 Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we  
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.

To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled  
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams  
 Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,  
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove,  
 In vain, to filter off a crystal draught  
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced  
 The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred  
 Intoxication and delirium wild.  
 In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth  
 And spring-time of the world; ask'd, Whence is man?  
 Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?  
 Where must he find his Maker? With what rites  
 Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?  
 Or does he sit regardless of his works?  
 Has man within him an immortal seed?  
 Or does the tomb take all? If he survive  
 His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?  
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone  
 A Deity could solve. Their answers vague,  
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,  
 Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,  
 Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak  
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead  
 Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.  
 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,  
 Explains all mysteries, except her own,  
 And so illuminates the path of life,  
 That fools discover it, and stray no more.  
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,  
 My man of morals, nurtured in the shades  
 Of Academus, is this false or true?  
 Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?  
 If Christ, then why resort at ev'ry turn  
 To Athens, or to Rome, for wisdom short  
 Of man's occasions, when in him reside  
 Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathom'd store?  
 How oft when Paul has served us with a text,  
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd!  
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content  
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,  
 Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,  
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their car.dour too.

And thus it is. The pastor, either vain  
 By nature, or by flattery made so, taught  
 To gaze at his own splendour, and t' exalt

Absurdly, not his office, but himself;  
 Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn,  
 Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach,  
 Perverting often, by the stress of lewd  
 And loose example, whom he should instruct,  
 Exposes and holds up to broad disgrace  
 The noblest function, and discredits much  
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.  
 For ghostly counsel, if it either fall  
 Below the exigence, or be not back'd  
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof  
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;  
 Or be dishonour'd in th' exterior form  
 And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks  
 As move derision, or by foppish airs  
 And histrionic mumm'ry, that let down  
 The pulpit to the level of the stage;  
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.  
 The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught.  
 While prejudice in men of stronger minds  
 Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.  
 A relaxation of religion's hold  
 Upon the roving and untutor'd heart  
 Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapt,  
 The laity run wild.—But do they now?  
 Note their extravagance, and be convinced.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive  
 A wooden one, so we, no longer taught  
 By monitors that mother church supplies,  
 Now make our own. Posterity will ask  
 (If e'er posterity sees verse of mine),  
 Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,  
 What was a monitor in George's days?  
 My very gentle reader, yet unborn,  
 Of whom I needs must augur better things,  
 Since Heav'n would sure grow weary of a world  
 Productive only of a race like us,  
 A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.  
 We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced  
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard  
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,  
 And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use  
 Sov'reign and most effectual to secure  
 A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,  
 From rickets and distortion, else, our lo<sup>u</sup>

But thus admonish'd we can walk erect,  
 One proof at least of manhood; while the friend  
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.  
 Our habits costlier than Lucullus wore,  
 And, by caprice as multiplied as his,  
 Just please us while the fashion is at full,  
 But change with ev'ry moon. The sycophant,  
 That' waits to dress us, arbitrates their date,  
 Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;  
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete,  
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;  
 And, making prize of all that he condemns,  
 With our expenditure defrays his own.  
 Variety's the very spice of life,  
 That gives it all its flavour. We have run  
 Through ev'ry change that fancy, at the loom  
 Exhausted, has had genius to supply,  
 And, studious of mutation still, discard  
 A real elegance, a little used,  
 For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.  
 We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
 And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
 And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires,  
 And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,  
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.  
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,  
 Would fail t' exhibit at the public shows  
 A form as splendid as the proudest there.  
 Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?  
 A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough  
 With reasonable forecast and despatch,  
 T' ensure a side-box station at half-price.  
 You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,  
 His daily fare as delicate. Alas!  
 He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems  
 With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.  
 The rout is folly's circle which she draws  
 With magic wand. So potent is the spell,

\* "This last sentence puts me in mind of your reference to Blair, in a former letter, whom you there permitted to be your arbiter, to adjust the respective claims of *who* or *that*. . . . Upon solemn occasions—as in prayer or preaching, for instance—I would be strictly correct; and upon stately ones—for instance, were I writing an epic poem—I would be so likewise; but not upon familiar occasions. God, *who* heareth prayer, is right. Hector, *who* slew Patroclus, is right. And the man *that* dresses me every day, is, in my mind, right also; because the contrary would give an air of stiffness and pedantry to an expression that, in respect of the matter of it, cannot be too negligently made up."—(To Unwin, August 27, 1786.)

That none decoy'd into that fatal ring,  
 Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.  
 There we grow early gray, but never wise;  
 There form connexions, and acquire no friend;  
 Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;  
 Waste youth in occupations only fit  
 For second childhood, and devote old age  
 To sports which only childhood could excuse.  
 There they are happiest who dissemble best  
 Their weariness; and they the most polite,  
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile,  
 Though at their own destruction. She that asks  
 Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,  
 And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)  
 Make just reprisals, and, with cringe and shrug  
 And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.  
 All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,  
 Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,  
 And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,  
 To her who, frugal only that her thrift,  
 May feed excesses she can ill afford,  
 Is hackney'd home unlackey'd; who, in haste  
 Alighting, turns the key in her own door,  
 And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,  
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.  
 Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,  
 On fortune's velvet altar off'ring up  
 Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe  
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far  
 Than all that held their routs in Juno's heav'n.—  
 So fare we in this prison-house the world.  
 And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.  
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast  
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,  
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again.

Now basket up the family of plagues  
 That waste our vitals. Peculation, sale  
 Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds  
 By forgery, by subterfuge of law,  
 By tricks and lies, as num'rous and as keen  
 As the necessities their authors feel;  
 Then cast them, closely bundled, ev'ry brat  
 At the right door. Profusion is its sire.  
 Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base



In character, has litter'd all the land,  
 And bred within the mem'ry of no few  
 A yriesthood such as Baal's was of old,  
 A people such as never was till now.  
 It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all  
 That gives society its beauty, strength,  
 Convenience, and security, and use;  
 Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd  
 And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws  
 Can seize the slipp'ry prey; unties the knot  
 Of union, and converts the sacred band  
 That holds mankind together to a scourge.  
 Profusion, deluging a state with lusts  
 Of grossest nature and of worst effects,  
 Prepares it for its ruin; hardens, blinds,  
 And warps the consciences of public men  
 Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools  
 That trust them; and, in th' end, disclose a face  
 Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse;—  
 Since all alike are selfish, why not they?  
 This does Profusion, and th' accursed cause  
 Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,  
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth  
 Were precious, and inculcated with care,  
 There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,  
 Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,  
 Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,  
 But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.  
 His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile  
 Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard  
 Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.  
 The occupation dearest to his heart  
 Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke  
 The head of modest and ingenuous worth,  
 That blush'd at its own praise, and press the youth  
 Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew  
 Beneath his care, a thriving, vig'rous plant;  
 The mind was well inform'd, the passions held  
 Subordinate, and diligence was choice.  
 If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,  
 That one among so many overleap'd  
 The limits of control, his gentle eye  
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke;

His frown was full of terror, and his voice  
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe  
 As left him not, till penitence had won  
 Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.  
 But Discipline, a faithful servant long,  
 Declined at length into the vale of years;  
 A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye  
 Was quench'd in rheums of age, his voice unstrung  
 Grew tremulous, and moved derision more  
 Than rev'rence in perverse, rebellious youth.  
 So colleges and halls neglected much  
 Their good old friend, and Discipline at length,  
 O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.  
 Then study languish'd, emulation slept,  
 And virtue fled. The schools became a scene  
 Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,  
 His cap well lined with logic not his own,  
 With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,  
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.  
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny  
 Became stone-blind, precedence went in truck,  
 And he was competent whose purse was so.  
 A dissolution of all bonds ensued,  
 The curbs invented for the mulish mouth  
 Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts  
 Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates  
 Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch;  
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade;  
 The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,  
 A mock'ry of the world. What need of these  
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,  
 Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oft'ner seen  
 With belted waist, and pointers at their heels,  
 Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,  
 If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot,  
 And such expense, as pinches parents blue,  
 And mortifies the lib'ral hand of love,  
 Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports  
 And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,  
 That sits a stigma on his father's house,  
 And cleaves through life inseparably close  
 To him that wears it. What can after-games  
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,  
 The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,  
 Add to such erudition thus acquired,  
 Where science and where virtue are profess'd?

They may confirm his habits, rivet fast  
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task  
 That bids defiance to th' united pow'rs  
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.  
 Now, blame we most the nurselings, or the nurse?  
 The children crook'd and twisted and deform'd,  
 Through want of care, or her whose winking eye  
 And slumb'ring oscitancy<sup>1</sup> mars the brood?  
 The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge  
 She needs herself correction. needs to learn  
 That it is dang'rous sporting with the world,  
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust;  
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—  
 Peace to the mem'ry of a man of worth,  
 A man of letters and of manners too—  
 Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,  
 When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.  
 He graced a college,<sup>2</sup> in which order yet  
 Was sacred, and was honour'd, loved, and wept,  
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.  
 Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt  
 With such ingredients of good sense and taste  
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst  
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,  
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more,  
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake  
 Nor can example hurt them. What they see  
 Of vice in others but enhancing more  
 The charms of virtue in their just esteem.  
 If such escape contagion, and emerge  
 Pure, from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,  
 And give the world their talents and themselves  
 Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth  
 Exposed their inexperience to the snare,  
 And left them to an undirected choice.

See then! the quiver broken and decay'd,  
 In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there  
 In wild disorder and unfit for use,  
 What wonder if discharged into the world

<sup>1</sup> Laziness; the *Spectator* speaks of "the oscitancy of transcribers."  
<sup>2</sup> New'et College, Cambridge.—C.

They shame their shooters with a random flight,  
 Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.  
 Well may the church wage unsuccessful war  
 With such artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide  
 Th' undreaded volley with a sword of straw,  
 And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found  
 His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns—  
 Mourns, because ev'ry plague that can invest  
 Society, and that saps and worms the base  
 Of th' edifice that Policy has raised,  
 Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,  
 And suffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.  
 Profusion breeds them. And the cause itseif  
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found,  
 Found too where most offensive, in the skirts  
 Of the robed pedagogue! Else, let th' arraign'd  
 Stand up unconscious and refute the charge.  
 So, when the Jewish Leader<sup>1</sup> stretch'd his arm  
 And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,  
 Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth  
 Polluting Egypt. Gardens, fields, and plains  
 Were cover'd with the pest. The streets were fill'd  
 The croaking nuisance lurk'd in ev'ry nook,  
 Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,  
 And the land stank, so num'rous was the fry.

<sup>1</sup> Exodus viii. 5, 6.

## BOOK III.

## THE GARDEN.

## ARGUMENT.

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

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes  
 Entangled, winds now this way and now that  
 His devious course uncertain, seeking home;  
 Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd  
 And sore discomfited, from slough to slough  
 Plunging, and half despairing of escape,  
 If chance at length he find a greensward smooth  
 And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
 He chirrup brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
 And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;  
 So I, designing other themes, and call'd  
 T' adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,  
 To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,  
 Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat  
 Of academic fame (howe'er deserved)  
 Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.  
 But now with pleasant pace, a cleaner road  
 I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,  
 Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,  
 If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect  
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,  
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,  
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,  
 Should speak for purpose, or with better hope  
 Crack the satiric thong? "Twere wiser far

For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,  
 And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,  
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine  
 My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains;  
 Or when rough winter rages, on the soft  
 And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air  
 Feeds a blue flame and makes a cheerful hearth  
 There, undisturb'd by folly, and apprized  
 How great the danger of disturbing her,  
 To muse in silence, or at least confine  
 Remarks that gall so many to the few,  
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd  
 Is oftentimes proof of wisdom, when the fault  
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
 Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!  
 Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,  
 Or, tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm  
 Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets  
 Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect  
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup.  
 Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms  
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
 Heav'n-born and destined to the skies again.  
 Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,  
 That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist  
 And wand'ring eyes, still leaning on the arm  
 Of Novelty, her fickle frail support;  
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change,  
 And finding in the calm of truth-tried love  
 Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.  
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made  
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown,  
 Till prostitution elbows us aside.  
 In all our crowded streets, and senates seem  
 Convened for purposes of empire less,  
 Than to release th' adulteress from her bond.  
 Th' adulteress! what a theme for angry verse,  
 What provocation to th' indignant heart  
 That feels for injured love! but I disdain  
 The nauseous task to paint her as she is,  
 Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame.  
 No: let her pass, and charioted along  
 In guilty splendour shake the public ways;  
 The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,

And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch;  
 Whom matrons now, of character unsmirch'd,<sup>1</sup>  
 And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.  
 Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time  
 Not to be pass'd; and she that had renounced  
 Her sex's honour, was renounced herself  
 By all that prized it; not for prud'ry's sake,  
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.  
 'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif  
 Desirous to return, and not received;  
 But was an wholesome rigour in the main,  
 And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care  
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.  
 Men too were nice in honour in those days,  
 And judg'd offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,  
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,  
 Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold  
 His country, or was slack when she required  
 His ev'ry nerve in action and at stretch,  
 Paid with the blood that he had basely spared  
 The price of his default. But now,—yes, now,  
 We are become so candid and so fair,  
 So lib'ral in construction, and so rich  
 In Christian charity, (good-natured age!)  
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,  
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well  
 bred,  
 Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough  
 To pass us readily through ev'ry door.  
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,  
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)  
 May claim this merit still—that she admits  
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,  
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause;  
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,  
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts  
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd  
 Long since; with many an arrow deep infixt  
 My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by one who had himself  
 Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,

<sup>1</sup> Not dirtied, or stained. Shakspeare (*Hamlet*, Act iv. Scene 5) has  
 "unsmirch'd brow."

And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
With gentle force soliciting the darts  
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.  
Since then, with few associates, in remote  
And silent woods I wander, far from those  
My former partners of the peopled scene,  
With few associates, and not wishing more.  
Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,  
With other views of men and manners now  
Than once, and others of a life to come.  
I see that all are wand'ers, gone astray  
Each in his own delusions; they are lost  
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd  
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed; rings the world  
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind  
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,  
And find the total of their hopes and fears  
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay,  
As if created only, like the fly  
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,  
To sport their season and be seen no more.  
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
And pregnant with discov'ries new and rare.  
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats  
Of heroes little known, and call the rant  
A history; describe the man, of whom  
His own coevals took but little note,  
And paint his person, character, and views,  
As they had known him from his mother's womb  
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,  
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,  
The threads of politic and shrewd design  
That ran through all his purposes, and charge  
His mind with meanings that he never had,  
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn  
That He, who made it and reveal'd its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.  
Some, more acute and more industrious still,  
Contrive creation; travel nature up  
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,  
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixt,  
And planetary some; what gave them first



Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.  
 Great contest follows, and much learned dust  
 Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,  
 And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend  
 The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp  
 In playing tricks with nature, giving laws  
 To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.  
 Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums  
 Should ever tease the lungs, and bear the sight  
 Of oracles like these? Great pity too,  
 That having wielded th' elements, and built  
 A thousand systems, each in his own way,  
 They should go out in fume and be forgot?  
 Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they  
 But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke—  
 Eternity for bubbles proves at last  
 A senseless bargain. When I see such games  
 Play'd by the creatures of a Pow'r who swears  
 That he will judge the earth, and call the fool  
 To a sharp reck'ning that has lived in vain,  
 And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,  
 And prove it in th' infallible result  
 So hollow and so false—I feel my heart  
 Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,  
 If this be learning, most of all deceived.  
 Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps  
 While thoughtful man is plausibly abused.  
 Defend me therefore common sense, say I,  
 From reveries so airy, from the toil  
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
 And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well says one sage erudite, profound,  
 Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,  
 And overbuilt with most impending brows,  
 'Twere well could you permit the world to live  
 As the world pleases. What's the world to you?  
 Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk  
 As sweet as charity from human breasts.  
 I think, articulate, I laugh and weep  
 And exercise all functions of a man.  
 How then should I and any man that lives  
 Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,  
 Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,  
 And catechise it well. Apply your glass,  
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood

Congenial with thine own ; and if it be,  
 What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose  
 Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,  
 To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
 One common Maker bound me to the kind ?  
 True ; I am no proficient, I confess,  
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift  
 And perious noughtings from the angry clouds,  
 And bid them hide themselves in th' earth beneath ;  
 I cannot analyse the air, nor catch  
 The parallax<sup>1</sup> of yonder luminous point  
 That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss :  
 Such pow'rs I boast not—neither can I rest  
 A silent witness of the headlong rage,  
 Or heedless folly by which thousands die,  
 Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heav'ns  
 By strides of human wisdom. In his works,  
 Though wondrous, he commands us in his word  
 To seek him rather where his mercy shines.  
 The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,  
 Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause  
 The grand effect ; acknowledges with joy  
 His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.  
 But never yet did philosophic tube,  
 That brings the planets home into the eye  
 Of observation, and discovers, else  
 Not visible, his family of worlds,  
 Discover him that rules them ; such a veil  
 Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
 And dark in things divine. Full often too  
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn  
 Of nature, overlooks her Author more ;  
 From instrumental causes proud to draw  
 Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.  
 But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray  
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal  
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,  
 Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized  
 In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
 Has eyes indeed ; and, viewing all she sees  
 As meant to indicate a God to man,  
 Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.

<sup>1</sup> The parallax of a star is the difference between its true and its apparent place.

Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
 On all her branches. Piety has found  
 Friends in the friends of science, and true pray'r  
 Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.  
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!  
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
 And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,  
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,  
 And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom  
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,  
 And sound integrity not more, than famed  
 For sanctity of manners undefiled.

All flesh is grass,<sup>1</sup> and all its glory fades  
 Like the fair flow'r dishevell'd in the wind;  
 Riches have wings,<sup>2</sup> and grandeur is a dream;  
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,  
 And we that worship him, ignoble graves.  
 Nothing is proof against the gen'ral curse  
 Of vanity, that seizes all below.<sup>3</sup>  
 The only amaranthine flow'r on earth  
 Is virtue; th' only lasting treasure, truth.  
 But what is truth? 'twas Pilate's question<sup>4</sup> put  
 To truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.  
 And wherefore? will not God impart his light  
 To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,  
 His glory, and his nature to impart.  
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,  
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.  
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book  
 And him that writes it, though the style be neat,  
 The method clear, and argument exact?  
 That makes a minister in holy things  
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,  
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?  
 That, while it gives us worth in God's account,  
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own?  
 What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,  
 That learning is too proud to gather up,  
 But which the poor and the despised of all  
 Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?  
 Tell me, and I will tell thee what is truth.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xl. 6, 7.  
<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs xxiii. 5.  
<sup>4</sup> St. John xviii. 38.

Oh, friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
 Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd!  
 Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,  
 Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
 To understand and choose thee for their own.  
 But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,  
 Ev'n as his first progenitor, and quits,  
 Though placed in paradise (for earth has still  
 Some traces of her youthful beauty left),  
 Substantial happiness for transient joy.  
 Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse  
 The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,  
 By ev'ry pleasing image they present,  
 Reflections such as meliorate the heart,  
 Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;  
 Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight  
 To fill with riot and defile with blood.  
 Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes  
 We persecute, annihilate the tribes  
 That draw the sportsman over hill and dale  
 Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;  
 Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,  
 Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;  
 Could pageantry, and dance, and feast, and song  
 Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats;  
 How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,  
 Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves  
 Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the spleen,  
 And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!  
 They love the country, and none else, who seek  
 For their own sake its silence and its shade;  
 Delights which who would leave, that has a heart  
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind  
 Cultured and capable of sober thought,  
 For all the savage din of the swift pack,  
 And clamours of the field? Detested sport,  
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain,  
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks  
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued  
 With eloquence, that agonies inspire,  
 Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!  
 Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find  
 A corresponding tone in jovial souls.  
 Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare  
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell

Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.  
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,  
 Whom ten long years' experience of my care  
 Has made at last familiar, she has lost  
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,  
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
 Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
 That feeds thee; thou mayst frolic on the floor  
 At evening, and at night retire secure  
 To thy straw-couch, and slumber unalarm'd;  
 For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledged  
 All that is human in me, to protect  
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.  
 If I survive thee I will dig thy grave,  
 And when I place thee in it, sighing say,  
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world  
 Calls idle, and who justly in return  
 Esteems that busy world an idler, too!  
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,  
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,  
 And nature in her cultivated trim  
 Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—  
 Can he want occupation who has these?  
 Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy?  
 Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,  
 Not slothful; happy to deceive the time,  
 Not waste it; and aware that human life  
 Is but a loan to be repaid with use,  
 When He shall call his debtors to account,  
 From whom are all our blessings; bus'ness finds  
 Ev'n here: while sedulous I seek t' improve,  
 At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd  
 The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack,  
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work  
 By causes not to be divulged in vain,  
 To its just point—the service of mankind.  
 He that attends to his interior self,  
 That has a heart and keeps it; has a mind  
 That hungers and supplies it; and who seeks  
 A social, not a dissipated life,  
 Has business; feels himself engaged t' achieve  
 No unimportant, though a silent task.  
 A life, all turbulence and noise, may seem  
 To him that leads it, wise and to be praised:

But wisdom is a pearl with most success  
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.  
 He that is ever occupied in storms,  
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,  
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man  
 Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.  
 Whether inclement seasons recommend  
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,  
 With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,  
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph  
 Which neatly she prepares; then to his book  
 Well chosen, and not sullenly perused  
 In selfish silence, but imparted oft  
 As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,  
 Or turn to nourishment digested well.  
 Or if the garden with its many cares,  
 All well repaid, demand him, he attends  
 The welcome call, conscious how much the hand  
 Of lubbard<sup>1</sup> labour needs his watchful eye,  
 Oft loit'ring lazily if not o'erseen,  
 Or misapplying his unskilful strength.  
 Nor does he govern only or direct,  
 But much performs himself; no works indeed  
 That ask robust tough sinews, bred to toil,  
 Servile employ—but such as may amuse,  
 Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.  
 Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees  
 That meet (no barren interval between)  
 With pleasure more than ev'n their fruits afford,  
 Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel  
 These therefore are his own peculiar charge,  
 No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,  
 None but his steel approach them. What is weak,  
 Distemper'd, or has lost prolific pow'rs,  
 Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand  
 Dooms to the knife. Nor does he spare the soft  
 And succulent that feeds its giant growth,  
 But barren, at th' expense of neighb'ring twigs  
 Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick  
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left  
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint  
 Large expectation, he disposes neat

<sup>1</sup> Sluggish.

At measured distances, that air and sun  
 Admitted freely may afford their aid,  
 And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.  
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,  
 And hence ev'n Winter fills his wither'd hand  
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.  
 Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd  
 And wise precaution, which a clime so rude  
 Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child  
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods  
 Discov'ring much the temper of her sire.  
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild  
 Maternal nature had reversed its course,  
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles,  
 But, once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.  
 He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies  
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm  
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep  
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft  
 As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,  
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,  
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd  
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare  
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—  
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art  
 That toiling ages have but just matured,  
 And at this moment unessay'd in song.  
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice long since  
 Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,  
 And these the Grecian in ennobling strains;  
 And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye  
 The solitary Shilling. Pardon then,  
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!  
 Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose pow'rs  
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,  
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste  
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,  
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap  
 Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,  
 And potent to resist the freezing blast.

1 "Misturque nova fructus et non sua coma." *FLORIL.—O.*

For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf  
 Deciduous, and when now November dark  
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant  
 Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.  
 Warily therefore, and with prudent heed  
 He seeks a favour'd spot, that where he builds  
 Th' agglomerated pile, his frame may front  
 The sun's meridian disk, and at the back  
 Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge  
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread  
 Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe  
 Th' ascending damps; then leisurely impose,  
 And lightly, shaking it with agile hand  
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.  
 What longest binds the closest, forms secure  
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes  
 By just degrees an overhanging breadth,  
 Shelt'ring the base with its projected eaves.  
 Th' uplifted frame compact at ev'ry joint,  
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass  
 He settles next upon the sloping mount,  
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure  
 From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls.  
 He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.  
 Thrice must the voluble and restless earth  
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth  
 Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass  
 Diffused, attain the surface. When behold!  
 A pestilent and most corrosive steam,  
 Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,  
 And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,  
 Asks egress; which obtain'd, the overcharged  
 And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,  
 In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank,  
 And purified, rejoices to have lost  
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage  
 Th' impatient fervour which it first conceives  
 Within its reeking bosom, threat'ning death  
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.  
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft  
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,  
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch  
 Th' auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat  
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford  
 Soft fermentation, and invite the seed.  
 The seed selected wisely, plump and smooth



And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
 Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepared  
 And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,  
 And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds:  
 These on the warm and genial earth that hides  
 The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,  
 He places lightly, and, as time subdues  
 The rage of fermentation, plunges deep  
 In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.  
 Then rise the tender germs upstarting quick  
 And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first  
 Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,  
 If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air  
 Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.  
 Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,  
 Cautious he pinches from the second stalk  
 A pimple, that portends a future sprout,  
 And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed  
 The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish,  
 Prolific all, and harbingers of more.  
 The crowded roots demand enlargement now  
 And transplantation in an ampler space.  
 Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply  
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flow'rs,  
 Blown on the summit of th' apparent fruit.  
 These have their sexes, and when summer shines  
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal  
 From flow'r to flow'r, and ev'n the breathing air  
 Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.  
 Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art  
 Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass  
 The glad espousals and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich (since luxury must have  
 His dainties, and the world's more num'rous half  
 Lives by contriving delicacies for you),  
 Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,  
 The vigilance, the labour, and the skill  
 That day and night are exercised, and hang  
 Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,  
 That ye may garnish your profuse regales  
 With summer fruits, brought forth by wintry suns.  
 Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart  
 The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,  
 Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies  
 Minute as dust and numberless, oft work

Dire disappointment that admits no cure,  
 And which no care can obviate. It were long,  
 'Too long to tell th' expedients and the shifts  
 Which he, that fights a season so severe,  
 Devises, while he guards his tender trust,  
 And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise  
 Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song  
 Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit  
 Of too much labour, worthless when produced.

Who loves a garden, loves a greenhouse too.  
 Unconscious of a less propitious clime  
 There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,  
 While the winds whistle and the snows descend.  
 The spiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf  
 Shines there and flourishes. The golden boast  
 Of Portugal and Western India there,  
 The ruddier orange and the paler lime,  
 Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,  
 And seem to smile at what they need not fear.  
 Th' amomum there with intermingling flow'rs  
 And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts  
 Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,  
 Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.  
 All plants, of ev'ry leaf, that can endure  
 The winter's frown if screen'd from his shrewd bite,  
 Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,  
 Levantine regions these; th' Azores send  
 Their jessamine; her jessamine remote  
 Caffraria: foreigners from many lands,  
 They form one social shade, as if convened  
 By magic summons of th' Orphean lyre.  
 Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass  
 But by a master's hand, disposing well  
 The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r,  
 Must lend its aid t' illustrate all their charms,  
 And dress the regular yet various scene.  
 Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van  
 The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still  
 Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.  
 So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,  
 A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;  
 And so, while Garrick as renown'd as he,  
 The sons of Albion, fearing each to lose  
 Some note of Nature's music from his lips,  
 And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen

In ev'ry flash of his far-beaming eye.  
 Nor taste alone and well-contrived display  
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace  
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains  
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind  
 And more laborious. Cares on which depends  
 Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.  
 The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd  
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,  
 And disappoints the roots; the slender roots,  
 Close interwoven where they meet the vase,  
 Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch  
 Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf  
 Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor  
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else  
 Contagion, and disseminating death.  
 Discharge but these kind offices, (and who  
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)  
 Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,  
 The scent regaled, each odorif'rous leaf,  
 Each op'ning blossom freely breathes abroad  
 Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,  
 All healthful, are th' employs of rural life,  
 Reiterated as the wheel of time  
 Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.  
 Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll  
 That, softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears  
 A flow'ry island from the dark green lawn  
 Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due  
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.  
 Here also grateful mixture of well match'd  
 And sorted hues (each giving each relief,  
 And by contrasted beauty shining more)  
 Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'rous spade  
 May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,  
 But elegance, chief grace the garden shows  
 And most attractive, is the fair result  
 Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.  
 Without it, all is Gothic as the scene  
 To which th' insipid citizen resorts  
 Near yonder heath; where industry misspent,  
 But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,  
 Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moors  
 Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd th' encumber'd soil

And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.  
 He, therefore, who would see his flow'rs disposed  
 Sightly and in just order, ere he gives  
 The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,  
 Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene  
 Shall break into its preconceived display,  
 Each for itself, and all as with one voice  
 Conspiring, may attest his bright design.  
 Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd  
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.  
 Few self-supported flow'rs endure the wind  
 Uninjured, but expect th' upholding aid  
 Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied  
 Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,  
 For int'rest sake, the living to the dead.  
 Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused  
 And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair;  
 Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.  
 Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub  
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,  
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon  
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well  
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.  
 All hate the rank society of weeds,  
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust  
 Th' impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,  
 That, like the multitude made faction-mad,  
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

Oh blest seclusion from a jarring world,  
 Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat  
 Cannot, indeed, to guilty man restore  
 Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;  
 But it has peace, and much secures the mind  
 From all assaults of evil; proving still  
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease  
 By vicious custom, raging uncontroll'd  
 Abroad, and desolating public life.  
 When fierce temptation, seconded within  
 By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts  
 Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,  
 To combat may be glorious, and success  
 Perhaps may crown us, but to fly is safe.  
 Had I the choice of sublunary good,  
 What could I wish that I possess not here?  
 Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace

No loose or wanton, though a wand'ring muse.  
 And constant occupation without care.  
 Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;  
 Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,  
 And profligate abusers of a world  
 Created fair so much in vain for them,  
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,  
 Allured by my report; but sure no less  
 That, self-condemn'd, they must neglect the prize  
 And what they will not taste, must yet approve.  
 What we admire we praise; and when we praise  
 Advance it into notice, that, its worth  
 Acknowledged, others may admire it too.  
 I therefore recommend, though at the risk  
 Of popular disgust, yet boldly still  
 The cause of piety and sacred truth  
 And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd,  
 Should best secure them and promote them most;  
 Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive  
 Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.  
 Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her smiles,  
 And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol.  
 Not as the prince<sup>1</sup> in Shushan, when he call'd,  
 Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,  
 To grace the full pavilion. His design  
 Was but to boast his own peculiar good,  
 Which all might view with envy, none partake.  
 My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,  
 And she that sweetens all my bitters, too,  
 Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form  
 And lineaments divine I trace a hand  
 That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd.  
 Is free to all men,—universal prize.  
 Strange that so fair a creature should yet want  
 Admirers, and be destined to divide  
 With meaner objects ev'n the few she finds.  
 Stript of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,  
 She loses all her influence. Cities then  
 Attract us, and neglected Nature pines  
 Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.  
 But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed  
 By roses, and clear suns, though scarcely felt.  
 And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure  
 From clamour, and whose very silence charms.

<sup>1</sup> Abasuerus; Esther i. 10, 11.

To be preferr'd to smoke,—to the eclipse  
 That Metropolitan volcanoes make,  
 Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long,  
 And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,  
 And thund'ring loud, with his ten thousand wheels?  
 They would be, were not madness in the head  
 And folly in the heart; were England now  
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
 And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell  
 To all the virtues of those better days,  
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once  
 Knew their own masters, and laborious hands  
 That had survived the father, served the son.  
 Now the legitimate and rightful lord  
 Is but a transient guest, newly arrived  
 And soon to be supplanted. He that saw  
 His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,  
 Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price  
 To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.  
 Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,  
 Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.  
 The country starves, and they that feed th' o'ercharged  
 And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,  
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.  
 The wings that waft our riches out of sight  
 Grow on the gamester's elbows, and th' alert  
 And nimble motion of those restless joints,  
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.  
 Improvement too, the idol of the age,  
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes—  
 The omnipotent magician, Brown,<sup>1</sup> appears.  
 Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode  
 Of our forefathers, a grave whisker'd race,  
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,  
 But in a distant spot; where more exposed  
 It may enjoy th' advantage of the North  
 And aguish East, till time shall have transform'd  
 Those naked acres to a shelt'ring grove.  
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,  
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,  
 And streams, as if created for his use,  
 Pursue the track of his directing wand

<sup>1</sup> But had Cowper forgotten his own obligations to this ingenious designer, by whom Weston Park was laid out?

Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,  
 Now murmur'ing soft, now roaring in cascades,  
 Ev'n as he bids. Th' enraptured owner smiles.  
 'Tis finish'd. And yet, finish'd as it seems,  
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,  
 A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.  
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,  
 He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan  
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a day  
 Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,  
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven  
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy.  
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,  
 When having no stake left, no pledge t' endear  
 Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause  
 A moment's operation on his love,  
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal  
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace  
 Deals him out money from the public chest,  
 Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse  
 Supplies his need with an usurious loan,  
 To be refunded duly, when his vote,  
 Well-managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.  
 Oh, innocent compared with arts like these,  
 Crape and cock'd pistol and the whistling ball  
 Sent through the trav'ler's temples! He that finds  
 One drop of heav'n's sweet mercy in his cup,  
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well-content,  
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags  
 At his last gasp; but could not for a world  
 Fish up his dirty and dependent bread  
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,  
 Sordid and sick'ning at his own success.

Ambition, av'rice, penury incur'd  
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
 Of pleasure and variety, despatch,  
 As duly as the swallows disappear,  
 The world of wand'ring knights and squires to town;  
 London ingulfs them all. The shark is there,  
 And the shark's prey; the spendthrift, and the leech  
 That sucks him. There the sycophant, and he  
 That with bare-headed and obsequious bows  
 Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail  
 And groat per diem if his patron frown.

The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp  
Were character'd on ev'ry statesman's door,  
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDEE  
HERE."

These are the charms that sully and eclipse  
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe  
That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,  
The hope of better things, the chance to win,  
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,  
That, at the sound of Winter's hoary wing,  
Unpeople all our counties of such herds  
Of flutt'ring, loit'ring, cringing, begging, loose  
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

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



## BOOK IV.

## THE WINTER EVENING.

## ARGUMENT.

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

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,  
 That with its wearisome but needful length  
 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—  
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
 With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,  
 News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.  
 True to his charge the close-pack'd load behind,  
 Yet careless what he brings; his one concern  
 Is to conduct it to the destined inn,  
 And, having dropp'd th' expected bag—pass on.  
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,  
 Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief  
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;  
 To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.  
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
 With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks,  
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
 Or charged with am'rous sighs of absent swains,  
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
 But oh, th' important budget! usher'd in  
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
 What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?  
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,  
 Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?

Is India free? and does she wear her plumed  
 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,  
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,  
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
 The logic and the wisdom and the wit  
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;  
 I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,  
 And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.  
 Not such his evening, who with shining face  
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeez'd  
 And bored with elbow-points through both his sides  
 Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage;  
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb  
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath  
 Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,  
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
 This folio of four pages, happy work!  
 Which not ev'n critics criticise, that holds  
 Inquisitive attention while I read  
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break,  
 What is it but a map of busy life,  
 Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?  
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge  
 That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,  
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes;  
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,  
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
 And with a dextrous jerk soon twists him down  
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.  
 Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft  
 Meanders, lubricate the course they take;  
 The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved  
 T' engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,  
 Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
 However trivial all that he conceives.  
 Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise,  
 The dearth of information and good sense,  
 That it foretells us, always comes to pass.

Cat'racts of declamation thunder here,  
 There forests of no meaning spread the page  
 In which all comprehension wanders lost ;  
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,  
 With merry descants on a nation's woes  
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
 But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,  
 And lilies for the brows of faded age,  
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,  
 Heav'n, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,  
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,  
 Sermons and city feasts and fav'rite airs,  
 Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,  
 And Katterfelto with his hair on end  
 At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

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

While fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

Oh Winter! ruler of th' inverted year,  
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,  
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
Fringed with a beard made white with other snow,  
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,  
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,  
But urged by storms along its slipp'ry way,  
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,<sup>1</sup>  
And dreaded as thou art. Thou hold'st the sun  
A pris'ner in the yet undawning East,  
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon.  
And hurrying him impatient of his stay  
Down to the rosy West; but kindly still  
Compensating his loss with added hours  
Of social converse and instructive ease,  
And gathering at short notice in one group  
The family dispersed, and fixing thought  
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.  
I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,  
And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours  
Of long uninterrupted evening know.  
No ratt'ling wheels stop short before these gates;  
No powder'd pert proficient in the art  
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors  
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds  
Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound  
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:  
But here the needle plies its busy task,  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom; buds and leaves and sprigs  
And curly tendrils, gracefully disposed,  
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;  
A wreath that cannot fade, of flow'rs that blow  
With most success when all besides decay.

<sup>1</sup> "I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer. But the long evenings have their comforts too; and there is hardly to be found upon earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman, by his fireside, in the winter. I mean, however, an Englishman that lives in the country." (To Hill, October 7, 1783.)

The poet's or historian's page, by one  
 Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest ;  
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;  
 And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
 And in the charming strife triumphant still,  
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
 On female industry ; the threaded steel  
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds  
 The volume closed, the customary rites  
 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,  
 Such as the mistress of the world once found  
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note,  
 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,  
 Enjoy'd—spare feast !—a radish and an egg.  
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,  
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play  
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth ;  
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
 That made them an intruder on their joys,  
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise  
 A jarring note ; themes of a graver tone  
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
 While we retrace with mem'ry's pointing wand  
 That calls the past to our exact review,  
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
 The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found  
 Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored,  
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love :—  
 Oh evenings worthy of the gods ! exclaim'd  
 The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,  
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,  
 As more illumined and with nobler truths,  
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is winter hideous in a garb like this ?  
 Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,  
 The pent-up breath of an unsav'ry throng  
 To thaw him into feeling, or the smart  
 And snappish dialogue that flippant wits  
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile ?  
 The self-complacent actor, when he views  
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)  
 The slope of faces from the floor to th' roof,

(As if one master-spring controll'd them all)  
 Relax'd into an universal grin.  
 Sees not a count'nance there that speaks a joy  
 Half so refined or so sincere as ours.  
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks  
 That idleness has ever yet contrived  
 To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,  
 To palliate dulness and give time a shove.  
 Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,<sup>1</sup>  
 Unsoil'd and swift and of a silken sound.  
 But the world's time is time in masquerade.  
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged  
 With motley plumes, and, where the peacock shows  
 His azure eyes, is tintured black and red  
 With spots quadrangular of di'mond form,  
 Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
 What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,  
 Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast  
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.  
 Thus deck'd he charms a world whom fashion blinds  
 To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,  
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours.  
 Ev'n misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
 The back-string and the bib, assume the dress  
 Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school  
 Of card-devoted time, and night by night,  
 Placed at some vacant corner of the board,  
 Learn ev'ry trick, and soon play all the game.  
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,  
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?  
 As he that travels far, oft turns aside  
 To view some rugged rock, or mould'ring tow'r,  
 Which seen delights him not; then coming home,  
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know  
 How far he went for what was nothing worth;  
 So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread  
 With colours mixt for a far diff'rent use,  
 Paint cards and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing  
 That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace,  
 Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!  
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,

<sup>1</sup> The reader may recollect Young's description, and the sublime illustration of it by Blake.

With matron-step slow-moving, while the night  
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd  
In letting fall the curtain of repose  
On bird and beast, the other charged for man  
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day;  
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,  
Like homely-featured night, of clust'ring gems,  
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow  
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine,  
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high  
With ostentatious pageantry, but set  
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.  
Come then, and thou shalt find thy vot'ry calm,  
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift;  
And whether I devote thy gentle hours  
To books, to music, or the poet's toil,  
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit,  
Or twining silken threads round iv'ry reels,  
When they command whom man was born to please,  
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,  
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk  
Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,  
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps  
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile  
With faint illumination, that uplifts  
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits  
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.  
Not undelightful is an hour to me  
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom  
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,  
The mind contemplative, with some new theme  
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.  
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs  
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,  
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,  
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.<sup>1</sup>  
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild

<sup>1</sup> He says in a letter,—"I frequently do not think at all. I am much mistaken if I do not often catch myself napping in this way; but when I ask myself, what was the last idea (as the ushers at Westminster ask an idle boy, what was the last word), I am not able to answer, but, like the boy in question, am obliged to stare, and say nothing."

Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,  
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd  
In the red cinders, while with poring eye  
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.  
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd  
The sooty films that play upon the bars  
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view  
Of superstition, prophesying still,  
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach  
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose  
In indolent vacuity of thought,  
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face  
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask  
Of deep deliberation, as the man  
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.  
Thus oft reclined at ease, I lose an hour  
At evening, till at length the freezing blast  
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home  
The recollected pow'rs, and, snapping short  
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves  
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.  
How calm is my recess! and how the frost  
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!  
I saw the woods and fields at close of day  
A variegated show; the meadows green  
Though faded, and the lands, where lately waved  
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,  
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share;  
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile  
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed  
By flocks fast feeding, and selecting each  
His fav'rite herb; while all the leafless groves  
That skirt th' horizon wore a sable hue,  
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.  
To-morrow brings a change, a total change,  
Which even now, though silently perform'd  
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face  
Of universal nature undergoes.  
Fast falls a fleecy show'r; the downy flakes,  
Descending and with never-ceasing lapse  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives  
Gladly the thick ning mantle, and the green  
And tender blade that fear'd the chilling blast,  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.



In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
 Finds happiness unblighted, or if found,  
 Without some thistly sorrow at its side,  
 It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
 Against the law of love, to measure lots  
 With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus  
 We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,  
 And sympathize with others, suffering more.  
 Ill fares the trav'ler now, and he that stalks  
 In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team;  
 The wain goes heavily, impeded sore  
 By congregated loads adhering close  
 To the clogg'd wheels, and, in its sluggish pace,  
 Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.  
 The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,  
 While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong  
 Forced downward, is consolidated soon  
 Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear  
 The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
 With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth  
 Presented bare against the storm, plods on;  
 One hand secures his hat, save when with both  
 He brandishes his pliant length of whip,  
 Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
 Oh happy! and, in my account, denied  
 That sensibility of pain with which  
 Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.  
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd;  
 The learned finger never need explore  
 Thy vig'rous pulse, and the unhealthful East,  
 That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone  
 Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.  
 Thy days roll on exempt from household care,  
 Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,  
 That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
 Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.  
 Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,  
 Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,  
 With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,  
 Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,  
 Such claim compassion in a night like this,  
 And have a friend in every feeling heart.  
 Warm'd while it lasts, by labour, all day long

They brave the season and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.  
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights  
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,  
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys ;  
The few small embers left she nurses well.  
And while her infant race with outspread hands  
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks  
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.  
The man feels least, as more inur'd than she  
To winter, and the current in his veins  
More briskly moved by his severer toil ;  
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.  
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw  
Dangled along at the cold finger's end  
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf  
Lodged on the shelf, half-eaten, without sauce  
Of sav'ry cheese, or butter costlier still,  
Sleep seems their only refuge. For alas !  
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,  
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.  
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care  
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just  
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,  
Skillet and old carved chest from public sale.  
They live, and live without extorted alms  
From grudging hands, but other boast have none  
To sooth their honest pride that scorns to beg,  
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.  
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,  
For ye are worthy ; choosing rather far  
A dry but independent crust, hard-earned  
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure  
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs  
Of knaves in office, partial in their work  
Of distribution ; lib'ral of their aid  
To clam'rous importunity in rags,  
But ofttimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush  
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,  
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth ;  
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused  
Because deserving, silently retire.  
But be ye of good courage ! Time itself  
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase  
And all your num'rous progeny, well train'd,  
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,

And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want  
 What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,  
 Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.  
 I mean the man, who when the distant poor  
 Need help, denies them nothing but his name!

But poverty with most, who whimper forth  
 Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe,  
 Th' effect of laziness or sottish waste.  
 Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad  
 For plunder; much solicitous how best  
 He may compensate for a day of sloth,  
 By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.  
 Woe to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge  
 Plash'd neatly and secured with driven stakes  
 Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength  
 Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame  
 To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil—  
 An ass's burden,—and when laden most  
 And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.  
 Nor does the boarded hovel better guard  
 The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots,  
 From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave  
 Unwrench'd the door, however well secured,  
 Where chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps  
 In unsuspecting pomp; twitch'd from the perch  
 He gives the princely bird with all his wives  
 To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,  
 And loudly wond'ring at the sudden change.  
 Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse  
 Did pity of their sufferings warp aside  
 His principle, and tempt him into sin  
 For their support, so destitute; but they  
 Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more  
 Exposed than others, with less scruple made  
 His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.  
 Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst  
 Of ruinous ebriety that prompts  
 His ev'ry action, and imbrutes the man.  
 Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck  
 Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood  
 He gave them in his children's veins, and hates  
 And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love.

Pass where we may, through city, or through town.

Village or hamlet of this merry land,  
 Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace  
 Conducts th' unguarded nose to such a whiff  
 Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the styes  
 That law has licensed, as makes temp'rance reel.  
 There sit involved and lost in curling clouds  
 Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,  
 The lackey, and the groom. The craftsman there  
 Takes a Lethæan leave of all his toil;  
 Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,  
 And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,  
 All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams  
 Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd  
 Its wasted tones and harmony unheard;  
 Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,  
 Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,  
 Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand  
 Her undecided scales. In this she lays  
 A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride,  
 And smiles delighted with th' eternal poise.  
 Dire is the frequent curse and its twin sound  
 The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised  
 As ornamental, musical, polite,  
 Like those which modern senators employ,  
 Whose oath is rhet'ric, and who swear for fame.  
 Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,  
 Once simple, are initiated in arts  
 Which some may practise with politer grace,  
 But none with readier skill! 'tis here they learn  
 The road that leads from competence and peace  
 To indigence and rapine; till at last  
 Society, grown weary of the load,  
 Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.  
 But censure profits little. Vain th' attempt  
 To advertise in verse a public pest,  
 That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds  
 His hungry acres, stinks and is of use.  
 Th' excise is fatten'd with the rich result  
 Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,  
 For ever dribbling out their base contents,  
 Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,  
 Bleed gold for Ministers to sport away.  
 Drink and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!  
 Gloriously drunk, obey th' important call,  
 Her cause demands th' assistance of your throats;  
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon those happier days  
 That poets celebrate; those golden times  
 And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,  
 And Sidney,<sup>1</sup> warbler of poetic prose.  
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts  
 That felt their virtues. Innocence it seems,  
 From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves—  
 The footsteps of simplicity, impress'd  
 Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)  
 Then were not all effaced. Then speech profane  
 And manners profligate were rarely found,  
 Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.  
 Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams  
 Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,  
 Imparting substance to an empty shade,  
 Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.  
 Grant it: I still must envy them an age  
 That favour'd such a dream, in days like these  
 Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,  
 That to suppose a scene where she presides  
 Is tramontane,<sup>2</sup> and stumbles all belief.  
 No. We are polish'd now. The rural lass,  
 Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,  
 Her artless manners and her neat attire,  
 So dignified, that she was hardly less  
 Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,  
 Is seen no more. The character is lost.  
 Her head adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft  
 And ribbons streaming gay, superbly raised  
 And magnified beyond all human size,  
 Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand  
 For more than half the tresses it sustains;  
 Her elbows ruffled, and her tott'ring form  
 Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deem'd  
 (But that the basket dangling on her arm  
 Interprets her more truly) of a rank  
 Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs;  
 Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,  
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,  
 Her train and her umbrellas all her care.

The town has tinged the country; and the stain  
 Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Phillip Sidney, in the "Arcadia."

<sup>2</sup> *Tramontane* is properly applied to people living beyond the mountains  
 It has, therefore, a general signification of "foreign." We read in the *Tail*  
 (No. 222) of "tramontane lovers."

The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs  
 Down into scenes still rural, but alas!  
 Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.  
 Time was when in the pastoral retreat  
 Th' unguarded door was safe; men did not watch  
 T' invade another's right, or guard their own.  
 Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared  
 By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale  
 Of midnight murder was a wonder heard  
 With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.  
 But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,  
 And slumbers unalarm'd. Now, ere you sleep,  
 See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,  
 And drop the night-bolt. Ruffians are abroad,  
 And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat  
 May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear  
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.  
 Ev'n daylight has its dangers; and the walk  
 Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once  
 Of other tenants than melodious birds,  
 Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.  
 Lamented change! to which full many a cause  
 Invet'rate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.  
 The course of human things from good to ill,  
 From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.  
 Increase of pow'r begets increase of wealth;  
 Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;  
 Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague  
 That seizes first the opulent, descends  
 To the next rank contagious, and in time  
 Taints downward all the graduated scale  
 Of order, from the chariot to the plough.  
 The rich, and they that have an arm to check  
 The licence of the lowest in degree,  
 Desert their office; and themselves, intent  
 On pleasure, haunt the capital and thus,  
 To all the violence of lawless hands,  
 Resign the scenes their presence might protect.  
 Authority itself not seldom sleeps,  
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.  
 The plump convivial parson often bears  
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays  
 His reverence and his worship both to rest,  
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.  
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm,  
 When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,

Himself enslaved by terror of the band,  
 Th' audacious convict whom he dares not bind.  
 Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,  
 He, too, may have his vice, and sometimes prove  
 Less dainty than becomes his grave outside  
 In lucrative concerns. Examine well  
 His milk-white hand. The palm is hardly clean—  
 But here and there an ugly smutch appears.  
 Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it. He has touch'd  
 Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here  
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
 Wildfowl or ven'son, and his errand speeds.

But faster far and more than all the rest  
 A noble cause, which none who bears a spark  
 Of public virtue ever wish'd removed,  
 Works the deplored and mischievous effect.  
 'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd  
 The heart of merit in the meaner class.  
 Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage  
 Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,  
 Seem most at variance with all moral good,  
 And incompatible with serious thought.  
 The clown, the child of nature, without guile,  
 Blest with an infant's ignorance of all  
 But his own simple pleasures, now and then  
 A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair,  
 Is balloted, and trembles at the news.  
 Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears  
 A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,  
 To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,  
 That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,  
 His pupil, and his torment, and his jest;  
 His awkward gait, his introverted toes,  
 Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected locks,  
 Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,  
 Unapt to learn and form'd of stubborn stuff,  
 He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,  
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.  
 He stands erect, his slouch becomes a walk,  
 He steps right onward, martial in his air,  
 His form and movement; is as smart above  
 As meal and larded locks can make him; wears  
 His hat or his plumed helmet with a grace,  
 And, his three years of heroship expired,  
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough.

He hates the field in which no fife or drum  
 Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,  
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.  
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all—  
 But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost  
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
 To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home  
 By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,  
 The great proficiency he made abroad,  
 T' astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,  
 To break some maiden's and his mother's heart,  
 To be a pest where he was useful once,  
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory now!

Man in society is like a flow'r  
 Blown in its native bed. 'Tis there alone  
 His faculties expanded in full bloom  
 Shine out, there only reach their proper use.  
 But man associated and leagued with man  
 By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond  
 For interest sake, or swarming into clans  
 Beneath one head for purposes of war,  
 Like flow'rs selected from the rest, and bound  
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,  
 Fades rapidly, and by compression marr'd  
 Contracts defilement not to be endured.  
 Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues,  
 And burghers, men immaculate perhaps  
 In all their private functions, once combined,  
 Become a loathsome body, only fit  
 For dissolution, hurtful to the main.  
 Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin  
 Against the charities of domestic life,  
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose  
 Their nature, and, disclaiming all regard  
 For mercy and the common rights of man,  
 Build factories with blood, conducting trade  
 At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe  
 Of innocent commercial justice red.  
 Hence too the field of glory, as the world  
 Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,  
 With all the majesty of thund'ring pomp,  
 Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,  
 Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught  
 On principle, where foppery atones  
 For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice.



But slighted as it is, and by the great  
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,  
Infected with the manners and the modes  
It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan  
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd  
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice  
Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
My very dreams were rural, rural too  
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,  
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells  
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.  
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned  
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats  
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe  
Of Tityrus, assembling as he sang  
The rustic throng beneath his fav'rite beech.  
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:  
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd  
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue  
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.  
I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age  
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,  
And still admiring, with regret supposed  
The joy half lost because not sooner found.  
Thee, too, enamour'd of the life I loved,  
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit  
Determined, and possessing it at last  
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,  
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,  
Ingenious Cowley! and though now, reclaim'd  
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,  
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit  
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.  
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,  
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bow'rs,  
Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends  
For a lost world in solitude and verse.  
'Tis born with all. The love of Nature's works  
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,  
Infused at the creation of the kind.  
And though th' Almighty Maker has throughout  
Discriminated each from each, by strokes  
And touches of his hand, with so much art

Diversified, that two were never found  
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,  
 That all discern a beauty in his works,  
 And all can taste them: minds that have been form'd  
 And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,  
 But none without some relish, none unmoved.  
 It is a flame that dies not even there,  
 Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,  
 Nor habits of luxurious city life,  
 Whatever else they smother of true worth  
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.  
 The villas, with which London stands begirt  
 Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,  
 Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,  
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer  
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame!  
 Ev'n in the stifling bosom of the town,  
 A garden in which nothing thrives, has charms  
 That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled  
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,  
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint  
 That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green  
 Is still the livery she delights to wear,  
 Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.  
 What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,  
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range  
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,  
 The Frenchman's 'darling? are they not all proofs  
 That man, immured in cities, still retains  
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst  
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss  
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may?  
 The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,  
 And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds  
 To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,  
 Yet feel the burning instinct: over-head  
 Suspend their crazy boxes planted thick  
 And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands  
 A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;  
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets  
 The country, with what ardour he contrives  
 A peep at nature, when he can no more.

<sup>1</sup> Mignonette.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease  
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys  
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode  
Of multitudes unknown, hail rural life!  
Address himself who will to the pursuit  
Of honours, or emolument, or fame,  
I shall not add myself to such a chase,  
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.  
Some must be great. Great offices will have  
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,  
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall  
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.  
To the deliv'rer of an injured land  
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, a heart  
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;  
To monarchs dignity, to judges sense;  
To artists ingenuity and skill;  
To me an unambitious mind, content  
In the low vale of life, that early felt  
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long  
Found here that leisure and that esse I wish'd.

## BOOK V.

## THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

## ARGUMENT.

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

'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb  
 Ascending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds,  
 That crowd away before the driving wind,  
 More ardent as the disk emerges more,  
 Resemble most some city in a blaze,  
 Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray  
 Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,  
 And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,  
 From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade  
 Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field;  
 Mine, spindling into longitude immense,  
 In spite of gravity, and sage remark  
 That I myself am but a fleeting shade,  
 Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance  
 I view the muscular proportion'd limb  
 Transform'd to a lean shank; the shapeless pair,  
 As they design'd to mock me, at my side  
 Take step for step, and, as I near approach  
 The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,  
 Prepost'rous sight! the legs without the man,  
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
 Beneath the dazzling deluge, and the bents<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the clusters, at the first coming forth."—BACON, on "Gardens."

And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,  
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine  
Conspicuous, and, in bright apparel clad,  
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.  
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence  
Screens them, and seem, half petrified, to sleep  
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
Their wonted fodder, not, like hung'ring man,  
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,  
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.  
He from the stack carves out th' accustomed load,  
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft  
His broad keen knife into the solid mass :  
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,  
With such undeviating and even force  
He severs it away : no needless care,  
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile  
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.  
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd  
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe  
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,  
From morn to eve his solitary task.  
Shaggy and lean and shrewd, with pointed ears  
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,  
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel  
Now creeps he slow, and now with many a frisk,  
Wide-scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow  
With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ;  
Then shakes his powder'd coat and barks for joy.  
Heedless of all his pranks the sturdy churl  
Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught,  
But now and then, with pressure of his thumb,  
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,  
That fumes beneath his nose ; the trailing cloud  
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.  
Now from the roost, or from the neighb'ring pale,  
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam  
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,  
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call  
The feather'd tribes domestic ; half on wing,  
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,  
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.  
The sparrows peep, and quit the shelt'ring eaves  
To seize the fair occasion ; well they eye  
The scatter'd grain, and, thievishly resolved  
T' escape th' impending famine, often scared

As oft return, a pert, voracious kind.  
 Clean riddance quickly made, one only care  
 Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,  
 Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd  
 To sad necessity the cock foregoes  
 His wonted strut, and, wading at their head  
 With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent  
 His alter'd gait, and stateliness retrench'd.  
 How find the myriads, that in summer cheer  
 The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,  
 Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?  
 Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is  
     safe  
 Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs  
 Lie cover'd close, and berry-bearing thorns  
 That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose),  
 Afford the smaller minstrel no supply.  
 The long-protracted rigour of the year  
 Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes  
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,  
 As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.  
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,  
 Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now  
 Repays their labour more; and perch'd aloft  
 By the way-side, or stalking in the path,  
 Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,  
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,  
 Of voided pulse, or half-digested grain.  
 The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,  
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood  
 Indurated and fix'd the snowy weight  
 Lies undissolved, while silently beneath  
 And unperceived the current steals away:  
 Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps  
 The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,  
 And wantons in the pebbly gulf below.  
 No frost can bind it there. Its utmost force  
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist  
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.  
 And see where it has hung th' embroider'd banks  
 With forms so various, that no pow'rs of art,  
 The pencil, or the pen, may trace the scene!  
 Here glitt'ring turrets rise, upbearing high  
 (Fantastic misarrangement) on the roof  
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees,  
 And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops

That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,  
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,  
 And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.  
 Here grotto within grotto safe defies  
 The sunbeam. There imboss'd and fretted wild,  
 The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes  
 Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain  
 The likeness of some object seen before.  
 Thus nature works as if to mock at art,  
 And in defiance of her rival pow'rs;  
 By these fortuitous and random strokes  
 Performing such inimitable feats,  
 As she with all her rules can never reach.  
 Less worthy of applause though more admired,  
 Because a novelty, the work of man,  
 Imperial mistress<sup>1</sup> of the fur-clad Russ!  
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,  
 The wonder of the North. No forest fell  
 When thou wouldst build: no quarry sent its stores  
 T' enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods,  
 And make thy marble of the glassy wave.  
 In such a palace Aristæus<sup>2</sup> found  
 Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale  
 Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.  
 In such a palace poetry might place  
 The armoury of winter, where his troops,  
 The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,  
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,  
 And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,  
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.  
 Silently as a dream the fabric rose.  
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there.  
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts  
 Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd  
 Than water interfused to make them one.  
 Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,  
 Illumined ev'ry side. A wat'ry light  
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd  
 Another moon new-risen, or meteor fall'n  
 From heav'n to earth, of lambent flame serene.  
 So stood the brittle prodigy, though smooth  
 And slipp'ry the materials, yet frost-bound

<sup>1</sup> The ice-palace of Catherine, in her road to the Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Eurydice, pursued by Aristæus, was stung by a serpent, and died; the gods, in anger, destroyed all the bees of Aristæus; but by the assistance of his mother, he recovered his former prosperity.

Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within  
 That royal residence might well befit,  
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths  
 Of flow'rs, that fear'd no enemy but warmth  
 Blush'd on the panels. Mirror needed none  
 Where all was vitreous, but in order due  
 Convivial table and commodious seat  
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there,  
 Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.  
 The same lubricity was found in all,  
 And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene  
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,  
 And soon to slide into a stream again.  
 Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke  
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanced  
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,  
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.  
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show  
 'Twas durable; as worthless, as it seem'd  
 Intrinsically precious; to the foot  
 Treach'rous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have  
 play'd  
 At hewing mountains into men, and some  
 At building human wonders mountain high.  
 Some have amused the dull sad years of life  
 (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)  
 With schemes of monumental fame, and sought  
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,  
 Short-lived themselves, t' immortalize their bones.  
 Some seek diversion in the tented field,  
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.  
 But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,  
 Kings should not play at. Nations would do well  
 T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
 Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds  
 Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,  
 Because men suffer it, their toy the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great  
 Confed'racy of projectors wild and vain  
 Was split into diversity of tongues,  
 Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,  
 These to the upland, to the valley those,  
 God drave asunder and assign'd their lot



To all the nations. Ample was the boon  
He gave them, in its distribution fair  
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.  
Peace was awhile their care. They plough'd and sow'd,  
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.  
But violence can never longer sleep  
Than human passions please. In ev'ry heart  
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war,  
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.  
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:  
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquench'd  
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.  
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line  
Of his descending progeny was found  
The first artificer of death; the shrewd  
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,  
And forced the blunt and yet unblooded steel  
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.  
Him Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,  
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,  
And the first smith was the first murd'rer's son.  
His art survived the waters; and ere long,  
When man was multiplied and spread abroad  
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call  
These meadows and that range of hills his own,  
The tasted sweets of property begat  
Desire of more; and industry in some  
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,  
Made others covet what they saw so fair.  
Thus wars began on earth. These fought for spoil,  
And those in self-defence. Savage at first  
The onset, and irregular. At length  
One eminent above the rest, for strength,  
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,  
Was chosen leader. Him they served in war,  
And him in peace for sake of warlike deeds  
Rev'renced no less. Who could with him compare?  
Or who so worthy to control themselves  
As he, whose prowess had subdued their foes?  
Thus war, affording field for the display  
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,  
Which have their exigencies too, and call  
For skill in government, at length made king.  
King was a name too proud for man to wear  
With modesty and meekness, and the crown,  
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,

Was sure t' intoxicate the brows it bound,  
It is the abject property of most,  
That being parcel of the common mass,  
And destitute of means to raise themselves,  
They sink and settle lower than they need.  
They know not what it is to feel within  
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps  
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields  
Almost without an effort, plans too vast  
For their conception, which they cannot move.  
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk  
With gazing, when they see an able man  
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus  
Build him a pedestal and say—Stand there,  
And be our admiration and our praise.  
They roll themselves before him in the dust,  
Then most deserving in their own account  
When most extravagant in his applause,  
As if exalting him they raised themselves.  
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound  
And sober judgment that he is but man,  
They demi-deify and fume him so  
That in due season he forgets it too.  
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit  
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,  
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks  
The world was made in vain if not for him.  
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born  
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,  
And sweating in his service. His caprice  
Becomes the soul that animates them all.  
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,  
Spent in the purchase of renown for him  
An easy reck'ning, and they think the same.  
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings  
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became  
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;  
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and die.  
Strange that such folly, as lifts bloated man  
To eminence fit only for a God,  
Should ever drivel out of human lips,  
Ev'n in the cradled weakness of the world!  
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind  
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,  
And could discriminate and argue well  
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet

Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear  
 And quake before the gods themselves had made.  
 But above measure strange, that neither proof  
 Of sad experience, nor examples set  
 By some whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,  
 Can even now, when they are grown mature  
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps  
 Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest!  
 Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone  
 To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead  
 A course of long observance for its use,  
 That even servitude, the worst of ills,  
 Because deliver'd down from sire to son,  
 Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.  
 But is it fit, or can it bear the shock  
 Of rational discussion, that a man,  
 Compounded and made up like other men  
 Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust  
 And folly in as ample measure meet,  
 As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,  
 Should be a despot absolute, and boast  
 Himself the only freeman of his land?  
 Should when he pleases, and on whom he will,  
 Wage war, with any or with no pretence  
 Of provocation giv'n, or wrong sustain'd,  
 And force the beggarly last doit, by means  
 That his own humour dictates, from the clutch  
 Of poverty, that thus he may procure  
 His thousands, weary of penurious life,  
 A splendid opportunity to die?  
 Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
 Jotham<sup>1</sup> ascribed to his assembled trees  
 In politic convention) put your trust  
 I' th' shadow of a bramble, and reclined  
 In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch,  
 Rejoice in him and celebrate his sway,  
 Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs  
 Your self-denying zeal that holds it good  
 To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang  
 His thorns with streamers of continual praise?  
 We too are friends to loyalty; we love  
 The king who loves the law; respects his bounds,  
 And reigns content within them; him we serve  
 Freely and with delight, who leaves us free;  
 But recollecting still that he is man,

<sup>1</sup> Judges ix. 7, 8.

We trust him not too far. King though he be,  
 And king in England, too, he may be weak  
 And vain enough to be ambitious still,  
 May exercise amiss his proper pow'rs,  
 Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:  
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,  
 T' administer, to guard, t' adorn the state,  
 But not to warp, or change it. We are his,  
 To serve him nobly in the common cause  
 True to the death, but not to be his slaves.  
 Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love  
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.  
 We love the man. The paltry pageant you.  
 We the chief patron of the commonwealth;  
 You the regardless author of its woes;  
 We, for the sake of liberty, a king;  
 You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.  
 Our love is principle, and has its root  
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free;  
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,  
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.  
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,  
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,  
 I would not be a king to be beloved  
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,  
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,  
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by suff'rance, and at will  
 Of a superior, he is never free.  
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life  
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.  
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd  
 And forced t' abandon what she bravely sought,  
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,  
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause  
 Not often unsuccessful; pow'r usurp'd  
 Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong  
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.  
 But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought  
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess  
 All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,  
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts,  
 The surest presage of the good they seek.<sup>1</sup>

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

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
 To France than all her losses and defeats,  
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
 Her house of bondage worse than that of old  
 Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille!  
 Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts,  
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,  
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age  
 With music such as suits their sov'reign ears,  
 The sighs and groans of miserable men!  
 There's not an English heart that would no' leap  
 To hear that ye were fall'n at last, to know  
 'That ev'n our enemies, so oft employ'd  
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
 For he that values liberty, confines  
 His zeal for her predominance within  
 No narrow bounds; her cause engages him  
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.  
 There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,  
 Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,  
 Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.  
 There, like the visionary emblem seen<sup>1</sup>  
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,  
 And filleted about with hoops of brass,  
 Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone,  
 To count the hour-bell and expect no change;  
 And ever as the sullen sound is heard,  
 Still to reflect that, though a joyless note  
 To him whose moments all have one dull pace,  
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large  
 Account it music; that it summons some  
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball;  
 The wearied hireling finds it a release  
 From labour, and the lover, that has chid  
 Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke  
 Upon his heart-strings trembling with delight—  
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought  
 To such amusements, as ingenious woe  
 Contrives, hard-shifting and without her tools—  
 To read engraven on the mouldy walls,  
 In stagg'ring types, his predecessor's tale,  
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—  
 To turn purveyor to an overgorged  
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest

<sup>1</sup> The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.—Daniel a. 31 -35.

Is made familiar, watches his approach,  
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—  
 To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro  
 The studs that thick emboss his iron door,  
 Then downward and then upward, then afloat  
 And then alternate, with a sickly hope  
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task  
 Some relish, till the sum, exactly found  
 In all directions, he begins again—  
 Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around  
 With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel  
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?  
 That man should thus encroach on fellow man,  
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,  
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold  
 Upon th' endearments of domestic life  
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,  
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word  
 To barrenness and solitude and tears,  
 Moves indignation; makes the name of king  
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please)  
 As dreadful as the Manichean god,  
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r  
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,  
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,  
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
 Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes  
 Their progress in the road of science; blinds  
 The eyesight of discov'ry, and begets,  
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind  
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.  
 Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,  
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed  
 By public exigence, till annual food  
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,  
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief  
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free:  
 My native nook of earth! thy clime is rude,  
 Replete with vapours, and disposes much  
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;  
 Thine unadult'rate manners are less soft  
 And plausible than social life requires,  
 And thou hast need of discipline and art

To give thee what politer France receives  
From Nature's bounty—that humane address  
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is  
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;  
Yet, being free, I love thee. For the sake  
Of that one feature, can be well content,  
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,  
To seek no sublunary rest beside.  
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure  
Chains nowhere patiently; and chains at home,  
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.  
Then what were left of roughness in the grain  
Of British natures, wanting its excuse  
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust  
And shock me. I should then with double pain  
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;  
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost  
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,  
I would at least bewail it under skies  
Milder, among a people less austere,  
In scenes which, having never known me free,  
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.  
Do I forbode impossible events,  
And tremble at vain dreams? Heav'n grant I may  
But th' age of virtuous politics is past,  
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.  
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,  
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes,  
Deep in his soft credulity, the stamp  
Design'd by loud declaimers on the part  
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,  
Incurs derision for his easy faith  
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough.  
For when was public virtue to be found,  
Where private was not? Can he love the whole  
Who loves no part? he be a nation's friend  
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?  
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,  
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake  
That country, if at all, must be beloved?  
—'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad  
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale  
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts  
So loose to private duty, that no brain,  
Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,

Can dream them trusty to the gen'ral weal.  
 Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades  
 Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd control,  
 And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons  
 Were sons indeed. They felt a filial heart  
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,  
 And shining each in his domestic sphere,  
 Shone brighter still once call'd to public view.  
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot  
 Forbids their interference, looking on,  
 Anticipate perforce some dire event;  
 And seeing the old castle of the state,  
 That promised once more firmness, so assail'd  
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,  
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.  
 All has its date below. The fatal hour  
 Was register'd in heav'n ere time began.  
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
 Die too. The deep foundations that we lay,  
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.  
 We build with what we deem eternal rock;  
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood;  
 And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,  
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

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



But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,  
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,  
 Might well suppose th' artificer divine  
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself  
 Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,  
 And still designing a more glorious far,  
 Doom'd it, as insufficient for his praise.  
 These, therefore, are occasional, and pass;  
 Form'd for the confutation of the fool  
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God;  
 That office served, they must be swept away.  
 Not so the labours of his love; they shine  
 In other heav'ns than these that we behold,  
 And fade not. There is paradise that fears  
 No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends  
 Large prelibation oft to saints below.  
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge  
 And confident assurance of the rest,  
 Is liberty; a flight into his arms  
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,  
 A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,  
 And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,  
 Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves  
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,  
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.  
 Propense<sup>1</sup> his heart to idols, he is held  
 In silly dotage on created things,  
 Careless of their Creator. And that low  
 And sordid gravitation of his pow'rs  
 To a vile clod, so draws him with such force  
 Resistless from the centre he should seek,  
 That he at last forgets it. All his hopes  
 Tend downward, his ambition is to sink,  
 To reach a depth profounder still, and still  
 Profounder, in the fathomless abyss  
 Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.  
 But ere he gain the comfortless repose  
 He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul,  
 In heav'n-renouncing exile, he endures—  
 What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain  
 And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees  
 The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,  
 Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all

<sup>1</sup> Inclined. The word is used by Hooker.

That can ennoble man, and make frail life,  
 Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,  
 Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins  
 Infect his happiest moments, he forbodes  
 Ages of hopeless misery; future death,  
 And death still future; not a hasty stroke,  
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,  
 But unrepealable enduring death!  
 Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:  
 What none can prove a forg'ry, may be true;  
 What none but bad men wish exploded, must.  
 That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud  
 Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst  
 Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,  
 And he abhors the jest by which he shines.  
 Remorse begets reform. His master-lust  
 Falls first before his resolute rebuke,  
 And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,  
 But spurious and short-lived, the puny child  
 Of self-congratulating Pride, begot  
 On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,  
 And fights again; but finds his best essay  
 A presage ominous, portending still  
 Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.  
 Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd  
 So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,  
 Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now  
 Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause,  
 Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;  
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn  
 And tatter'd in the service of debauch,  
 Cov'ring his shame from his offended sight.

“Hath God indeed given appetites to man,  
 And stored the earth so plenteously with means  
 To gratify the hunger of his wish,  
 And doth he reprobate and will he damn  
 The use of his own bounty? making first  
 So frail a kind, and then enacting laws  
 So strict, that less than perfect must despair?  
 Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth,  
 Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.  
 Do they themselves, who undertake for hire  
 The teacher's office, and dispense at large  
 Their weekly dole of edifying strains,  
 Attend to their own music? have they faith

In what, with such solemnity of tone  
 And gesture, they propound to our belief?  
 Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice  
 Is but an instrument on which the priest  
 May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,  
 The unequivocal authentic deed,  
 We find sound argument, we read the heart."

Such reas'nings (if that name must needs belong  
 T'excuses in which reason has no part)  
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclined  
 To live on terms of amity with vice,  
 And sin without disturbance. Often urged  
 (As often as, libidinous discourse  
 Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes  
 Of theological and grave import)  
 They gain at last his unreserved assent.  
 Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge  
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,  
 He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,  
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;  
 Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease,  
 'Tis desp'rate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.  
 Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.  
 Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear  
 Of rectitude and fitness: moral truth  
 How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,  
 Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps  
 Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.  
 Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the pow'rs  
 Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise,  
 Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,  
 And with poetic trappings grace thy prose  
 Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—  
 Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass  
 Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm  
 Th' eclipse that intercepts truth's heav'nly beam,  
 And chills and darkens a wide-wand'ring soul.  
 The still small voice is wanted. He must speak,  
 Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,  
 Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change  
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech  
 And stately tone of moralists, who boast,  
 As if, like him of fabulous renown,

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

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause  
 Bled nobly, and their deeds, as they deserve,  
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge  
 Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historic muse,  
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
 To latest times; and sculpture, in her turn,  
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass,  
 To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust.  
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
 To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,  
 Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood  
 Well spent in such a strife may earn indeed,  
 And for a time ensure to his loved land  
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws;  
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed  
 In confirmation of the noblest claim,  
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies!  
 Yet few remember them. They lived unknown  
 Till persecution dragg'd them into fame  
 And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew  
 —No marble tells us whither. With their names  
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song,  
 And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed  
 The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,  
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.<sup>1</sup>

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,

<sup>1</sup> See Hume.—C.

And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain  
That hellish foes confed'rate for his harm  
Can wind around him, but he casts it off  
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.  
He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of Nature, and, though poor perhaps compared  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers. His t' enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel,  
But who, with filial confidence inspired,  
Can lift to heav'n an unpresumptuous eye,  
And smiling say—My Father made them all!  
Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,  
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,  
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind  
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love  
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world  
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?  
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap  
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good  
In senseless riot; but ye will not find  
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance  
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd  
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,  
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,  
And has a richer use of yours, than you.  
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth  
Of no mean city, plann'd or ere the hills  
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea  
With all his roaring multitude of waves.  
His freedom is the same in ev'ry state;  
And no condition of this changeful life  
So manifold in cares, whose ev'ry day  
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less.  
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,  
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.  
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there  
With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds  
His body bound, but knows not what a range  
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;  
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,  
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint' thyself with God if thou wouldst taste  
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace,  
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;  
 Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,  
 Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight  
 Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.  
 Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone,  
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb  
 It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,  
 Ruminates, heedless of the scene outspread  
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
 From inland regions to the distant main.  
 Man views it and admires, but rests content  
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,  
 But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd  
 The paradise he sees, he finds it such,  
 And such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.  
 Not so the mind that has been touch'd from heav'n,  
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught  
 To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,  
 Fair as it is, existed ere it was.  
 Not for its own sake merely, but for His  
 Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;  
 Praise that from earth resulting as it ought  
 To earth's acknowledged sov'reign, finds at once  
 Its only just proprietor in Him.  
 The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed  
 New faculties, or learns at least t'employ  
 More worthily the pow'rs she own'd before;  
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
 Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,  
 A ray of heav'nly light gilding all forms  
 Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,  
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God  
 Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.  
 Much conversant with heav'n, she often holds  
 With those fair ministers of light to man,  
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
 Sweet conference; inquires what strains were they  
 With which heav'n rang, when ev'ry star, in haste  
 To gratulate the new-created earth,  
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
 Shouted for joy.—“Tell me, ye shining hosts  
 That navigate a sea that knows no storms,

<sup>1</sup> Job xxii. 21.

Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,  
 If from your elevation, whence ye view  
 Distinctly scenes invisible to man,  
 And systems of whose birth no tidings yet  
 Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race  
 Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb,  
 And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,  
 And to possess a brighter heav'n than yours?  
 As one who, long detain'd on foreign shores,  
 Pants to return, and when he sees afar  
 His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks  
 From the green wave emerging, darts an eye  
 Radiant with joy towards the happy land;  
 So I with animated hopes behold,  
 And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,  
 That show like beacons in the blue abyss,  
 Ordain'd to guide th' embodied spirit home  
 From toilsome life, to never-ending rest.  
 Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires  
 That give assurance of their own success,  
 And that infused from heav'n must thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth  
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!  
 Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost  
 With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,  
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,  
 With means that were not till by thee employ'd,  
 Worlds that had never been, hadst thou in strength  
 Been less, or less benevolent than strong.  
 They are thy witnesses, who speak thy pow'r  
 And goodness infinite, but speak in ears  
 That hear not, or receive not their report.  
 In vain thy creatures testify of thee  
 Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed  
 A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine  
 That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,  
 And with the boon gives talents for its use.  
 Till thou art heard, imaginations vain  
 Possess the heart, and fables, false as hell,  
 Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death  
 The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.  
 We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,  
 The glory of thy work, which yet appears  
 Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,  
 Challenging human scrutiny, and proved

Then skilful most when most severely judged.  
But chance is not ; or is not where thou reign'st :  
Thy providence forbids that fickle pow'r  
(If pow'r she be that works but to confound)  
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.  
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can,  
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves  
Gods such as guilt makes welcome, gods that sleep,  
Or disregard our follies, or that sit  
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.  
Thee we reject, unable to abide  
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,  
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause  
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.  
Then we are free : then liberty, like day,  
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heav'n  
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.  
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not  
Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,  
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,  
Which he that hears it, with a shout repeats,  
And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praise.  
In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide  
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile  
The Author of her beauties, who, retired  
Behind his own creation, works unseen  
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied.  
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,  
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !  
From thee departing, they are lost and rove  
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.  
From thee is all that soothes the life of man,  
His high endeavour, and his glad success,  
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
But oh thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.



## BOOK VI.

## THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

## ARGUMENT.

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

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
 And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleas'd  
 With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave;  
 Some chord in unison with what we hear  
 Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.  
 How soft the music of those village bells  
 Falling at intervals upon the ear  
 In cadence sweet! now dying all away,  
 Now pealing loud again and louder still,  
 Clear and sonorous as the gale comes on.  
 With easy force it opens all the cells  
 Where mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard  
 A kindred melody, the scene recurs,  
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.  
 Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,  
 That in a few short moments I retrace  
 (As in a map the voyager his course)  
 The windings of my way through many years.  
 Short as in retrospect the journey seems,  
 It seem'd not always short; the rugged path,  
 And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn

Moved many a sigh at its disheart'ning length.  
 Yet feeling present evils, while the past  
 Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,  
 How readily we wish time spent revoked,  
 That we might try the ground again, where once  
 (Through inexperience as we now perceive)  
 We miss'd that happiness we might have found.  
 Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend  
 A father, whose authority, in show  
 When most severe, and must'ring all its force,  
 Was but the graver countenance of love ;  
 Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might low'r,  
 And utter now and then an awful voice,  
 But had a blessing in its darkest frown,  
 Threat'ning at once and nourishing the plant.  
 We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand  
 That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age allured  
 By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounced  
 His shelt'ring side, and wilfully forewent  
 That converse which we now in vain regret.  
 How gladly would the man recall to life  
 The boy's neglected sire ! a mother too,  
 That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,  
 Might he demand them at the gates of death.  
 Sorrow has since they went subdued and tamed  
 The playful humour ; he could now endure  
 (Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)  
 And feel a parent's presence no restraint.  
 But not to understand a treasure's worth  
 Till time has stol'n away the slighted good,  
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
 And makes the world the wilderness it is.  
 The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,  
 And, seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,  
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood,  
 The morning sharp and clear ; but now at noon  
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast,  
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.  
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,  
 And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r

Whence all the music. I again perceive  
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
 And settle in soft musings, as I tread  
 The walk still verdant under oaks and elms,  
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
 The roof, though moveable through all its length,  
 As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,  
 And, intercepting in their silent fall  
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.  
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought  
 The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
 With slender notes and more than half suppress'd.  
 Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light  
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes  
 From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,  
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.  
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here  
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
 May give an useful lesson to the head,  
 And learning wiser grow without his books.  
 Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
 Have oftimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;  
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
 The mere materials with which wisdom builds,  
 Till smooth'd and squared and fitted to its place,  
 Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.  
 Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much.  
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.  
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells  
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits  
 Holds an unthinking multitude inthrall'd.  
 Some to the fascination of a name  
 Surrender judgment hoodwink'd. Some the style  
 Infatuates, and, through labyrinths and wilds  
 Of error, leads them by a tune entranced.  
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear  
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,  
 And swallowing therefore without pause or choice  
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.  
 But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course  
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,  
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,

And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time  
 Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,  
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,  
 Not shy as in the world, and to be won  
 By slow solicitation, seize at once  
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can pow'r divine perform  
 More grand, than it produces year by year,  
 And all in sight of inattentive man?  
 Familiar with th' effect we slight the cause,  
 And in the constancy of nature's course,  
 The regular return of genial months,  
 And renovation of a faded world,  
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again,  
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
 Of the undeviating and punctual sun,  
 How would the world admire! but speaks it less  
 An agency divine, to make him know  
 His moment when to sink and when to rise  
 Age after age, than to arrest his course  
 All we behold is miracle; but, seen  
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.  
 Where now the vital energy that moved,  
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph  
 Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins  
 Of leaf and flow'r? It sleeps; and th' icy touch  
 Of unprolific winter has impress'd  
 A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.  
 But let the months go round, a few short months,  
 And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,  
 Barren as lances, among which the wind  
 Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,  
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,  
 And more aspiring and with ampler spread  
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.  
 Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,  
 Shall publish even to the distant eye  
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich  
 In streaming gold; syringa iv'ry pure;  
 The scented and the scentless rose; this red  
 And of a humbler growth, the other<sup>1</sup> tall,  
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
 Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,

<sup>1</sup> The Guelder-rose.—C.

Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf  
 That the wind severs from the broken wave;  
 The lilac various in array, now white,  
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set  
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if  
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolved  
 Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;  
 Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,  
 But well compensating their sickly looks  
 With never-cloying odours, early and late;  
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm  
 Of flow'rs like flies, clothing her slender rods,  
 That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon too,  
 Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset  
 With blushing wreaths investing ev'ry spray;  
 Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,  
 Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd  
 Her blossoms, and luxuriant above all  
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf  
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more  
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—  
 These have been, and these shall be in their day,  
 And all this uniform uncolour'd scene  
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,  
 And flush into variety again.  
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
 Is Nature's progress when she lectures man  
 In heav'nly truth; evincing, as she makes  
 The grand transition, that there lives and works  
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.  
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,  
 That make so gay the solitary place  
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms  
 That cultivation glories in, are his.  
 He sets the bright procession on its way,  
 And marshals all the order of the year.  
 He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,  
 And blunts his pointed fury. In its case,  
 Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ  
 Uninjured, with inimitable art,  
 And, ere one flow'ry season fades and dies,  
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,

When all creation started into birth,  
 The infant elements received a law  
 From which they swerve not since; that under force  
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
 And need not his immediate hand, who first  
 Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.  
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God  
 Th' incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
 The great Artificer of all that moves  
 The stress of a continual act, the pain  
 Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
 As too laborious and severe a task.  
 So man the moth is not afraid, it seems,  
 To span Omnipotence, and measure might  
 That know\* no measure, by the scanty rule  
 And standard of his own, that is to-day,  
 And is not, ere to-morrow's sun go down.  
 But how should matter occupy a charge  
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law  
 So vast in its demands, unless impell'd  
 To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,  
 And under pressure of some conscious cause?  
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,  
 Sustains and is the life of all that lives.  
 Nature is but a name for an effect  
 Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire  
 By which the mighty process is maintain'd,  
 Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight  
 Slow-circling ages are as transient days;  
 Whose work is without labour, whose designs  
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,  
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.  
 Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,  
 With self-taught rites and under various names  
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,  
 And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth  
 With tutelary goddesses and gods  
 That were not, and commending as they would  
 To each some province, garden, field, or grove.  
 But all are under one. One spirit—His  
 Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,  
 Rules universal nature. Not a flow'r  
 But shows some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,  
 Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires  
 Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,

And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
 In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
 Happy who walks with him! whom, what he finds  
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flow'r,  
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak  
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.  
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,  
 Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene  
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.  
 Though winter had been none, had man been true,  
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,  
 Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky  
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream,  
 Recov'ring fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tuned  
 To contemplation, and within his reach  
 A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,  
 Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,  
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
 Marching and counter-marching, with an eye  
 As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridged  
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand  
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung  
 In balance on his conduct of a pin?  
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,  
 Who pant with application misapplied  
 To trivial toys, and, pushing iv'ry balls  
 Across the velvet level, feel a joy  
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds  
 It's destined goal of difficult access.  
 Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon  
 To Miss, the Mercer's plague, from shop to shop  
 Wand'ring, and litt'ring with unfolded silks  
 The polish'd counter, and approving none,  
 Or promising with smiles to call again.  
 Nor him, who, by his vanity seduced,  
 And sooth'd into a dream that he discerns  
 The difference of a Guido from a daub,  
 Frequents the crowded auction. Station'd there  
 As duly as the Langford of the show,

With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,  
 And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant  
 And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease,  
 Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls  
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,  
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate  
 That he has let it pass—but never bids.

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

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



That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,  
 Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels  
 Starts to the voluntary race again;  
 The very kine that gambol at high noon,  
 The total herd receiving first from one,  
 That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,  
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth  
 Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent  
 To give such act and utt'rance as they may  
 To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd—  
 These, and a thousand images of bliss,  
 With which kind nature graces ev'ry scene  
 Where cruel man defeats not her design,  
 Impart to the benevolent, who wish  
 All that are capable of pleasure pleased,  
 A far superior happiness to theirs,  
 The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call  
 Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,  
 When he was crown'd as never king was since.  
 God set the diadem upon his head,  
 And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring stood  
 The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,  
 All happy and all perfect in their kind,  
 The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts  
 To see their sov'reign, and confess his sway.  
 Vast was his empire, absolute his pow'r,  
 Or bounded only by a law whose force  
 'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel  
 And own, the law of universal love.  
 He ruled with meekness, they obey'd with joy.  
 No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,  
 And no distrust of his intent in theirs.  
 So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,  
 Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole  
 Begat a tranquil confidence in all,  
 And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.  
 But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,  
 That source of evils not exhausted yet,  
 Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.  
 Garden of God, how terrible the change  
 Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! ev'ry heart,  
 Each animal of ev'ry name, conceived  
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,  
 And, conscious of some danger, either fled

Precipitate the loathed abode of man,  
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,  
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.  
Thus harmony and family accord  
Were driv'n from Paradise; and in that hour  
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd  
To such gigantic and enormous growth,  
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
Hence date the persecution and the pain  
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,  
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,  
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,  
Or his base gluttony, are causes good  
And just, in his account, why bird and beast  
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed  
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.  
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war  
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,  
Not satisfied to prey on all around,  
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs  
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.  
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes  
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,  
Whom once as delegate of God on earth  
They fear'd, and as his perfect image loved.  
The wilderness is theirs with all its caves,  
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains  
Unvisited by man. There they are free,  
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd,  
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.  
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude  
Within the confines of their wild domain;  
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—  
And if he spares him, spares him on the terms  
Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn  
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.  
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live  
Dependent upon man, those in his fields,  
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.  
They prove too often at how dear a rate  
He sells protection. Witness, at his foot  
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,  
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;  
Witness, the patient ox, with stripes and yells  
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs

To madness, while the savage at his heels  
 Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury spent  
 Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.  
 He too is witness, noblest of the train  
 That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:  
 With unsuspecting readiness he takes  
 His murderer on his back, and, push'd all day,  
 With bleeding sides, and flanks that heave for life,  
 To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies.  
 So little mercy shows who needs so much!  
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.  
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
 (As if barbarity were high desert)  
 Th' inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praise  
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
 The honours of his matchless horse his own.  
 But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,  
 Is register'd in heav'n, and these, no doubt,  
 Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.  
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
 But God will never. When he charged the Jew  
 To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise,  
 And when the bush-exploring boy that seized  
 The young, to let the parent bird go free,<sup>1</sup>  
 Proved he not plainly that his meaner works  
 Are yet his care, and have an interest all,  
 All, in the universal Father's love.  
 On Noah,<sup>2</sup> and in him on all mankind,  
 The charter was conferr'd by which we hold  
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim,  
 O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.  
 But read the instrument, and mark it well;  
 Th' oppression of a tyrannous control  
 Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield  
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute.

The Governor of all, himself to all  
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear  
 The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp  
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs  
 Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,  
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite  
 Th' injurious trampler upon nature's law,

Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis ix. 2, 3.

That claims forbearance even for a brute.  
 He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;  
 And, prophet as he was, he might not strike  
 The blameless animal, without rebuke,  
 On which he rode. Her opportune offence<sup>1</sup>  
 Saved him, or th' unrelenting seer had died.  
 He sees that human equity is slack  
 To interfere, though in so just a cause,  
 And makes the task his own; inspiring dumb  
 And helpless victims with a sense so keen  
 Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,  
 And such sagacity to take revenge,  
 That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.  
 An ancient, not a legendary tale,  
 By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,  
 (If such, who plead for Providence, may seem  
 In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,  
 Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,  
 Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he  
 Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,  
 Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.  
 He journey'd, and his chance was, as he went,  
 To join a traveller of far different note,—  
 Evander, famed for piety, for years  
 Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.  
 Fame had not left the venerable man  
 A stranger to the manners of the youth,  
 Whose face, too, was familiar to his view  
 Their way was on the margin of the land,  
 O'er the green summit of the rocks whose base  
 Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.  
 The charity that warm'd his heart was moved  
 At sight of the man-monster. With a smile  
 Gentle and affable, and full of grace,  
 As fearful of offending whom he wish'd  
 Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths  
 Not harshly thunder'd forth or rudely press'd.  
 But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.  
 And dost thou dream, th' impenetrable man  
 Exclaim'd, that me the lullabies of age,  
 And fantasies of dotards such as thou,  
 Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?  
 Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xxii. 27.

Need no such aids as superstition lends  
To steel their hearts against the dread of death.  
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand  
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,  
And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought  
Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.  
But though the felon on his back could dare  
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed  
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,  
Or ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,  
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.  
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd  
By med'cine well applied, but without grace  
The heart's insanity admits no cure.  
Enraged the more by what might have reform'd  
His horrible intent, again he sought  
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,  
With sounding whip and rowels dyed in blood.  
But still in vain. The Providence that meant  
A longer date to the far nobler beast,  
Spared yet again th' ignobler for his sake.  
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere,  
Incurable obduracy evinced,  
His rage grew cool; and, pleased perhaps t' have earn'd  
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,  
With looks of some complacence he resumed  
His road, deriding much the blank amaze  
Of good Evander, still where he was left  
Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.  
So on they fared; discourse on other themes  
Ensuing, seem'd t' obliterate the past,  
And tamer far for so much fury shown,  
(As is the course of rash and fiery men.)  
The rude companion smiled as if transform'd.  
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,  
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.  
The impious challenger of pow'r divine  
Was now to learn that Heav'n, though slow to wrath,  
Is never with impunity defied.  
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,  
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,  
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,  
Rush'd to the cliff, and having reach'd it, stood.  
At once the shock unseated him; he flew  
Sheer c'er the craggy barrier, and, immersed  
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,

The death he had deserved, and died alone.  
 So God wrought double justice; made the fool  
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,  
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends  
 (Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense  
 Yet wanting sensibility) the man  
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
 An inadvertent step may crush the snail  
 That crawls at evening in the public path;  
 But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,  
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.  
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
 And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes  
 A visitor unwelcome into scenes  
 Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,  
 The chamber, or refectory, may die.<sup>1</sup>  
 A necessary act incurs no blame.  
 Not so when, held within their proper bounds  
 And guiltless of offence, they range the air,  
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field.  
 There they are privileged; and he that hunts  
 Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,  
 Disturbs th' economy of nature's realm,  
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.  
 The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,  
 Or safety interfere, his rights and claims  
 Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.  
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are,  
 As free to live and to enjoy that life,  
 As God was free to form them at the first,  
 Who in his sov'reign wisdom made them all.  
 Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons  
 To love it too. The spring-time of our years  
 Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most  
 By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand  
 To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,  
 If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,  
 Than cruelty, most dev'lish of them all.  
 Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule  
 And righteous limitation of its act,  
 By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man;

<sup>1</sup> We have Cowper's account, in prose and verse, of his own summary sentence and execution upon a viper, which had found its way into the house.

And he that shows none, being ripe in years,  
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
 Shall seek it, and not find it in his turn.

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more  
 By our capacity of grace divine,  
 From creatures that exist but for our sake,  
 Which having served us, perish, we are held  
 Accountable, and God, some future day,  
 Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuse  
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.  
 Superior as we are, they yet depend  
 Not more on human help, than we on theirs.  
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv'n  
 In aid of our defects. In some are found  
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,  
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,  
 Match'd with th' expertness of the brutes in theirs,  
 Are oftentimes vanquish'd and thrown far behind.  
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,  
 And read with such discernment, in the port  
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,  
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill  
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn.  
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop  
 To quadruped instructors, many a good  
 And useful quality, and virtue too,  
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves;  
 Attachment never to be wean'd, or changed  
 By any change of fortune, proof alike  
 Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;  
 Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat  
 Can move or warp; and gratitude for small  
 And trivial favours, lasting as the life,  
 And glist'ning even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms  
 Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit  
 Patiently present at a sacred song,  
 Commemoration-mad; content to hear  
 (Oh wonderful effect of music's pow'r!)  
 Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.<sup>1</sup>  
 But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—  
 (For was it less? What heathen would have dared  
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath

<sup>1</sup> In 1784-5 Mr. Newton preached a course of sermons upon this subject and published them in 1786.

And hang it up in honour of a man ?)  
Much less might serve, when all that we design  
Is but to gratify an itching ear,  
And give the day to a musician's praise.  
Remember Handel! who, that was not born  
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,  
Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?  
Yes—we remember him ; and, while we praise  
A talent so divine, remember too  
That His most holy Book from whom it came  
Was never meant, was never used before  
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.  
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe,  
And with a gravity beyond the size  
And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed  
Less impious than absurd, and owing more  
To want of judgment than to wrong design.  
So in the chapel of old Ely House,  
When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,  
Had fled from Wilham, and the news was fresh,  
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,  
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,  
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.  
—Man praises man ; and Garrick's mem'ry next,  
When time has somewhat mellow'd it, and made  
The idol of our worship while he lived  
The god of our idolatry once more,  
Shall have its altar ; and the world shall go  
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.  
The theatre too small, shall suffocate  
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits  
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return  
Ungratified. For there some noble lord  
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,  
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,  
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and star  
To show the world how Garrick did not act.  
For Garrick was a worshipper himself ;  
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites  
And solemn ceremonial of the day,  
And call'd the world to worship on the banks  
Of Avon famed in song. Ah! pleasant proof  
That piety has still in human hearts  
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.  
The mulb'ry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths.  
The mulb'ry-tree stood centre of the dance,



The mulb'ry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs,  
 And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'ry-tree  
 Supplied such relics, as devotion holds  
 Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.  
 So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,  
 And mirth without offence. No few return'd  
 Doubtless much edified, and all refresh'd.  
 —Man praises man. The rabble all alive,  
 From tippling-benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,  
 Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,  
 A pompous and slow-moving pageant comes;  
 Some shout him, and some hang upon his car  
 To gaze in his eyes and bless him. Maidens wave  
 Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;  
 While others not so satisfied unhorse  
 The gilded equipage, and, turning loose  
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.  
 Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?  
 No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.  
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,  
 That finds out every crevice of the head  
 That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs  
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,  
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon.  
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,  
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use  
 And just direction sacred, to a thing  
 Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.  
 Encomium in old time was poets' work;  
 But, poets having lavishly long since  
 Exhausted all materials of the art,  
 The task now falls into the public hand;  
 And I, contented with a humble theme,  
 Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down  
 The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds  
 Among her lovely works, with a secure  
 And unambitious course, reflecting clear  
 If not the virtues yet the worth of brutes.  
 And I am recompensed, and deem the toils  
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine  
 May stand between an animal and woe,  
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.  
 The groans of nature in this nether world,  
 Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.  
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,

The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes,  
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh  
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course  
 Over a sinful world; and what remains  
 Of this tempestuous state of human things,  
 Is merely as the working of a sea  
 Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.  
 For He, whose ear the winds are, and the clouds  
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,  
 When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,  
 Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend  
 Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,  
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced  
 For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet  
 Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;  
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung  
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.  
 But when a poet, or when one like me,  
 Happy to rove among poetic flow'rs,  
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last  
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,  
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels  
 To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,  
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems  
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?  
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,  
 And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach  
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
 Laughs with abundance, and the land once lean,  
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
 Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.  
 The various seasons woven into one,  
 And that one season an eternal spring,  
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
 For there is none to covet, all are full.  
 The lion and the libbard<sup>1</sup> and the bear  
 Graze with the fearless flocks.<sup>2</sup> All bask at noon

<sup>1</sup> Spenser uses this name instead of the leopard.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah lxxv. 25.

Together, or all gambol in the shade  
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.  
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
 Lurks in the serpent now. The mother sees,  
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
 Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,  
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;  
 That creeping pestilence is driven away,  
 The breath of heav'n has chased it. In the heart  
 No passion touches a discordant string,  
 But all is harmony and love. Disease  
 Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood  
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.  
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,  
 "Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"  
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,  
 Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
 Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.  
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd,  
 See Salem built, the labour of a God!  
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;  
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
 Flock to that light; the glory of all lands  
 Flows into her, unbounded is her joy  
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there  
 Nebaioth,<sup>1</sup> and the flocks of Kedar there;  
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
 And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.  
 Praise is in all her gates. Upon her walls,  
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts  
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there  
 Kneels with the native of the farthest West,  
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth  
 Into all lands. From every clime they come  
 To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,  
 O Sion! an assembly such as earth  
 Saw never; such as heav'n stoops down to see.

<sup>1</sup> Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.—C.

Thus heav'nward all things tend. For all were  
once

Perfect, and all must be at length restored.  
So God has greatly purposed; who would else  
In his dishonour'd works himself endure  
Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.  
Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,  
Ye slow-revolving seasons! We would see  
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)  
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,  
And suffer for its crime: would learn how fair  
The creature is that God pronounces good,  
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a sting;  
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs,  
And ev'n the joy, that haply some poor heart  
Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,  
Is sullied in the stream; taking a taint  
From touch of human lips, at best impure.  
Oh for a world in principle as chaste  
As this is gross and selfish! over which  
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,  
That govern all things here, should'ring aside  
The meek and modest truth, and forcing her  
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife  
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men.  
Where violence shall never lift the sword,  
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,  
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears.  
Where he that fills an office, shall esteem  
Th' occasion it presents of doing good  
More than the perquisite. Where law shall speak  
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts,  
And equity; not jealous more to guard  
A worthless form, than to decide aright.  
Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,  
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)  
With lean performance ape the work of love.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns  
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
Thou who alone art worthy! it was thine  
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth,  
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
Thy saints proclaim thee king; and in their hearts

Thy title is engraven with a pen,  
 Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.  
 Thy saints proclaim thee king; and thy delay  
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see  
 The dawn of thy last advent, long-desired,  
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,  
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.  
 The very spirit of the world is tired  
 Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,  
 "Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"  
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,  
 Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,  
 He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,  
 And aims them at the shield of truth again.  
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,  
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes;  
 And all the mysteries to faith proposed,  
 Insulted and traduced, are cast aside.  
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats.  
 They now are deem'd the faithful and are praised,  
 Who, constant only in rejecting thee,  
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,  
 And quit their office for their error's sake.  
 Blind and in love with darkness! yet ev'n these  
 Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee  
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!  
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare,  
 The world takes little thought; who will may preach,  
 And what they will. All pastors are alike  
 To wand'ring sheep, resolved to follow none.  
 Two gods divide them all, Pleasure and Gain;  
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,  
 And in their service wage perpetual war  
 With conscience and with thee. Lust in their heart,  
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth  
 To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,  
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.  
 Thy prophets speak of such; and noting down  
 The features of the last degen'rate times,  
 Exhibit ev'ry lineament of these.  
 Come then, and added to thy many crowns  
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
 Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of

He is the happy man, whose life ev'n  
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;  
 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,  
 Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,  
 Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit  
 Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,  
 Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one  
 Content indeed to sojourn while he must  
 Below the skies, but having there his home.  
 The world o'erlooks him in her busy search  
 Of objects more illustrious in her view;  
 And occupied as earnestly as she,  
 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.  
 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;  
 He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.  
 He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
 Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems  
 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys;  
 Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
 Whose pow'r is such, that whom she lifts from earth  
 She makes familiar with a heav'n unseen,  
 And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.  
 Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,  
 And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams  
 Oft water fairest meadows; and the bird  
 That flutters least is longest on the wing.  
 Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,  
 Or what achievements of immortal fame  
 He purposes, and he shall answer—None.  
 His warfare is within. There unfatigued  
 His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,  
 And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,  
 And never-with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which  
 The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.  
 Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,  
 That, as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,<sup>1</sup>  
 Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see  
 Deems him a cipher in the works of God,  
 Receives advantage from his noiseless hours  
 Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes  
 Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring

<sup>1</sup> "Then came brave Glory puffing by  
 In silks that whistled, who but he?  
 He scarce allow'd me half an eye;  
 But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me."

And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,  
 When, Isaac-like, the solitary saint  
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,<sup>1</sup>  
 And think on her, who thinks not for herself.  
 Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns  
 Of little worth, and idler in the best,  
 If, author of no mischief and some good,  
 He seek his proper happiness by means  
 That may advance, but cannot hinder thine.  
 Nor though he tread the secret path of life,  
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,  
 Account him an incumbrance on the state,  
 Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.  
 His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere  
 Shine with his fair example, and though small  
 His influence, if that influence all be spent  
 In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,  
 In aiding helpless indigence, in works  
 From which at least a grateful few derive  
 Some taste of comfort in a world of woe,  
 Then let the supercilious great confess  
 He serves his country; recompenses well  
 The state beneath the shadow of whose vine  
 He sits secure, and in the scale of life  
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.  
 The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,  
 Must drop, indeed, the hope of public praise;  
 But he may boast, what few that win it can,  
 That if his country stand not by his skill,  
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.  
 Polite refinement offers him in vain  
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual world  
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,  
 The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.  
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode  
 Because that world adopts it. If it bear  
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,  
 And be not costly more than of true worth,  
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake  
 Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.  
 She judges of refinement by the eye,  
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart

<sup>1</sup> "And Isaac went out to meditate in the fields at the even-tide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming."—*Genesis* xxiv. 63.

Not soon deceived; aware that what is base  
 No polish can make sterling, and that vice,  
 Though well perfum'd and elegantly dress'd,  
 Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flow'rs,  
 Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far  
 For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.  
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,  
 More golden than that age of fabled gold  
 Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care,  
 Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approved  
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.  
 So glide my life away! and so at last,  
 My share of duties decently fulfill'd,  
 May some disease, not tardy to perform  
 Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,  
 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat  
 Beneath the turf that I have often trod.  
 It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd  
 To dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse,  
 I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,  
 With that light task, but soon to please her more,  
 Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little please,  
 Let fall th' unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit;  
 Roved far and gather'd much; some harsh, 'tis true  
 Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,  
 But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some  
 To palates that can taste immortal truth;  
 Insipid else, and sure to be despised.  
 But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.  
 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,  
 If he regard not, though divine the theme.  
 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime  
 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre  
 To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart;  
 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
 Whose approbation—prosper even mine.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons—first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance; and secondly, that my best impressions might be made the last."—(To Unwin, October 10, 1784.)



## AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH,—five and twenty years ago—  
 Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—  
 With frequent intercourse and always sweet  
 And always friendly we were wont to cheat<sup>1</sup>  
 A tedious hour—and now we never meet.  
 As some grave gentleman in Terence says,  
 ('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)  
 Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
 Strange fluctuation of all human things!  
 True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,  
 But distance only cannot change the heart:  
 And were I call'd to prove th' assertion true,  
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,  
 Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,  
 We find the friends we fancied we had won,  
 Though num'rous once, reduced to few or none?  
 Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?  
 No. Gold they seem'd, but they were never such.  
 Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,  
 Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,  
 Dreading a negative, and overawed  
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.  
 Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—  
 Nay. Stay at home;—you're always going out.  
 'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end—  
 For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.  
 A friend! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—  
 Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—  
 And fetch my cloak, for though the night be raw  
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
 And was his plaything often when a child;  
 But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,  
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose.  
 Perhaps, his confidence just then betray'd,  
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made:

<sup>1</sup> "Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,  
 Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire  
 Help waste a sullen day?"

Perhaps 'twas mere good-humour gave it birth,  
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.  
Howe'er it was, his language in my mind  
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain  
To prove an evil of which all complain,  
(I hate long arguments, verbosely spun)  
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.  
Once on a time, an emp'ror, a wise man,  
No matter where, in China or Japan,  
Decreed that whosoever should offend  
Against the well-known duties of a friend,  
Convicted once, should ever after wear  
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare ;  
The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
That all was naught within and all found out.

Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear  
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;  
Else could a law, like that which I relate,  
Once have the sanction of our triple state,  
Some few that I have known in days of old  
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold.  
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,  
Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
An honest man, close button'd to the chin,  
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

TIROCINIUM;  
OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νιων τροφα.

DIOD. LAERT.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN, RECTOR OF STOCK, IN ESSEX, THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS, THE FOLLOWING POEM, RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION IN PREFERENCE TO AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL, IS INSCRIBED BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND, WILLIAM COWPER.<sup>1</sup> OLNEY, NOV. 6, 1784.

[“In the poem on the subject of education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.” Such was the Author’s preface. Sincerer indignation never made verses; the whole vehement heart was in them. “I do not know,” he wrote, “that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are become a nuisance, a pest, an abomination; and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should, if possible, be opened to perceive it.” These are hard words; and yet the Public School recollections of Cowper were not displeasing. “I, the other day,” he told Unwin, “sent my imagination upon a trip thirty years

<sup>1</sup> “I can easily see that you may have very reasonable objections to my dedicatory proposal. You are a clergyman, and I have banged your order; you are a child of *Alma Mater*, and I have banged her too.”—(To Unwin, October 20, 1784.)

behind her. She was obedient, and very swift of foot, presently performed her journey, and set me down on the sixth form at Westminster. I fancied myself once more a schoolboy—a period of life in which, if I had never tasted true happiness, I was, at least, equally unacquainted with its contrary. No manufacturer of waking dreams ever succeeded better in his employment than I do. I can weave such a piece of tapestry in a few minutes as not only has all its charms of reality, but is embellished also with a variety of beauties, which, though they never existed, are more captivating than any that ever did; accordingly, I was a schoolboy in high favour with the master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form, for the admiration of all who were able to understand it." He should have distinguished the Academy from the School, and have shown, at least, the sunny side of the system which he denounced. There is a good remark of Coleridge—"I am clear for Public Schools as the general rule; but, for particular children, private education may be proper. For the purpose of moving at ease in the best English society, the defect of a public education upon the plan of our great schools is hardly to be supplied." On the opposite argument, an observation of Johnson may be remembered. A gentleman had expressed a hope of curing the shyness of his son by a public school. "Sir," exclaimed the Doctor, "this is a preposterous expedient for removing his infirmity; such a disposition should be cultivated in the shade. Placing him at a public school is forcing an owl upon day."]

It is not from his form, in which we trace  
 Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,  
 That man, the master of this globe, derives  
 His right of empire over all that lives.  
 That form indeed, th' associate of a mind  
 Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,  
 That form, the labour of Almighty skill,  
 Framed for the service of a free-born will,  
 Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
 But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.  
 Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,  
 An intellectual kingdom, all her own.  
 For her the mem'ry fills her ample page  
 With truths pour'd down from ev'ry distant ago,  
 For her amasses an unbounded store,  
 The wisdom of great nations, now no more:

Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil;  
 Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;  
 When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;  
 Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.  
 For her the fancy, roving unconfined,  
 The present muse of ev'ry pensive mind,  
 Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue  
 To nature's scenes, than nature ever knew:  
 At her command winds rise and waters roar,  
 Again she lays them slumb'ring on the shore;  
 With flow'r and fruit the wilderness supplies,  
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.  
 For her the judgment, umpire in the strife,  
 That grace and nature have to wage through  
     life,  
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,  
 Appointed sage preceptor to the will,  
 Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice  
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth  
 To yon fair sun and his attendant earth?  
 And, when descending he resigns the skies,  
 Why takes the gentler moon her turn to rise,  
 Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,  
 And owns her pow'r on ev'ry shore he laves?  
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,  
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?  
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,  
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;  
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives  
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,  
 Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews  
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—  
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,  
 Pow'r misemploy'd, munificence misplaced,  
 Had not its Author dignified the plan,  
 And crown'd it with the majesty of man.  
 Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,  
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,  
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws  
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause,  
 To press th' important question on his heart,  
 "Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"  
 If man be what he seems,—this hour a slave,  
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave,

Endued with reason only to descry  
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;  
 With passions, just that he may prove with pain  
 The force he spends against their fury vain;  
 And if, soon after having burnt by turns  
 With ev'ry lust with which frail nature burns,  
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,  
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond,—  
 Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,  
 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,  
 And, useless while he lives, and v'then he dies,  
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,  
 Are not important always as dear-bought,  
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,  
 A childish waste of philosophic pains;  
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,  
 That 'tis our shame and mis'ry not to learn,  
 Shine by the side of every path we tread  
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read.  
 'Tis true, that if to trifle life away  
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,  
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore  
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,  
 Were all that Heav'n required of human kind,  
 And all the plan their destiny design'd,  
 What none could rev'ence all might justly blame,  
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's  
 shame.

But reason heard, and nature well perused,  
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused.  
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
 Reflect his attributes who placed them there,  
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd,  
 Proofs of the wisdom of th' all-seeing mind:  
 'Tis plain, the creature whom he chose t' invest  
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,  
 Received his nobler nature, and was made  
 Fit for the power in which he stands array'd;  
 That first or last, hereafter if not here,  
 He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,  
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,  
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.  
 This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied  
 To prove a consequence by none demed,

..nat we are bound to cast the minds of youth  
 Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,  
 That, taught of God they may indeed be wise,  
 Nor, ignorantly wand'ring, miss the skies

In early days the conscience has in most  
 A quickness, which in later life is lost:  
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,  
 Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.  
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,  
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,  
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care  
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare,  
 And wisely store the nurs'ry by degrees  
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.  
 Neatly secured from being soil'd, or torn,  
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,  
 A book (to please us at a tender age  
 'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)  
 Presents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,  
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.  
 Lipping our syllables, we scramble next,  
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text,  
 And learn with wonder how this world began,  
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man;  
 Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,  
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain.  
 Oh thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing  
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,  
 I pleased remember, and while mem'ry yet  
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;  
 Ingenious dreamer,<sup>1</sup> in whose well-told tale  
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;  
 Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;  
 Witty, and well-employ'd, and, like thy Lord,  
 Speaking in parables his slighted word;  
 I name thee not, lest so despised a name  
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;  
 Yet, ev'n in transitory life's late day  
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,  
 Revere the man whose *Pilgrim* marks the road,  
 And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God.  
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage  
 Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age:

<sup>1</sup> Bunyan.

The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,  
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy;  
 And not with curses on his art who stole  
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.  
 The stamp of artless piety impress'd  
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,  
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,  
 Regards with scorn, though once received with

awe,

And warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,  
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,  
 Blasphemes his creed as founded on a plan  
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.  
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof<sup>1</sup>  
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough;  
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross  
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,  
 The young apostate sickens at the view,  
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves  
 Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!  
 While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,  
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.  
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange  
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.  
 Time was, he closed as he began the day,  
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;  
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,  
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part;  
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease  
 A pow'r confess'd so lately on his knees.  
 But now, farewell all legendary tales,  
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails!  
 Pray'r to the winds and caution to the waves,  
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves!  
 Priests have invented, and the world admired  
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired;  
 Till reason, now no longer overawed,  
 Resumes her pow'rs, and spurns the clumsy fraud;  
 And, common-sense diffusing real day,  
 The meteor of the gospel dies away.

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.—C.



Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth  
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth,  
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,  
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.  
 And thus, well-tutor'd only while we share  
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care,  
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,<sup>1</sup>  
 But sound religion sparingly enough,  
 Our early notices of truth disgraced  
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once,  
 That, in good time, the stripling's finish'd taste  
 For loose expense and fashionable waste,  
 Should prove your ruin and his own at last;—  
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten  
 In infidelity and lewdness, men.  
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,  
 That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;  
 There waiter Dick with Bacchanalian lays  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,  
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.  
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,  
 Detain their adolescent charge too long;  
 The management of tyros of eighteen  
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.  
 The stout tall Captain, whose superior size  
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,  
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix  
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.  
 His pride, that scorns t'obey or to submit,  
 With them is courage, his effront'ry wit;  
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,  
 Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the streets,  
 His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,  
 Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.

<sup>1</sup> The author begs leave to explain; sensible that without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.—C.

In little bosoms such achievements strike  
 A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.  
 Thus half accomplish'd, ere he yet begin  
 To show the peeping down upon his chin,  
 And as maturity of years come on  
 Made just th' adept that you design'd your son;  
 T' ensure the perseverance of his course,  
 And give your monstrous project all its force,  
 Send him to college. If he there be tamed,  
 Or in one article of vice reclaimed,  
 Where no regard of ord'nances is shown  
 Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.  
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him no doubt,  
 Where neither strumpet's charms, nor drinking-bout,  
 Nor gambling practices can find it out.  
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,  
 Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you!  
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,  
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds;  
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,  
 With pack-horse constancy we keep the road,  
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,  
 True to the jingling of our leader's bells.  
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink  
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think:  
 And such an age as ours balks no expense,  
 Except of caution and of common-sense;  
 Else, sure, notorious fact and proof so plain  
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train.  
 I blame not those who with what care they can  
 O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan;  
 Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare  
 Promise a work of which they must despair.  
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,  
 An ubiquarian presence and control,—  
 Elisha's eye,<sup>1</sup> that when Gehazi stray'd  
 Went with him and saw all the game he play'd?  
 Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves  
 Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.  
 Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,  
 Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,  
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd  
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.  
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,

<sup>1</sup> "And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?"—2 Kings v. 26.

And evils, not to be endured, endure,  
 Lest pow'r exerted, but without success,  
 Should make the little ye retain still less.  
 Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth  
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth,  
 And in the firmament of fame still shines  
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,  
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines  
 Peace to them all, those brilliant times are fled,  
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead.  
 Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays  
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze,  
 And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,  
 Deeper in none than in their surgeon's books.

Say, muse, (for, education made the song,  
 No muse can hesitate or linger long)  
 What causes move us, knowing as we must  
 That these *Menageries* all fail their trust,  
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,  
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
 We love the play-place of our early days;  
 The scene is touching, and the heart is stone  
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.  
 The wall on which we tried our graving skill,  
 The very name we carved subsisting still;  
 The bench, on which we sat while deep-employ'd.  
 Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;  
 The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,  
 Playing our games, and on the very spot,  
 As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;  
 To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
 Or drive it devious with a dext'rous pat:—  
 The pleasing spectacle at once excites  
 Such recollection of our own delights,  
 That, viewing it, we seem almost t' obtain  
 Our innocent sweet simple years again.  
 This fond attachment to the well-known place  
 Whence first we started into life's long race,  
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
 We feel it ev'n in age, and at our latest day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, only three years before his death, supplied an illustration of Cowper's line. The story is told by Reed—"A gentleman of Lichfield

Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share  
 Of classic food begins to be his care,  
 With his own likeness placed on either knee,  
 Indulges all a father's heartfelt glee,  
 And tells them as he strokes their silver locks,  
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;  
 Then, turning, he regales his list'ning wife  
 With all th' adventures of his early life;  
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,  
 In bilking tavern bills and spouting plays;  
 What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,  
 How he was flogg'd, or had the luck t' escape;  
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold  
 Watch, seals, and all,—till all his pranks are told  
 Retracing thus his frolics ('tis a name  
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)  
 He gives the local bias all its sway,  
 Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,  
 And destines their bright genius to be shown  
 Just in the scene, wher' he display'd his own.  
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught  
 To be as bold and forward as he ought;  
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,  
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.  
 Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,  
 Th' event is sure, expect it, and rejoice!  
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,  
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,  
 Excused th' incumbrance of more solid worth,  
 Are best disposed of, where with most success  
 They may acquire that confident address,  
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,  
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,  
 Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,  
 With so much reason all expect from them.  
 But families of less illustrious fame,  
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,

meeting the Doctor returning from a walk, inquired how far he had been? The Doctor replied, he had gone round Mr. Levet's field (the place where the scholars play), in search of a rail that he used to jump over when a boy, 'and,' says the Doctor, in a transport of joy, 'I have been so fortunate as to find it. I stood,' said he, 'gazing upon it some time with a degree of rapture, for it brought to my mind all my juvenile sports and pastimes; and at length I determined to try my skill and dexterity. I laid aside my hat and wig, pulled off my coat, and leapt over it twice.' Johnson was then about seventy-two years old.

Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,  
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,  
 What dream they of, that with so little care  
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure there?  
 They dream of little Charles or William graced  
 With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist;  
 They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,  
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.  
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,  
 Dreams him episcopally such at least,  
 And while the playful jockey scours the room  
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,  
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride  
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.  
 Events improbable and strange as these,  
 Which only a parental eye foresees,  
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.  
 But how? resides such virtue in that air  
 As must create an appetite for pray'r?  
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal  
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,  
 To take the lead and be the foremost still  
 In all true worth and literary skill?  
 " Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught  
 The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought:  
 Church-ladders are not always mounted best  
 By learned clerks and Latinists profess'd.  
 Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,  
 Not to be found by poring on a book,  
 Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,  
 Is more than adequate to all I seek.  
 Let erudition grace him, or not grace,  
 I give the bauble but the second place;  
 His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,  
 Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.  
 A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
 Shall give him consequence, heal all defects  
 His intercourse with peers, and sons of peers—  
 There dawns the splendour of his future years;  
 In that bright quarter his propitious skies  
 Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.  
 Your Lordship and your Grace, what school can  
 teach  
 A rhet'ric equal to those parts of speech?  
 What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,  
 Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?

Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,  
 Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,  
 The parson knows enough who knows a duke."—  
 Egregious purpose! worthily begun  
 In barb'rous prostitution of your son,  
 Press'd on *his* part by means that would disgrace  
 A scriv'ner's clerk, or footman out of place,  
 And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,  
 In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.  
 It may succeed; and, if his sins should call  
 For more than common punishment, it shall.  
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth  
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,  
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,  
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.  
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,  
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse,  
 And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,  
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.  
 Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part,  
 Christian in name, and Infidel in heart,  
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,  
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man!  
 Dumb as a senator, and as a priest  
 A piece of mere church-furniture at best;  
 To live estranged from God his total scope,  
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.  
 But, fair although and feasible it seem,  
 Depend not much upon your golden dream;  
 For Providence, that seems concern'd t' exempt  
 The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,  
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,  
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;  
 And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,  
 We sometimes see a Lowth,<sup>1</sup> or Bagot, there.  
 Besides, school-friendships are not always found,  
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;

<sup>1</sup> The learned Bishop of London, whose early verses excited the warm admiration of Cowper. In a letter to Unwin, he gives his reasons for complimenting Bagot. In the first place, to show that he had no objection to a Bishop, *quæ* Bishop; in the second place, because "the brothers were all first his schoolfellows," and very amiable and valuable boys; and thirdly, because the Bishop had been rudely assailed for a sermon, which seemed to Cowper to be admirable. To Walter Bagot he wrote (January 15, 1786),—"When I can hear of the rest of the Bishops, that they preach and live as your brother does, I will think more respectfully of them than I feel inclined to do at present."

The most disint' rested and virtuous minds,  
 In early years connected, time unbinds ;  
 New situations give a diff' rent cast  
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;  
 And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,  
 Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.  
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are war  
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.  
 Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,  
 Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than  
 known ;

Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
 But learns his error in maturer years,  
 When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,  
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.  
 If, therefore, ev'n when honest in design,  
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
 'Twere wiser sure t' inspire a little heart  
 With just abhorrence of so mean a part,  
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade,  
 For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile resort,  
 That are of chief and most approved report,  
 To such base hopes in many a sordid soul  
 Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.  
 A principle, whose proud pretensions pass  
 Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass,  
 That with a world not often over-nice  
 Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ;  
 Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,  
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride,  
 Contributes most perhaps t' enhance their fame,  
 And Emulation is its specious name.  
 Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,  
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,  
 The prize of beauty, in a woman's eyes,  
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.  
 The spirit of that competition burns  
 With all varieties of ill by turns ;  
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,  
 Resents his fellows, wishes it were less,  
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,  
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,  
 And labours to surpass him day and night,  
 Less for improvement, than to tickle spite.

The spur is pow'rful, and I grant its force,  
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,  
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,  
 And, felt alike by each, advances both :  
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,  
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.  
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert  
 Against a heart depraved and temper hurt ;  
 Hurt, too, perhaps for life, for early wrong,  
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;  
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,  
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws  
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion, form'd for int'rest, and endear'd  
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd,  
 And emulation, as engend'ring hate,  
 Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate,  
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,  
 The JACHIN and the BOAZ of them all.<sup>1</sup>  
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell  
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,  
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,  
 And small academies win all the praise ?  
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent,  
 I praise a school, as Pope a government ;  
 So take my judgment in his language dress'd,  
 " Whate'er is best administer'd, is best."  
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,  
 But all are capable of living well.  
 Then ask not, whether limited or large,  
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge ?  
 If anxious only that their boys may learn  
 While *Morals* languish, a despised concern,  
 The great and small deserve one common blame,  
 Diff'rent in size, but in effect the same.  
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,  
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;  
 Therefore, in towns and cities they abound,  
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ;  
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,  
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to Solomon's House, 1 Kings vii. 21 : " And he set up the pillars in the porch of the Temple ; and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin ; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz."



If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,  
 Keen in pursuit, and vig'rous to retain,  
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill,  
 As wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will,  
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,  
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share;  
 But if with all his genius he betray,  
 Not more intelligent, than loose and gay,  
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,  
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,  
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred  
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread,  
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone  
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

Oh 'tis a sight to be with joy perused  
 By all whom sentiment has not abused;  
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace  
 Of those who never feel in the right place;  
 A sight surpassed by none that we can show,  
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;  
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,—  
 Father and friend and tutor all in one.  
 How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,  
 Æsop and Phædrus and the rest?—Why not?  
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,  
 To take in childish plays a childish part,  
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy  
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;  
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand  
 A task as much within your own command,  
 That God and nature and your int'rest too  
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?  
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown,  
 For one whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round  
 your own?  
 This second weaning, needless as it is,  
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his!  
 Th' indented stick, that loses day by day  
 Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,  
 Bears witness long ere his dismissal come,  
 With what intense desire he wants his home.  
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof  
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,  
 Harmless and safe and nat'ral as they are,  
 A disappointment waits him even there:

Arrived, he feels an unexpected change;  
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,  
 No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,  
 His favorite stand between his father's knees,  
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,  
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,  
 And, least familiar where he should be most,  
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost.  
 Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect  
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.  
 Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired  
 Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired?  
 Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,  
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;  
 None that, in thy domestic snug recess,  
 He had not made his own with more address,  
 Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling  
 mind,  
 And better never learn'd, or left behind.  
 Add too, that thus estranged thou canst obtain  
 By no kind arts his confidence again;  
 That here begins with most that long complaint  
 Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,  
 Which, oft neglected in life's waning years,  
 A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars dangling under trees  
 By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,  
 Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace  
 The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race,  
 While ev'ry worm industriously weaves  
 And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;  
 So num'rous are the follies that annoy  
 The mind and heart of ev'ry sprightly boy;  
 Imaginations noxious and perverse,  
 Which admonition can alone disperse.  
 Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,  
 Patient, affectionate, of high command,  
 To check the procreation of a breed,  
 Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.  
 'Tis not enough that Greek, or Roman page,  
 At stated hours his freakish thoughts engage;  
 Ev'n in his pastimes he requires a friend  
 To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,  
 O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,  
 Watch his emotions and control their tide:

And levying thus, and with an easy sway,  
 A tax of profit from his very play,  
 T' impress a value not to be erased  
 On moments squander'd else, and running all to  
 waste.

And seems it nothing in a father's eye,  
 That unimproved those many moments fly?  
 And is he well content, his son should find  
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind.  
 But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?  
 For such is all the mental food purvey'd  
 By public hackneys in the schooling trade;  
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store  
 Of syntax, truly, but with little more;  
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock—  
 Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.  
 Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,  
 Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,  
 T' improve this diet, at no great expense,  
 With sav'ry truth and wholesome common sense;  
 To lead his son for prospects of delight,  
 To some not steep, though philosophic, height,  
 Thence to exhibit to his wond'ring eyes  
 Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,  
 The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,  
 And the harmonious order of them all;  
 To show him in an insect, or a flower,  
 Such microscopic proofs of skill and power,  
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays,  
 To combat Atheists with in modern days;  
 To spread the earth before him, and commend,  
 With designation of the finger's end,  
 Its various parts to his attentive note,  
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote;  
 To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame,  
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;  
 And, more than all, with commendation due,  
 To set some living worthy in his view,  
 Whose fair example may at once inspire  
 A wish to copy what he must admire.  
 Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,  
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,  
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,  
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,  
 Would make him what some lovely boys have been,  
 And more than one perhaps that I have seen,

An evidence and reprehension both  
Of the mere school-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,  
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,  
Too busy to intend a meaner care  
Than how t' enrich thyself, and next, thine heir;  
Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)  
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart—  
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,  
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;  
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then  
Heard to articulate like other men;  
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,  
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force;  
And his address, if not quite French in ease,  
Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to  
please;  
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;  
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;  
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,  
Wise for himself and his few friends alone;—  
In him, thy well-appointed proxy see,  
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee;  
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,  
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;  
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye to prove  
The force of discipline when back'd by love;  
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,  
His mind inform'd, his morals undefiled.  
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show  
No spots contracted among grooms below,  
Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd  
By footman Tom for witty and refined.  
There—in his commerce with the liv'ried herd  
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd;  
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim  
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,  
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,  
To entertain a thief or two in pay,  
(And they that can afford th' expense of more,  
Some half a dozen, and some half a score)  
Great cause occurs to save him from a band  
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;  
A point secured, if once he be supplied  
With some such Mentor always at his side.

Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound  
 Were occupation easier to be found,  
 Were education, else so sure to fail,  
 Conducted on a manageable scale,  
 And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,  
 Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.  
 But having found him, be thou duke or earl,  
 Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,  
 And, as thou wouldst th' advancement of thine heir  
 In all good faculties beneath his care,  
 Respect, as is but rational and just,  
 A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.  
 Despised by thee, what more can he expect  
 From youthful folly, than the same neglect?  
 A flat and fatal negative obtains  
 That instant, upon all his future pains;  
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,  
 And all the instructions of thy son's best friend  
 Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.  
 Doom him not then to solitary meals,  
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels,  
 And that, possessor of a soul refined,  
 An upright heart and cultivated mind,  
 His post not mean, his talents not unknown,  
 He deems it hard to vegetate alone.  
 And, if admitted at thy board he sit,  
 Account him no just mark for idle wit,  
 Offend not him, whom modesty restrains  
 From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,  
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,  
 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth—  
 And, trust me, his utility may reach  
 To more than he is hired, or bound, to teach;  
 Much trash unutter'd and some ills undone,  
 Through rev'rence of the censor of thy son.

But if thy table be indeed unclean,  
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,  
 And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,  
 The world accounts an honourable man,  
 Because, forsooth, thy courage has been tried,  
 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side,  
 Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
 That anything but vice could win thy love;  
 Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,  
 Chain'd to the routs that she frequents, for life,

Who, just when industry begins to snore,  
 Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door,  
 And thrice in ev'ry winter throngs thine own  
 With half the chariots and sedans in town,  
 Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst,  
 Not very sober though, nor very chaste ;  
 Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,  
 If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,  
 And thou at best, and in thy sob'rest mood,  
 A trifter, vain, and empty of all good ?  
 Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,  
 Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.  
 Saved from his home, where ev'ry day brings forth  
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,  
 Find him a better in a distant spot,  
 Within some pious pastor's humble cot,  
 Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,  
 The most seducing and the oft'nest seen)  
 May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,  
 Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd ;  
 Where early rest makes early rising sure,  
 Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,  
 Prevented much by diet neat and plain,  
 Or, if it enter, soon starved out again ;  
 Where all th' attention of his faithful host  
 Discreetly limited to two at most,  
 May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,  
 And not at last evaporate in air ;  
 Where stillness aiding study, and his mind  
 Serene, and to his duties much inclined,  
 Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,  
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,  
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last  
 In settled habit and decided taste.  
 But whom do I advise ? the fashion-led,  
 Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,  
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit,  
 Not better much than spectacles a brute ;  
 Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,  
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;  
 Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,  
 And much too gay t' have any of their own.  
 But courage man ! methought the muse replied,  
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide ;  
 The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,  
 And form'd of God without a parent's mind,

Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,  
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;  
 And, while on public nurs'ries they rely,  
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,  
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,  
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.  
 But all are not alike; thy warning voice  
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice,  
 And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,  
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care,  
 Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may  
     reach  
 Their offspring left upon so wild a beach,  
 Will need no stress of argument t' enforce  
 Th' expedience of a less advent'rous course:  
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;  
 But *they* have human feelings;—turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,  
 Securely placed between the small and great,  
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains  
 Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains,  
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn  
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.  
 Look round you on a world perversely blind,  
 See what contempt is fall'n on human kind;  
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,  
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,  
 Long lines of ancestry renown'd of old,  
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;  
 See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge  
 Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large;  
 See great commanders making war a trade,  
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;  
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ  
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,  
 Who far enough from furnishing their shelves  
 With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;  
 See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed  
 With infamy too nauseous to be named,  
 Fops at all corners lady-like in mien,  
 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,  
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue  
 On fire with curses and with nonsense hung,  
 Now flush'd with drunk'ness, now with whoredom pale,  
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale;

See volunteers in all the vilest arts  
 Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,  
 Design'd by nature wise, but self-made fools,—  
 All these, and more like these, were bred at school,  
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,  
 That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still,  
 Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,  
 Prove rather than impeach the just remark :  
 As here and there a twinkling star descried  
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.  
 Now look on him whose very voice in tone,  
 Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,  
 And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,  
 And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,  
 And say,—My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,  
 When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,  
 Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
 And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;  
 What character, what turn thou wilt assume  
 From constant converse with I know not whom,  
 Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,  
 And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose,  
 Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,  
 Is all chance medley and unknown to me.  
 Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,  
 And while the dreadful risk foreseen, forbids,—  
 Free too, and under no constraining force,  
 Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,—  
 Lay such a stake upon the losing side,  
 Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?  
 Thou canst not ! Nature pulling at thine heart  
 Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.  
 Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tend' rest plea,  
 Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,  
 Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay  
 A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way ;  
 Then, only govern'd by the selfsame rule  
 Of nat'ral pity, send him not to school.  
 No—guard him better: is he not thine own,  
 Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone ?  
 And hop'st thou not ('tis every father's hope)  
 That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,  
 And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage  
 Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,  
 That then, in recompense of all thy cares,  
 Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs,



Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,  
 And give thy life its only cordial left?  
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,  
 To compass that good end forecast the means.  
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;  
 Secure it thine; its key is in thine hand.  
 If thou desert thy charge and throw it wide,  
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,  
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base  
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.  
 But if thou guard its sacred chambers sure  
 From vicious inmates and delights impure,  
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,  
 And keep him warm and filial to the last;  
 Or, if he prove unkind, (as who can say  
 But being man, and therefore frail, he may?)  
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,  
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh barb'rous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand  
 Pull down the schools—what! all the schools i' th'  
 land?

Or throw them up to liv'ry nags and grooms,  
 Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?  
 —A captious question, sir, and yours is one,  
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.  
 Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock employ  
 (Apprized that he is such) a careless boy,  
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,  
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?  
 Survey our schools and colleges, and see  
 A sight not much unlike my simile.  
 From education as the leading cause,  
 The public character its colour draws,  
 Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
 Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.  
 And though I would not advertise them yet,  
 Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let*,  
 Unless the world were all prepared t' embrace  
 A plan well worthy to supply their place;  
 Yet backward as they are, and long have been,  
 To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,  
 (Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,  
 Or better managed, or encouraged less.

## THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED,  
AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

[THE history of "Gilpin" is told by Hayley:—"It happened in those years when his accomplished friend, Lady Austen, made a part of his little evening circle, that she observed him sinking into increasing dejection; it was her custom, on these occasions, to try all the resources of her sprightly powers for his immediate relief. She told him the story of John Gilpin (which had been treasured in her memory from her childhood), to dissipate the gloom of the passing hour. Its effect on the fancy of Cowper had the air of enchantment. He informed her, the next morning, that convulsions of laughter, brought on by his recollection of her story, had kept him awake during the greater part of the night—that he had turned it into a ballad. So arose the pleasant poem of 'John Gilpin.' Mrs. Unwin sent it to the *Public Advertiser*; it was recited by Henderson, the comedian and mimic, and became the fashion of the fireside and the Court. The knight of the stone-bottles—as Cowper called him—has no rival except the knight of La Mancha. Mrs. Piozzi found more humour in this ballad than in all 'Gulliver's Travels.' And what humour it is!—how gay, sunshiny, and refreshing! and the mirth and the sunshine, too, are thoroughly English. Cowper talked of gracing Gilpin with a Greek and a Latin motto; he might as well have put a Cardinal's hat on Dr. Primrose. One improvement, however, he proposed, but did not perfectly execute. 'Here and there,' he told Unwin, 'I can give him a touch that, I think, will mend him, the language, in some places, not being quite so quaint and old-fashioned as it should be.'"]

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen  
Of credit and renown,  
A train-band Captain eke was he  
Of famous London town.

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

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

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

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

I am a linen-draper bold,  
 As all the world doth know,  
 And my good friend the Calender  
 Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin,—That's well said,  
 And for that wine is dear,  
 We will be furnish'd with our own,  
 Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;  
 O'erjoy'd was he to find  
 That, though on pleasure she was bent,  
 She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,  
 But yet was not allow'd  
 To drive up to the door, lest all  
 Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,  
 Where they did all get in,  
 Six precious souls, and all agog  
 To dash through thick and thin.

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

John Gilpin at his horse's side  
Seized fast the flowing mane,  
And up he got in haste to ride,  
But soon came down again.

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

So down he came; for loss of time,  
Although it grieved him sore,  
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,  
Would trouble him much more.

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

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

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

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

Then over all, that he might be  
Equipp'd from top to toe,  
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,  
He manfully did throw.

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

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

So, 'Fair and softly,' John he cried  
But John he cried in vain;  
That trot became a gallop soon,  
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must  
Who cannot sit upright,  
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,  
And eke with all his might.

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

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

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

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

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,  
Up flew the windows all,  
And ev'ry soul cried out, Well done!  
As loud as he could bawl.

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

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

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

Down ran the wine into the road,  
Most piteous to be seen,  
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke  
As they had basted been.

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

Thus all through merry Islington  
These gambols he did play,  
And till he came unto the Wash  
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about  
On both sides of the way,  
Just like unto a trundling mop,  
Or a wild-goose at play.

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

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—  
They all at once did cry,  
The dinner waits and we are tired :—  
Said Gilpin—So am I.

But yet his horse was not a whit  
Inclined to tarry there ;  
For why? his owner had a house  
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,  
Shot by an archer strong;  
So did he fly—which brings me to  
The middle of my song.

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

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

What news? what news? your tidings tell,  
Tell me you must and shall—  
Say why bare-headed you are come,  
Or why you come at all?

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

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

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

Whence straight he came with hat and wig:  
A wig that flow'd behind,  
A hat not much the worse for wear,  
Each comely in its kind.

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

But let me scrape the dirt away  
That hangs upon your face ;  
And stop and eat, for well you may  
Be in a hungry case.

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

So, turning to his horse, he said—  
I am in haste to dine;  
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,  
You shall go back for mine.

Ah, luckless speech and bootless boast !  
For which he paid full dear ;  
For, while he spake, a braying ass  
Did sing most loud and clear.

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

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

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

And thus unto the youth she said  
That drove them to the Bell,—  
This shall be yours when you bring back  
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet  
John coming back amain ;  
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,  
By catching at his rein ;



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

Away went Gilpin, and away  
 Went post-boy at his heels!—  
 The post-boy's horse right glad to miss  
 The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,  
 Thus seeing Gilpin fly,  
 With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear,  
 They raised the hue and cry:—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!  
 Not one of them was mute;  
 And all and each that pass'd that way  
 Did join in the pursuit.

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

And so he did, and won it too,  
 For he got first to town;  
 Nor stopp'd till where he had got up  
 He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,  
 And Gilpin long live he;  
 And when he next doth ride abroad,  
 May I be there to see!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It was long since, and even in the infancy of 'John Gilpin,' recommended to me by a lady now at Bristol, to write a sequel. But having always observed that authors, elated with the success of a first part, have fallen below themselves when they attempted a second. I had more prudence than to take her counsel." (May 8. 1784.)

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,  
ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

THAT ocean you have late survey'd,  
Those rocks I too have seen;  
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,  
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep  
Saw stretch'd before your view,  
With conscious joy, the threat'ning deep,  
No longer such to you.

To me the waves, that ceaseless broke  
Upon the dang'rous coast,  
Hoarsely and ominously spoke  
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,  
And found the peaceful shore;  
I, tempest-toss'd and wreck'd at last,  
Come home to port no more.

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LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life  
Half so delightful as a wife,  
When friendship, love, and peace combine  
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?  
The stream of pure and genuine love  
Derives its current from above;  
And earth a second Eden shows,  
Where'er the healing water flows:  
But ah, if from the dikes and drains  
Of sensual nature's fev'rish veins,  
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,  
Impregnated with ooze and mud,  
Descending fast on every side  
Vncc mingles with the sacred tide,

Farewell the soul-enliv'ning scene!  
 The banks that wore a smiling green,  
 With rank defilement overspread,  
 Bewail their flow'ry beauties dead.  
 The stream polluted, dark, and dull,  
 Diffused into a Stygian pool,  
 Through life's last melancholy years  
 Is fed with ever-flowing tears:  
 Complaints supply the zephyr's part,  
 And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

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## A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN.

DEAR ANNA,—between friend and friend,  
 Prose answers every common end;  
 Serves, in a plain and homely way,  
 T' express th' occurrence of the day;  
 Our health, the weather, and the news;  
 What walks we take, what books we choose;  
 And all the floating thoughts we find  
 Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,  
 Far more alive than other men,  
 He feels a gentle tingling come  
 Down to his finger and his thumb,  
 Derived from nature's noblest part,  
 The centre of a glowing heart:  
 And this is what the world, who knows  
 No flights above the pitch of prose,  
 His more sublime vagaries slighting,  
 Denominates an itch for writing.  
 No wonder I, who scribble rhyme  
 To catch the triflers of the time,  
 And tell them truths divine and clear,  
 Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear,  
 Who labour hard t' allure and draw  
 The loiterers I never saw,  
 Should feel that itching, and that tingling,  
 With all my purpose intermingling,  
 To your intrinsic merit true,  
 When call'd t' address myself to you.

Mysterious are His ways, whose power  
 Brings forth that unexpected hour,  
 When minds, that never met before,  
 Shall meet, unite, and part no more:  
 It is th' allotment of the skies,  
 The hand of the Supremely Wise,  
 That guides and governs our affections,  
 And plans and orders our connexions:  
 Directs us in our distant road,  
 And marks the bounds of our abode.  
 Thus we were settled when you found us,  
 Peasants and children all around us,  
 Not dreaming of so dear a friend,  
 Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thus Martha, ev'n against her will,  
 Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;  
 And you, tho' you must needs prefer  
 The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,<sup>2</sup>  
 Are come from distant Loire to choose  
 A cottage on the banks of Ouse.  
 This page of Providence quite new,  
 And now just op'ning to our view,  
 Employs our present thoughts and pains  
 To guess, and spell, what it contains:  
 But day by day, and year by year,  
 Will make the dark enigma clear;  
 And furnish us, perhaps, at last,  
 Like other scenes already past,  
 With proof that we, and our affairs,  
 Are part of a Jehovah's cares:  
 For God unfolds, by slow degrees,  
 The purport of his deep decrees;  
 Sheds every hour a clearer light  
 In aid of our defective sight;  
 And spreads, at length, before the soul,  
 A beautiful and perfect whole,  
 Which busy man's inventive brain  
 Toils to anticipate, in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known  
 The beauties of a rose full blown,

<sup>1</sup> An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Austen's residence in France.

Could you, tho' luminous your eye,  
By looking on the bud, descry,  
Or guess, with a prophetic power,  
The future splendour of the flower?  
Just so, th' Omnipotent, who turns  
The system of a world's concerns,  
From mere minutiae can educe  
Events of most important use,  
And bid a dawning sky display  
The blaze of a meridian day.  
The works of man tend, one and all,  
As needs they must, from great to small;  
And vanity absorbs at length  
The monuments of human strength.  
But who can tell how vast the plan  
Which this day's incident began?  
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion  
For our dim-sighted observation;  
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird  
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,  
And yet may prove, when understood,  
A harbinger of endless good.

Not that I deem, or mean to call  
Friendship a blessing cheap or small:  
But merely to remark that ours,  
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,  
Rose from a seed of tiny size,  
That seem'd to promise no such prize;  
A transient visit intervening,  
And made almost without a meaning,  
(Hardly the effect of inclination,  
Much less of pleasing expectation)  
Produced a friendship, then begun,  
That has cemented us in one;  
And placed it in our power to prove,  
By long fidelity and love,  
That Solomon has wisely spoken:  
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

## FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

SAYS the pipe to the snuffbox, I can't understand  
 What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,  
 That you are in fashion all over the land,  
 And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

Do but see what a pretty contemplative air  
 I give to the company—pray do but note 'em—  
 You would think that the wise men of Greece were all  
 there,  
 Or, at least would suppose them the wise men of  
 Gotham.<sup>1</sup>

My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,  
 While you are a nuisance where'er you appear ;  
 There is nothing but sniv'ling and blowing of noses,  
 Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear.

Then lifting his lid in a delicate way,  
 And op'ning his mouth with a smile quite engaging,  
 The box in reply was heard plainly to say,—  
 What a silly dispute is this we are waging!

If you have a little of merit to claim,  
 You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed,  
 And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,  
 The before-mention'd drug in apology plead.

Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,  
 No room for a sneer, much less a cachinnus,  
 We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,  
 But of anything else they may choose to put in us.

<sup>1</sup> Ray remarks on the proverb, "As wise as the men of Gotham," "It passeth for the *Periphrasis* of a fool, and an hundred fopperies are feigned and fathered on the townfolk of Gotham, a village in Nottinghamshire. As for Gotham, it doth breed as wise people as any which causelessly laugh at their simplicity."

## THE COLUBRIAD.

Close by the threshold of a door nail'd fast  
 Three kittens sat ; each kitten look'd aghast.  
 I, passing swift and inattentive by,  
 At the three kittens cast a careless eye ;  
 Not much concern'd to know what they did there ;  
 Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.  
 But presently a loud and furious hiss  
 Caused me to stop, and to exclaim "What's this?"  
 When lo! upon the threshold met my view,  
 With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,  
 A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.  
 Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,  
 Darting it full against a kitten's nose ;  
 Who having never seen, in field or house,  
 The like, sat still and silent as a mouse :  
 Only projecting, with attention due,  
 Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are you?"  
 On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,  
 But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe :  
 With which well arm'd I hasten'd to the spot.  
 To find the viper, but I found him not.  
 And, turning up the leaves and shrubs around,  
 Found only that he was not to be found.  
 But still the kittens, sitting as before,  
 Sat watching close the bottom of the door.  
 "I hope," said I, "the villain I would kill,  
 Has slipp'd between the door and the door-sill ;  
 And if I make despatch, and follow hard,  
 No doubt but I shall find him in the yard ;"  
 For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,  
 'Twas in the garden that I found him first.  
 Ev'n there I found him ; there the full-grown cat  
 His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat :  
 As curious as the kittens erst had been  
 To learn what this phenomenon might mean.  
 Fill'd with heroic ardour at the sight,  
 And fearing every moment he would bite,  
 And rob our household of our only cat,  
 That was of age to combat with a rat ;  
 With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,  
 And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

ON FRIENDSHIP.<sup>1</sup>

*Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest.—CICERO.*

WHAT virtue can we name, or grace,  
But men unqualified and base  
Will boast it their possession?  
Profusion apes the noble part  
Of liberality of heart,  
And dulness of discretion.

But, as the gem of richest cost  
Is ever counterfeited most,  
So, always, imitation  
Employs the utmost skill she can  
To counterfeit the faithful man,  
The friend of long duration.

Some will pronounce me too severe—  
But long experience speaks me clear;  
Therefore, that censure scorning,  
I will proceed to mark the shelves,  
On which so many dash themselves,  
And give the simple warning.

Youth, unadmonish'd by a guide,  
Will trust to any fair outside:  
An error soon corrected;  
For who, but learns, with riper years,  
That man, when smoothest he appears,  
Is most to be suspected.

But here again a danger lies;  
Lest, thus deluded by our eyes,  
And taking trash for treasure,  
We should, when undeceived, conclude  
Friendship, imaginary good,  
A mere Utopian pleasure.

<sup>1</sup> Hayley regarded this composition as one of the most admirable of Cowper's minor poems, and containing "the essence of all that has been said on this interesting subject." The alterations subsequently made in it are very questionable; and the revised line—

"What virtue, or what mental grace,"

is evidently ungrammatical.



An acquisition, rather rare,  
 Is yet no subject of despair;  
     Nor should it seem distress  
 If either on forbidden ground,  
 Or, where it was not to be found,  
     We sought it unsuccessful.

No friendship will abide the test  
 That stands on sordid interest  
     And mean self-love erected;  
 Nor such, as may awhile subsist  
 'Twixt sensualist and sensualist,  
     For vicious ends connected.

Who hopes a friend, should have a heart,  
 Himself, well furnish'd for the part,  
     And ready on occasion  
 To show the virtue that he seeks;  
 For 'tis an union that bespeaks  
     A just reciprocation.

A fretful temper will divide  
 The closest knot that may be tied,  
     By ceaseless sharp corrosion:  
 A temper, passionate and fierce,  
 May suddenly your joys disperse  
     At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite  
 With hope of permanent delight:  
     The secret just committed  
 They drop through mere desire to prate,  
 Forgetting its important weight,  
     And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,  
 All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,  
     If envy chance to creep in;  
 An envious man, if you succeed,  
 May prove a dang'rous foe indeed,  
     But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,  
 So jealousy looks forth distress'd,  
     On good that seems approaching;  
 And, if success his steps attend,  
 Discerns a rival in a friend,  
     And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name  
 (Unless belied by common fame)  
 Are sadly prone to quarrel;  
 To deem the wit a friend displays  
 So much of loss to their own praise,  
 And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee,  
 Will seldom scruple to make free  
 With friendship's finest feeling;  
 Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
 And tell you 'twas a special jest,  
 By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers; keep your ear  
 Close stopt against the tales they hear,  
 Fruits of their own invention;  
 The separation of chief friends  
 Is what their kindness most intends;  
 Their sport is your dissension.

Friendship that wantonly admits  
 A joco-serious play of wits,  
 In brilliant altercation,  
 Is union such as indicates,  
 Like Hand-in-Hand Insurance plates  
 Danger of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul  
 True as the needle to the pole,  
 Yet shifting, like the weather,  
 The needle's constancy forego  
 For any novelty, and show  
 Its variations rather.

Insensibility makes some  
 Unseasonably deaf and dumb,  
 When most you need their pity;  
 'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall  
 From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,  
 Those playthings of the city.

The great and small but rarely meet  
 On terms of amity complete:  
 Th' attempt would scarce be madder,  
 Should any from the bottom hope,  
 At one huge stride, to reach the top  
 Of an erected ladder.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix  
 Their heterogeneous politics  
 Without an effervescence,  
 Such as of salts with lemon-juice,  
 But which is rarely known t' induce,  
 Like that, a coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,  
 And make a calm of human life:  
 But even those, who differ  
 Only on topics left at large,  
 How fiercely will they meet and charge!  
 No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas! my main intent,  
 Needs no great cost of argument,  
 No cutting and contriving;  
 Seeking a real friend, we seem  
 T' adopt the chemist's golden dream  
 With still less hope of thriving.

Then judge, or ere you choose your man,  
 As circumspectly as you can,  
 And, having made election,  
 See that no disrespect of yours,  
 Such as a friend but ill endures,  
 Enfeeble his affection.

It is not timber, lead, and stone,  
 An architect requires alone,  
 To finish a great building;  
 The palace were but half complete,  
 Could he by any chance forget  
 The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,  
 Or something not to be defined,  
 First rivets our attention;  
 So manners decent and polite,  
 The same we practised at first sight,  
 Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom--or Jack,  
 And proves by thumping on your back,  
 His sense of your great merit,  
 Is such a friend, that one had need  
 Be very much his friend indeed,  
 To pardon, or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan—  
 " Say little, and hear all you can ;"  
 Safe policy, but hateful ;  
 So barren sands imbibe the show'r,  
 But render neither fruit nor flow'r,  
 Unpleasant and ungrateful.

They whisper trivial things, and small ;  
 But, to communicate at all  
 Things serious, deem improper ;  
 Their feculence and froth they show,  
 But keep the best contents below,  
 Just like a simm'ring copper.

These samples (for alas ! at last  
 These are but samples, and a taste  
 Of evils yet unmention'd)  
 May prove the task, a task indeed,  
 In which 'tis much, if we succeed,  
 However well-intention'd.

Pursue the theme, and you shall find  
 A disciplined and furnish'd mind  
 To be at least expedient,  
 And, after summing all the rest,  
 Religion ruling in the breast  
 A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace  
 More than terrestrial in its face,  
 That proves it Heav'n-descended ;  
 Man's love of woman not so pure,  
 Nor, when sincerest, so secure  
 To last till life is ended.

## ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED, SEPTEMBER, 1782

*To the March in Scipio.*

TOLL for the brave!  
 The brave that are no more!  
 All sunk beneath the wave,  
 Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,  
 Whose courage well was tried,  
 Had made the vessel heel,  
 And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shrouds,  
 And she was overset;  
 Down went the Royal George,  
 With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!  
 Brave Kempenfelt is gone;  
 His last sea-fight is fought;  
 His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;  
 No tempest gave the shock;  
 She sprang no fatal leak;  
 She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;  
 His fingers held the pen,<sup>1</sup>  
 When Kempenfelt went down,  
 With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,  
 Once dreaded by our foes!  
 And mingle with our cup  
 The tear that England owes.

<sup>1</sup> The admiral was writing in his cabin.

Her timbers yet are sound,  
 And she may float again,  
 Full-charged with England's thunder,  
 And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,  
 His victories are o'er;  
 And he and his eight hundred,  
 Shall plough the wave no more.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII, CUI GEORGIUS  
 REGALE NOMEN, INDITUM.

PLANGIMUS fortes. Perière fortes,  
 Patrium propter perière littus  
 Bis quatèr centum; subitò sub alto  
 Æquore mersi.

Navis, innitens lateri, jacebat,  
 Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,  
 Cùm levis, funes quatiens, ad imum  
 Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam  
 Fortibus vitam voluère Parcæ,  
 Nec sinunt ultrà tibi nos recentes  
 Nectere laurus.

Magne, qui nomen, licèt incanorum,  
 Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!  
 At tuos olim memorabit ævum  
 Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,  
 Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,  
 Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox  
 Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosì  
 Voce fallebant hilari laborem,  
 Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram im-  
 plevèrat heros.

Vox, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,  
 Humidum ex alto spolum levate,  
 Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos  
 Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic Dis placuit) fucie:  
 Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit  
 Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen  
 Tollere ad astra.

---

 ON PEACE.

WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1783, AT THE REQUEST OF  
 LADY AUSTEN, WHO GAVE THE SENTIMENT.

*Air*—"My fond shepherds of late," &c.

No longer I follow a sound;  
 No longer a dream I pursue;  
 O happiness! not to be found,  
 Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,  
 In the regions of pleasure and taste;  
 I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,  
 But have proved thee a vision at last.

A humble ambition and hope  
 The voice of true wisdom inspires;  
 'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope,  
 And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind  
 That seeks it in meekness and love.  
 But rapture and bliss are confined  
 To the glorified spirits above.

## SONG.

ALSO WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTIN.

*Air—"The Lass of Pattie's Mill."*

WHEN all within is peace,  
How nature seems to smile!  
Delights that never cease,  
The livelong day beguile.

From morn to dewy eve,  
With open hand she showers  
Fresh blessings, to deceive  
And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart  
Gives nature power to please;  
The mind that feels no smart,  
Enlivens all it sees;

Can make a wintry sky  
Seem bright as smiling May,  
And evening's closing eye,  
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,  
So beauteously array'd  
In nature's various robe,  
With wondrous skill display'd.

Is to a mourner's heart  
A dreary wild at best;  
It flutters to depart,  
And longs to be at rest.



## THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS;

OR, LABOUR IN VAIN.

*A New Song to a Tune never sung before.*

I SING of a journey to Clifton,  
 We would have perform'd if we could,  
 Without cart or barrow to lift on  
 Poor Mary and me through the mud.  
 Slee sla slud,  
 Stuck in the mud,

Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood!

So away we went, slipping and sliding,  
 Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs,  
 'Tis near as good walking as riding,  
 When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.  
 Wheels, no doubt,  
 Go briskly about,

But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout!

SHE.

"Well! now I protest it is charming;  
 How finely the weather improves!  
 That cloud, though 'tis rather alarming,  
 How slowly and stately it moves!"

HE.

"Pshaw! never mind,  
 'Tis not in the wind,  
 We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind."

SHE.

"I am glad we are come for an airing,  
 For folks may be pounded and penn'd,  
 Until they grow rusty, not caring  
 To stir half a mile to an end."

HE.

"The longer we stay,  
 The longer we may;  
 It's a folly to think about weather or way."

SHE.

"But now I begin to be frighted,  
If I fall, what a way I should roll!  
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,—  
Stay! stop! I am sunk in a hole!"

HE.

"Nay, never care!  
'Tis a common affair:  
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there."

SHE.

"Let me breathe now a little, and ponder  
On what it were better to do;  
That terrible lane I see yonder,  
I think we shall never get through."

HE.

"So think I:—  
But by the by,  
We never shall know, if we never should try."

SHE.

"But should we get there, how shall we get home?  
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past!  
Slipping and sliding: and if we should come  
To a difficult stile, I am ruin'd at last!  
Oh this lane!  
Now it is plain  
That struggling and striving is labour in vain."

HE.

"Stick fast there while I go and look—"

SHE.

"Don't go away, for fear I should fall!"

HE.

"I have examin'd it every nook,  
And what you see here is a sample of all.  
Come, wheel round,  
The dirt we have found  
Would be an estate at a farthing a pound."

Now, sister Anne, the guitar you must take,  
 Set it, and sing it, and make it a song ;  
 I have varied the verse for variety's sake,  
 And cut it off short—because it was long.  
     'Tis hobbling and lame,  
     Which critics wont blame,  
 For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same

---

 THE ROSE.<sup>1</sup>

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,  
 Which Mary to Anna convey'd ;  
 The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,  
 And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,  
 And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,  
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret  
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was  
 For a nosegay so dripping and drown'd,  
 And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas !  
 I snapped it, it fell to the ground.

And such I exclaimed is the pitiless part  
 Some act by the delicate mind,  
 Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart,  
 Already to sorrow resigned.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,  
 Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile ;  
 And the tear, that is wiped with a little address,  
 May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

<sup>1</sup> " It appears to me that the lady who purloined your friend's song, 'The Rose,' had as little good taste as honesty. A quaint affectation of ideas, and arsehoiarlike awkwardness of expression disgrace it :

'The rose had been wash'd, just wash'd by a shower,  
 Which Mary to Anna convey'd.'

" According to grammar construction, the word *which* belongs to the shower, and not to the rose. Mr. Cary, Saville, and myself used to laugh at it, as a disagreeable quiz of a ballad, when we believed it a lady's composition. Since Cary has known it to be Cowper's he told me he had persuaded himself to take it. Such is prejudice!"—(Miss Seward to Hayley, March 7, 1803.)

## THE VALEDICTION.

FAREWELL, false hearts! whose best affections fail  
 Like shallow brooks which summer suns exhale!  
 Forgetful of the man whom once ye chose,  
 Cold in his cause, and careless of his woes;  
 I bid you both a long and last adieu!  
 Cold in my turn, and unconcern'd like you.

First farewell, Niger!<sup>1</sup> whom, now duly proved,  
 I disregard as much as I have loved.  
 Your brain well furnish'd, and your tongue well taught  
 To press with energy your ardent thought,  
 Your senatorial dignity of face,  
 Sound sense, intrepid spirit, manly grace,  
 Have raised you high as talents can ascend,  
 Made you a peer, but spoilt you for a friend!  
 Pretend to all that parts have e'er acquired;  
 Be great, be fear'd, be envied, be admired;  
 To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,  
 But not hereafter to the name of friend!  
 I sent you verse, and, as your lordship knows,  
 Back'd with a modest sheet of humble prose;  
 Not to recall a promise to your mind,  
 Fulfill'd with ease had you been so inclined,  
 But to comply with feelings, and to give  
 Proof of an old affection still alive.  
 Your sullen silence serves at least to tell  
 Your alter'd heart; and so, my lord, farewell!

Next, busy actor on a meaner stage,<sup>2</sup>  
 Amusement-monger of a trifling age,  
 Illustrious histrionic patentee,  
 Terentius,<sup>3</sup> once my friend, farewell to thee!  
 In thee some virtuous qualities combine,  
 To fit thee for a nobler part than thine,  
 Who, born a gentleman, hast stoop'd too low,  
 To live by buskin, sock, and raree-show.  
 Thy schoolfellow and partner of thy plays,  
 When Nichols<sup>4</sup> swung the birch and twined the bays  
 And having known thee bearded and full grown  
 The weekly censor of a laughing town,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Thurlow.

<sup>2</sup> Colman.

<sup>3</sup> Colman had translated Terence.

<sup>4</sup> The master of Westminster school.

<sup>5</sup> Colman was connected with a weekly publication, called *The Connoisseur*.

I thought the volume I presumed to send,  
 Graced with the name of a long-absent friend,  
 Might prove a welcome gift, and touch thine heart,  
 Not hard by nature, in a feeling part.  
 But thou, it seems (what cannot grandeur do,  
 Though but a dream!) art grown disdainful too;  
 And strutting in thy school of queens and kings,  
 Who fret their hour and are forgotten things,  
 Hast caught the cold distemper of the day,  
 And, like his lordship, cast thy friend away.

Oh Friendship! Cordial of the human breast!  
 So little felt, so fervently profess'd!

Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years;  
 The promise of delicious fruit appears:  
 We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,  
 Such is the folly of our dreaming youth;  
 But soon, alas! detect the rash mistake,  
 That sanguine inexperience loves to make;  
 And view with tears th' expected harvest lost,  
 Decay'd by time, or wither'd by a frost.  
 Whoever undertakes a friend's great part  
 Should be renew'd in nature, pure in heart,  
 Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove  
 A thousand ways the force of genuine love.  
 He may be call'd to give up health and gain,  
 T' exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,  
 To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,  
 And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.  
 The heart of man, for such a task too frail,  
 When most relied on, is most sure to fail;  
 And, summon'd to partake its fellow's woe,  
 Starts from its office, like a broken bow.

Vot'ries of business, and of pleasure, prove  
 Faithless alike in friendship, and in love.  
 Retired from all the circles of the gay,  
 And all the crowds that bustle life away,  
 To scenes, where competition, envy, strife  
 Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,  
 Let me, the charge of some good angel, find  
 One, who has known, and has escaped mankind  
 Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away  
 The manners, not the morals, of the day:  
 With him, perhaps with *her*, (for men have known  
 No firmer friendships than the fair have shown)  
 Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,  
 All former friends forgiven, and forgot,

Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,  
 Union of hearts, without a flaw between.  
 'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,  
 If God give health, that sunshine of our days!  
 And if he add, a blessing shared by few,  
 Content of heart, more praises still are due—  
 But if he grant a friend, that boon possess'd  
 Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;  
 And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,  
 Born from above, and made divinely wise,  
 He gives, what bankrupt nature never can,  
 Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,  
 Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,  
 A soul, an image of himself, and therefore true.

---

IN BREVITATEM VITÆ SPATII HOMINIBUS  
 CONCESSI.

BY DR. JORTIN.

HEI mihi! Lege ratâ sol occidit atque resurgit,  
 Lunaque mutata reparat dispendia formæ,  
 Astraque, purpurei telis extincta diei,  
 Rursus nocte vigent. Humiles telluris alumni,  
 Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,  
 Quos crudelis hyems lethali tæbe peredit,  
 Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque sereni  
 Temperies anni, sæcundo è cespite surgunt.  
 Nos domini rerum, nos, magna et pulchra minati,  
 Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit ætas,  
 Deficimus; nec nos ordo revolubilis auras  
 Reddit in æthereas, tumuli neque claustra resolvit.

---

ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

SUNS that set, and moons that wane,  
 Rise, and are restored again,  
 Stars that orient day subdues,  
 Night at her return renews.

Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth  
 Of the genial womb of Earth,  
 Suffer but a transient death  
 From the winter's cruel breath.  
 Zephyr speaks; serenest skies  
 Warm the glebe, and they arise.  
 We, alas! Earth's haughty kings,  
 We, that promise mighty things,  
 Losing soon life's happy prime,  
 Droop, and fade, in little time;  
 Spring returns, but not our bloom;  
 Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

---

## EPITAPH ON JOHNSON.

HERE Johnson lies—a sage by all allow'd,  
 Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;  
 Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,  
 The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;  
 Whose verse may claim—grave, masculine, and strong,  
 Superior praise to the mere poet's song;  
 Who many a noble gift from Heav'n possess'd,  
 And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.  
 O man, immortal by a double prize,  
 By fame on earth—by glory in the skies!

---

## TO MISS C—, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

How many between east and west,  
 Disgrace their parent earth,  
 Whose deeds constrain us to detest  
 The day that gave them birth!  
 Not so when Stella's natal morn  
 Revolving months restore;  
 We can rejoice that she was born,  
 And wish her born once more!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "If you like it, use it; if not, you know the remedy. It is serious, yet epigrammatic, like a bishop at a ball."—(To Unwin.)

## GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

THIS cap, that so stately appears,  
 With ribbon-bound tassel on high,  
 Which seems by the crest that it rears  
 Ambitious of brushing the sky :  
 This cap to my cousin I owe,  
 She gave it, and gave me beside,  
 Wreathed into an elegant bow,  
 The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,  
 Contrived both for toil and repose,  
 Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,  
 In which I both scribble and doze,  
 Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,  
 And rival in lustre of that  
 In which, or astronomy lies,  
 Fair Cassiopeia sat :

These carpets so soft to the foot,  
 Caledonia's traffic and pride !  
 Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,  
 Escaped from a cross-country ride !  
 This table and mirror within,  
 Secure from collision and dust,  
 At which I oft shave cheek and chin,  
 And periwig nicely adjust :

This moveable structure of shelves,  
 For its beauty admired, and use,  
 And charged with octavos and twelves,  
 The gayest I had to produce ;  
 Where flaming and scarlet and gold,  
 My poems enchanted I view,  
 And hope, in due time, to behold  
 My Iliad and Odyssey too :

This china, that decks the alcove,  
 Which here people call a buffet,  
 But what the gods call it above,  
 Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet :  
 These curtains, that keep the room warm,  
 Or cool, as the season demands,  
 Those stoves that, for pattern and form,  
 Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands :



All these are not half that I owe  
 To One, from our earliest youth  
 To me ever ready to show  
 Benignity, friendship, and truth;  
 For time, the destroyer declared  
 And foe of our perishing kind,  
 If even her face he has spared,  
 Much less could he alter her mind.  
 Thus compass'd about with the goods  
 And chattels of leisure and ease,  
 I indulge my poetical moods  
 In many such fancies as these;  
 And fancies I fear they will seem—  
 Poets' goods are not often so fine;  
 The poets will swear that I dream,  
 When I sing of the splendour of mine.

---

## THE FLATTING-MILL.

### AN ILLUSTRATION.

**WHEN** a bar of pure silver, or ingot of gold,  
 Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,  
 It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd  
 In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears  
 Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,  
 Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,  
 And warm'd by the pressure is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doom'd to sustain  
 The thump-after-thump of a gold-beater's mallet,  
 And at last is of service, in sickness or pain,  
 To cover a pill from a delicate palate.

**Alas** for the Poet! who dares undertake  
 To urge reformation of national ill—  
 His head and his heart are both likely to ache  
 With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,  
Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,  
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,  
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all he must beat it as thin and as fine  
As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows;  
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,  
And unless you adorn it, a nausea follows.

---

### LINES

COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.,  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH.

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage  
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!  
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd  
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)  
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd;  
Through every period of this changeful state  
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem  
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,  
Although thy worth be more than half suppress'd,  
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

---

### ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1789.

WHEN, long sequester'd from his throne,  
George took his seat again,  
By right of worth, not blood alone,  
Entitled here to reign.

Then, Loyalty, with all his laraps  
 New trimm'd, a gallant show!  
 Chasing the darkness, and the damp,  
 Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets or squares,  
 Which form'd the chief display,  
 These most resembling cluster'd stars,  
 Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,  
 And rockets flew, self-driven,  
 To hang their momentary fires  
 Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,  
 The ocean serves, on high  
 Up-spouted by a whale in air,  
 T' express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world  
 In one procession join'd,  
 And all the banners been unfurl'd  
 That heralds e'er design'd,

For no such sight had England's Queen  
 Forsaken her retreat,  
 Where George, recover'd, made a scene  
 Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,  
 A witness undescried,  
 How much the object of her love  
 Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er  
 In aid of her design—  
 Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before  
 To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,  
 Resolved to be unknown,  
 And gratify no curious eyes  
 That night, except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,  
 And hears the million hum;  
 As all by instinct, like the bees,  
 Had known their sov'reign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft pourtray'd  
 On many a splendid wall,  
 Emblems of health, and heav'nly aid,  
 And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,  
 So difficult to spell,  
 Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,  
 The night his city fell.

Soon, wat'ry grew her eyes and dim,  
 But with a joyful tear,  
 None else, except in pray'r for him,  
 George ever drew from her.<sup>1</sup>

It was a scene in every part  
 Like those in fable feign'd,  
 And seem'd by some magician's art  
 Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,  
 Had been exerted none,  
 To raise such wonders in her view,  
 Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirits cheer'd,  
 And through the cumbrous throng,  
 Not else unworthy to be fear'd,  
 Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene  
 The sea-maid rides the waves,  
 And fearless of the billowy scene  
 Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes  
 She view'd the sparkling show ;  
 One Georgian star adorns the skies,  
 She myriads found below.

<sup>1</sup> I may quote, in connexion with this poem, an anecdote in Cowper's letter to Mrs. King, January 29, 1789:—"Engaged as I am with my own private anxieties, I yet find leisure to interest myself not a little in the distresses of the Royal Family, especially in those of the Queen. The Lord Chancellor called the other morning on Lord Stafford; entering the room, he threw his hat into a sofa at the fireside, and clasping his hands, said, 'I have heard of distress, and I have read of it; but I never saw distress equal to that of the Queen.' This I know from particular and certain authority."

Yet let the glories of a night  
 Like that, once seen, suffice,  
 Heav'n grant us no such future sight,  
 Such previous woe the price!

THE COCKFIGHTER'S GARLAND.<sup>1</sup>

MUSE—Hide his name of whom I sing,  
 Lest his surviving house thou bring  
 For his sake into scorn,  
 Nor speak the school from which he drew  
 The much or little that he knew,  
 Nor place where he was born.

That such a man once was, may seem  
 Worthy of record (if the theme  
 Perchance may credit win)  
 For proof to man, what man may prove,  
 If grace depart, and demons move  
 The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild  
 Disclaims him, man he must be styled)  
 Wanted no good below;  
 Gentle he was, if gentle birth  
 Could make him such, and he had worth,  
 If wealth could worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest,  
 He shone superior at the feast,  
 And qualities of mind,  
 Illustrious in the eyes of those,  
 Whose gay society he chose,  
 Possess'd of ev'ry kind.

Methinks I see him powder'd red  
 With bushy locks his well-dress'd head  
 Wing'd broad on either side.  
 The mossy rose-bud not so sweet;  
 His steeds superb, his carriage neat  
 As lux'ry could provide.

<sup>1</sup> "I have composed a small poem on a hideous subject, with which the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for April furnished me: it is, nevertheless, a true one, hideous as it is. Mr. Bull and Mr. Greathead, who both have seen the man on whose death it is written, know that he died as there related." (June 6, 1789.)

Can such be cruel? Such can be  
 Cruel as hell, and so was he;  
 A tyrant entertain'd  
 With barb'rous sports, whose fell delight  
 Was to encourage mortal fight  
 'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

One feather'd champion he possess'd,  
 His darling far beyond the rest,  
 Which never knew disgrace,  
 Nor e'er had fought, but he made flow  
 The life-blood of his fiercest foe,  
 The Casar of his race.

It chanced, at last, when, on a day,  
 He push'd him to the desp'rate fray,  
 His courage droop'd, he fled.  
 The master storm'd, the prize was lost:  
 And, instant, frantic at the cost,  
 He doom'd his fav'rite dead.

He seiz'd him fast, and from the pit  
 Flew to the kitchen, snatch'd the spit,  
 And, bring me cord, he cried;  
 The cord was brought, and, at his word,  
 To that dire implement the bird  
 Alive and struggling tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,  
 And all the terrors of the tale  
 That can be, shall be, sunk—  
 Led by the sufferer's screams aright,  
 His shock'd companions view the sight  
 And him with fury drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate  
 For the old warrior at the grate:  
 He deaf to pity's call  
 Whirl'd round him rapid as a wheel  
 His culinary club of steel,  
 Death menacing on all.

But vengeance hung not far remote,  
 For while he stretch'd his clam'rous throat,  
 And heav'n and earth defied,  
 Big with a curse too closely pent  
 That struggled vainly for a vent,  
 He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,  
 To point the judgments of the skies,  
 But judgments plain as this,  
 That, sent for man's instruction, bring  
 A written label on their wing,  
 'Tis hard to read amiss.

---

ON THE BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY FROM  
 SEA-BATHING, IN THE YEAR 1789.

O SOV'REIGN of an isle renown'd  
 For undisputed sway  
 Wherever o'er yon gulf profound  
 Her navies wing their way;

With juster claim she builds at length  
 Her empire on the sea,  
 And well may boast the waves her strength,  
 Which strength restored to Thee.

---

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON A FACT WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream,  
 There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme.  
 In subterraneous caves his life he led,  
 Black as the mine, in which he wrought for bread.  
 When, on a day, emerging from the deep,  
 A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep!)  
 The wages of his weekly toil he bore  
 To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;  
 As if the noblest of the feather'd kind  
 Were but for battle and for death design'd;  
 As if the consecrated hours were meant  
 For sport, to minds on cruelty intent;  
 It chanced, (such chances Providence obey)  
 He met a fellow-lab'rer on the way,  
 Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed;  
 But now the savage temper was reclaim'd.  
 Persuasion on his lips had taken place;  
 For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.

His iron-heart with Scripture he assail'd,  
 Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.  
 His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,  
 Swift, as the light'ning-glimpse, the arrow flew.  
 He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,  
 To find a worse than he; but none he found.  
 He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel;  
 Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.

Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies  
 He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.  
 That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,  
 Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.  
 The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine  
 Learn'd, by his alter'd speech—the change divine!  
 Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day  
 Was nigh, when he would swear as fast as they.  
 "No (said the penitent): such words shall share  
 This breath no more; devoted now to pray'r.  
 O! if Thou seest, (thine eye the future sees)  
 That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these;  
 Now strike me to the ground, on which I kneel,  
 Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;  
 Now take me to that Heaven I once defied,  
 Thy presence, thy embrace!" He spoke, and died!

## STANZAS

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH OF

ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON, ANNO DOMINI 1787.

*Pallida Mors equo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
 Regumque turres.* HORACE.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door  
 Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run  
 The Nen's barge-laden wave  
 All these, life's rambling journey done,  
 Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail  
 Than in foregoing years?  
 Did famine or did plague prevail,  
 That so much death appears?



No; these were vigorous as their sires,  
 Nor plague nor famine came;  
 This annual tribute Death requires,  
 And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,  
 And some are marked to fall;  
 The axe will smite at God's command,  
 And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,  
 With its new foliage on,  
 The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,  
 I passed,—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth  
 With which I charge my page!  
 A worm is in the bud of youth,  
 And at the root of age.

No present health can health insure  
 For yet an hour to come;  
 No medicine, though it oft can cure,  
 Can always balk the tomb.

And oh! that humble as my lot,  
 And scorned as is my strain,  
 These truths, though known, too much forgot,  
 I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,  
 And, ere he quits the pen,  
 Begs you for once to take his part,  
 And answer all—Amen!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows:—'Sir, I am clerk of the Parish of All Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr. C., the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You will do me a great favour, sir, if you would furnish me with one.' To this I replied, 'Mr. C., you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, C., the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose.' 'Alas, sir! I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading, that the people of our town cannot understand him.' I confess to you I felt all the force of the compliment." (To Lady Hesketh, Nov. 27 1787.)

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.<sup>1</sup>

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

Quod adest, memento  
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis  
Ritu ferantur. HORACE.

Improve the present hour, for all beside  
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage  
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,  
As I can number in my punctual page,  
And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet  
On which the press might stamp him next to die;  
And, reading here his sentence, how replete  
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys  
In which he sports away the treasure now;  
And prayer more seasonable than the noise  
Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink  
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,  
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,  
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah, self-deceived! Could I prophetic say  
Who next 's fated, and who next to fall,  
The rest might then seem privileged to play;  
But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to all.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light  
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade;  
One falls—the rest, wide scattered with affright,  
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

<sup>1</sup> "It is pretty well known, (the clerk took care it should be so,) both at Northampton and in this county, who wrote the Mortuary Verses. All that I know of their success is, that he sent a bundle of them to Maurice Smith, at Olney, who sold them for threepence a-piece—a high price for a *memento mori*, a commodity not generally in great request." (Feb. 7, 1788.)

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warned,  
 Still need repeated warnings, and at last,  
 A thousand awful admonitions scorned,  
 Die self-accused of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for which no after thrift atones !  
 The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin ;  
 Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,  
 But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living ! by the mouths be taught  
 Of all those sepulchres, instructors true,  
 That, soon or late, death also is your lot,  
 And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

---

### ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—*Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.*      *V. 120.*  
 There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

“ O most delightful hour by man  
 Experienced here below,  
 The hour that terminates his span,  
 His folly and his woe !

“ Worlds should not bribe me back to tread  
 Again life's dreary waste,  
 To see again my day o'erspread  
 With all the gloomy past.

“ My home henceforth is in the skies,  
 Earth, seas, and sun, adieu !  
 All heaven unfolded to my eyes,  
 I have no sight for you.”

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd  
 Of faith's supporting rod,  
 Then breathed his soul into its rest,  
 The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few  
Sincere on virtue's side;  
And all his strength from Scripture drew,  
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he feared,  
He hated, hoped, and loved;  
Nor ever frowned, or sad appeared,  
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,  
And evil felt within;  
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,  
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last  
Called up from earth to heaven,  
The gulf of death triumphant passed,  
By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be mine, each reader cries,  
When my last hour arrives;  
They shall be yours, my verse replies,  
Such only be your lives.

---

### ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

*Ne commentem recta sperne.* BUCHANAN.

Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day  
Where the prisoned lark is hung,  
Heedless of his loudest lay,  
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round  
Nightly lifts his voice on high,  
None accustomed to the sound  
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and Clerk,  
Yearly in my song proclaim  
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—  
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,  
Publishing to all aloud,—  
Soon the grave must be your home,  
And your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,  
Oft repeated in your ears,  
Seems to sound too much in vain,  
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confessed  
Of such magnitude and weight,  
Grow, by being oft impressed,  
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,  
Hear it often as we may;  
New as ever seem our sins,  
Though committed every day.

Death and judgment, Heaven and Hell—  
These alone, so often heard,  
No more move us than the bell  
When some stranger is interred.

Oh then, ere the turf or tomb  
Cover us from every eye,  
Spirit of instruction! come,  
Make us learn that we must die

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari — VIRG.

Happy the mortal who has traced effects  
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,  
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires ?

THANKLESS for favours from on high,  
Man thinks he fades too soon ;  
Though 'tis his privilege to die,  
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan  
His blest concerns aright,  
Would gladly stretch life's little span  
To ages, if he might ;

To ages in a world of pain,  
To ages, where he goes  
Galled by affliction's heavy chain,  
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,  
Enamoured of its harm !  
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,  
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power ?  
Why deem we Death a foe ?  
Recoil from weary life's best hour,  
And covet longer woe ?

The cause is Conscience :—Conscience oft  
Her tale of guilt renews ;  
Her voice is terrible though soft,  
And dread of Death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared  
Man mourns his fleeting breath :  
All evils then seem light, compared  
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him ; there's the fear,  
That prompts the wish to stay :  
He has incurred a long arrear,  
And must despair to pay.

*Pay!*—follow Christ, and all is paid :  
His death your peace ensures ;  
Think on the grave where He was laid,  
And calm descend to yours.

---

### ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.  
CIC. *De Leg.*

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred  
be inviolate.

HE lives who lives to God alone,  
And all are dead beside ;  
For other source than God is none  
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite  
His love as best we may ;  
To make his precepts our delight,  
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring  
Of giddy joys comprised,  
Is falsely named, and no such thing,  
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,  
Who only live to prove  
For what poor toys they can disclaim  
An endless life above ?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel ;  
Much menaced, nothing dread ;  
Have wounds which only God can heal,  
Yet never ask His aid ?

Who deem His house a useless place,  
 Faith, want of common sense;  
 And ardour in the Christian race,  
 A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day  
 Which God asserts His own  
 Dishonour with unhallowed play,  
 And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impressed  
 On word and deed, imply  
 The better part of man unblessed  
 With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want, uncured  
 Till man resigns his breath,  
 Speaks him a criminal, assured  
 Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!  
 Yet so will God repay  
 Sabbaths profaned without remorse,  
 And mercy cast away.

---

### THE POET'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

MARIA!<sup>1</sup> I have every good  
 For thee wished many a time,  
 Both sad and in a cheerful mood,  
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,  
 More prudent or more sprightly,  
 Or more ingenious, or more freed  
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possessed  
 Can I for thee require,  
 In wedded love already blessed,  
 To thy whole heart's desire?

<sup>1</sup> Throckmorton.



None here is happy but in part;  
Full bliss is bliss divine;  
There dwells some wish in every heart,  
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day  
Which fate shall brightly gild,  
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)  
I wish it all fulfilled.

## THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,  
Afric's coast I left forlorn,  
To increase a stranger's treasures,  
O'er the raging billows borne.  
Men from England bought and sold me,  
Paid my price in paltry gold;  
But, though slave they have enrolled me,  
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,  
What are England's rights, I ask,  
Me from my delights to sever,  
Me to torture, me to task?  
Fleecy locks and black complexion  
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;  
Skins may differ, but affection  
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature  
Make the plant for which we toil?  
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,  
Lolling at your jovial boards,  
Think how many backs have smarted  
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,  
Is there One who reigns on high?  
Has He bid you buy and sell us,  
Speaking from His throne, the sky?

Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,  
Matches, blood-extorting screws,  
Are the means that duty urges  
Agents of His will to use?

Hark! He answers!—wild tornadoes  
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,  
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
Are the voice with which He speaks.  
He, foreseeing what vexations  
Afric's sons should undergo,  
Fixed their tyrants' habitations  
Where his whirlwinds answer—No

By our blood in Afric wasted,  
Ere our necks received the chain;  
By the miseries that we tasted,  
Crossing in your barks the main;  
By our sufferings, since ye brought us  
To the man-degrading mart,  
All sustain'd by patience, taught us  
Only by a broken heart!

Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
Till some reason ye shall find  
Worthier of regard and stronger  
Than the colour of our kind.  
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings  
Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
Prove that you have human feelings,  
Ere you proudly question ours!

## PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

*Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.*

I OWN I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,  
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves ;  
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,  
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,  
For how could we do without sugar and rum ?  
Especially sugar, so needful we see ;  
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea !

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes  
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains ;  
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will ;  
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,  
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said,  
But while they get riches by purchasing blacks,  
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind  
A story so pat, you may think it is coined,  
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint ;  
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,  
Had once his integrity put to the test ;  
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,  
And asked him to go and assist in the job.

He was shocked, sir, like you, and answered, " Oh no !  
What ! rob our good neighbour ? I pray you don't go :  
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread :  
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

" You speak very fine, and you look very grave,  
But apples we want, and apples we'll have ;  
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,  
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom pondered—"I see they will go;  
 Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!  
 Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,  
 But staying behind will do him no good.

\* If the matter depended alone upon me,  
 His apples might hang till they dropped from the tree;  
 But since they will take them, I think I'll go too;  
 He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,  
 And went with his comrades the apples to seize;  
 He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan;  
 He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

### THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,  
 Asleep at the dawn of the day,  
 I dreamed what I cannot but sing,  
 So pleasant it seemed as I lay.  
 I dreamed that on ocean afloat,  
 Far hence to the westward I sailed,  
 While the billows high lifted the boat,  
 And the fresh-blowing breeze never failed

In the steerage a woman I saw;  
 Such at least was the form that she wore,  
 Whose beauty impressed me with awe,  
 Ne'er taught me by woman before.  
 She sat, and a shield at her side  
 Shed light, like a sun, on the waves,  
 And, smiling divinely, she cried—  
 "I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain  
 The sweetest that ear ever heard,  
 She sung of the slave's broken chain  
 Wherever her glory appeared.  
 Some clouds, which had over us hung,  
 Fled, chased by her melody clear,  
 And methought while she liberty sung,  
 'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,  
 To a slave-cultured island we came,  
 Where a demon, her enemy, stood—  
 Oppression his terrible name;  
 In his hand, as the sign of his sway,  
 A scourge hung with lashes he bore,  
 And stood looking out for his prey  
 From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land  
 That goddess-like woman he viewed,  
 The scourge he let fall from his hand,  
 With blood of his subjects imbrued.  
 I saw him both sicken and die,  
 And the moment the monster expired,  
 Heard shouts that ascended the sky,  
 From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse  
 At what such a dream should betide?  
 But soon my ear caught the glad news,  
 Which served my weak thought for a guide,—  
 That Britannia, renowned o'er the waves  
 For the hatred she ever has shown  
 To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,  
 Resolves to have none of her own.

---

SWEET MEAT HAS SOUR SAUCE;

OR, THE SLAVE TRADE IN THE DUMPS.

A TRADER I am to the African shore,  
 But since that my trading is like to be o'er,  
 I'll sing you a song that you ne'er heard before,  
 Which nobody can deny, deny,  
 Which nobody can deny.

When I first heard the news it gave me a shock,  
 Much like what they call an electrical knock,  
 And now I am going to sell off my stock,  
 Which nobody, &c

'Tis a curious assortment of dainty regales,  
 To tickle the negroes with when the ship sails,  
 Fine chains for the neck, and a cat with nine tails,  
 Which nobody, &c

Here's supple-jack plenty and store of rat-tan,  
 That will wind itself round the sides of a man,  
 As close as a hoop round a bucket or can,  
 Which nobody, &c

Here's padlocks and bolts, and screws for the thumbs,  
 That squeeze them so lovingly till the blood comes ;  
 They sweeten the temper like comfits or plums,  
 Which nobody, &c

When a negro his head from his victuals withdraws,  
 And clenches his teeth and thrusts out his paws,  
 Here's a notable engine to open his jaws,  
 Which nobody, &c.

Thus going to market, we kindly prepare  
 A pretty black cargo of African ware,  
 For what they must meet with when they get there,  
 Which nobody, &c.

'Twould do your heart good to see 'em below  
 Lie flat on their backs all the way as we go,  
 Like sprats on a gridiron, scores in a row,  
 Which nobody, &c.

But ah! if in vain I have studied an art,  
 So gainful to me, all boasting apart,  
 I think it would break my compassionate heart,  
 Which nobody, &c

For oh! how it enters my soul like an awl!  
 This pity, which some people self-pity call,  
 Is sure the most heart-piercing pity of all,  
 Which nobody, &c

So this is my song, as I told you before ;  
 Come, buy off my stock, for I must no more  
 Carry Cæsars and Pompeys to sugar-cane shore,  
 Which nobody, &c.

## EPIGRAM.

To purify their wine, some people bleed  
 A lamb into the barrel, and succeed ;  
 No nostrum, planters say, is half so good  
 To make fine sugar, as a negro's blood.  
 Now lambs and negroes both are harmless things,  
 And hence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs.  
 'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—  
 Good cause why planters never try their own.

## THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR, TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,  
 To laugh it would be wrong,  
 The troubles of a worthy priest,  
 The burthen of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe  
 Three quarters of a year,  
 But oh! it cuts him like a scythe  
 When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,  
 As one at point to die,  
 And long before the day appears  
 He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,  
 Along the miry road,  
 Each heart as heavy as a log,  
 To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days  
 Is not to be expressed,  
 When he that takes and he that pay  
 Are both alike distressed.

Now all unwelcome at his gates  
 The clumsy swains alight,  
 With rueful faces and bald pates,—  
 He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows  
 Each bumpkin of the clan,  
 Instead of paying what he owes,  
 Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,  
 And flings his head before,  
 And looks as if he came to beg,  
 And not to quit a score.

“And how does miss and madam do,  
 The little boy and all?”  
 “All tight and well. And how do you,  
 Good Mr. What-d’ye call?”

The dinner comes, and down they sit:  
 Were e’er such hungry folk?  
 There’s little talking and no wit;  
 It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,  
 One spits upon the floor,  
 Yet not to give offence or grieve,  
 Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull  
 And lumpish still as ever;  
 Like barrels with their bellies full,  
 They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.  
 “Come, neighbours, we must wag—”  
 The money chinks, down drop their chins,  
 Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,  
 And one of storms of hail,  
 And one of pigs that he has lost  
 By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, “A rarer man than you  
 In pulpit none shall hear;  
 But yet, methinks, to tell you true,  
 You sell it piuguy dear.”



O why were farmers made so coarse,  
 Or clergy made so fine?  
 A kick that scarce would move a horse,  
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;  
 'Twould cost him, I dare say,  
 Less trouble taking twice the sum,  
 Without the clowns that pay.

## SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

*On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren  
 Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.*

COWPER, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard  
 Legends prolix delivers in the ears  
 (Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,  
 Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.  
 Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,  
 Expending late on all that length of plea  
 Thy generous powers, but silence honoured thee,  
 Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.  
 Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside  
 Both heart and head; and couldst with music sweet  
 Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,  
 Like thy renowned forefathers, far and wide  
 Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet  
 Of others' speech, but magic of thy own.

## THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs  
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,  
 When 'scaped from literary cares,  
 I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,  
 And high in pedigree,  
 (Two nymphs<sup>1</sup> adorned with every grace  
 That spaniel found for me,)

Now wantoned lost in flags and reeds  
 Now starting into sight,  
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads,  
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed  
 His lilies newly blown;  
 Their beauties I intent surveyed,  
 And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought  
 To steer it close to land;  
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,  
 Escaped my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains  
 With fixed considerate face,  
 And puzzling set his puppy brains  
 To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,  
 Dispensing all his dream,  
 I thence withdrew, and followed long  
 The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned;  
 Beau, trotting far before,  
 The floating wreath again discerned,  
 And plunging, left the shore.

I saw him, with that lily cropped,  
 Impatient swim to meet  
 My quick approach, and soon he dropped  
 The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, the world I cried,  
 Shall hear of this thy deed:  
 My dog shall mortify the pride  
 Of man's superior breed:

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Gunning's daughter.

But chief myself I will enjoin,  
Awake at duty's call,  
To show a love as prompt as thine  
To Him who gives me all.

---

MOTTO FOR A CLOCK.

Quæ lenta accedit, quam velox præterit hora!  
Ut capias, patiens esto, sed esto vigil!

Slow comes the hour; its passing speed how great!  
Waiting to seize it—vigilantly wait!

---

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.

THE birds put off their every hue,  
To dress a room for Montagu.  
The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,  
His rainbows and his starry eyes;  
The pheasant, plumes which round infold  
His mantling neck with downy gold;  
The cock, his arched tail's azure show;  
And, river-blanchèd, the swan his snow.  
All tribes beside of Indian name,  
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,  
Where rises and where sets the day,  
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,  
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,  
Proud to advance it all they can.  
This plumage neither dashing shower,  
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,  
Shall drench again or discompose;  
But, screened from every storm that blows,  
It boasts a splendour ever new,  
Safe with protecting Montagu.  
To the same patroness resort,  
Secure of favour at her court,  
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought  
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,

Which, though new-born, with vigour move  
 Like Pallas, springing armed from Jove;  
 Imagination scattering round  
 Wild roses over furrowed ground,  
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,  
 And teach Philosophy a smile;  
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,  
 Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,  
 The gem, though luminous before,  
 Obtrude on human notice more,  
 Like sunbeams on the golden height  
 Of some tall temple playing bright;  
 Well tutored Learning from his books  
 Dismissed with grave, not haughty looks,  
 Their order on his shelves exact,  
 Not more harmonious or compact  
 Than that, to which he keeps confined  
 The various treasures of his mind;  
 All these to Montagu's repair,  
 Ambitious of a shelter there.  
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,  
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,  
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar  
 Around their flight who highest soar,)  
 And in her eye, and by her aid,  
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway  
 With you bright regent of the day,  
 The Plume and Poet both, we know,  
 Their lustre to his influence owe;  
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,  
 Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S  
 BULLFINCH.

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red  
 With tears o'er hapless fav'rites shed,  
 O, share Maria's grief!  
 Her fav'rite, even in his cage,  
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)  
 Assassined by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,  
 The egg was laid from which he sprung,  
 And though by nature mute,  
 Or only with a whistle blessed,  
 Well taught he all the sounds expressed  
 Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll  
 Were brighter than the sleekest mole,  
 His bosom of the hue  
 With which Aurora decks the skies,  
 When piping winds shall soon arise  
 To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,  
 Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,  
 No cat had leave to dwell;  
 And Bully's cage supported stood  
 On props of smoothest shaven wood,  
 Large-built and latticed well.

Well-latticed—but the grate, alas!  
 Not rough with wire of steel or brass,  
 For Bully's plumage sake,  
 But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,  
 With which, when neatly peeled and dried,  
 The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole: all seemed secure:  
 When, led by instinct sharp and sure,  
 Subsistence to provide,  
 A beast forth sallied on the scout,  
 Long backed, long tailed, with whiskered snout,  
 And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,  
 Its ample area 'gan explore;  
 And something in the wind  
 Conjectured, sniffing round and round,  
 Better than all the books he found,  
 Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,  
 A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;  
 In sleep he seem'd to view  
 A rat fast clinging to the cage,  
 And, screaming at the sad presage,  
 Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,  
 Right to his mark the monster went,—  
 Ah, Muse, forbear to speak  
 Minute the horrors that ensued ;  
 His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—  
 He left poor Bully's beak.

O, had he made that too his prey !  
 That beak whence issued many a lay,  
 Of such mellifluous tone,  
 Might have repaid him well, I wote,  
 For silencing so sweet a throat,  
 Fast stuck within his own.

MA<sup>RIA</sup> weeps,—the Muses mourn—  
 So, when by Bacchanalians torn,  
 On Thracian Hebrus' side  
 The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,  
 His head alone remained to tell  
 The cruel death he died.

---

AN EPISTLE TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT  
 LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER's purpose in these lays  
 Is to congratulate and not to praise.  
 To give the creature the Creator's due  
 Were sin in me, and an offence to you.  
 From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,  
 Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,  
 A coin by craft for folly's use designed,  
 Spurious, and only current with the blind.  
 The path of sorrow, and that path alone  
 Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.  
 No traveller ever reach'd that blest abode,  
 Who found not thorns and briers in his road.  
 The world may dance along the flowery plain,  
 Cheered as they go by many a sprightly strain ;  
 Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,  
 With unshod feet they yet securely tread ;  
 Admonished, scorn the caution and the friend,  
 Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.

But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,  
 How slow to learn the dictates of his love,  
 That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,  
 A life of ease would make them harder still,  
 In pity to the souls his grace design'd  
 To rescue from the ruins of mankind,  
 Called for a cloud to darken all their years,  
 And said "Go spend them in the vale of tears!"  
 O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!  
 O salutary streams that murmur there!  
 These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,  
 Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.  
 The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,  
 Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,  
 An envious world will interpose its frown  
 To mar delights superior to its own,  
 And many a pang experienced still within,  
 Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin:  
 But ills of every shape and every name,  
 Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim:  
 And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,  
 Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast  
 Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!  
 No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,  
 But the chief Shepherd even there is near;  
 Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain  
 Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;  
 Thy tears all issue from a source divine,  
 And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.  
 So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,  
 And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

---

## THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

### A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,  
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,  
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,  
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,  
 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,  
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,  
 Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,  
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.

A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,  
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;  
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,  
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;  
 And where the land slopes to its watery bourn  
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;  
 Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago;  
 And horrid brambles intertwine below;  
 A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,  
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.  
 Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,  
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;  
 Nor autumn yet had brushed from every spray,  
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;  
 But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,  
 Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,  
 With tails high-mounted, ears hung low, and throats  
 With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,  
 For which, alas! my destiny severe,  
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun, accomplishing his early march,  
 His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,  
 When, exercise and air my only aim,  
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,  
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound  
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,  
 Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang  
 All Kilwick<sup>1</sup> and all Dingleberry<sup>1</sup> rang.

Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom  
 pressed

The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;  
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,  
 Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.  
 All seemed so peaceful, that, from them conveyed,  
 To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,  
 'Gan make his instrument of music speak,  
 And from within the wood that crash was heard,  
 Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,  
 The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,  
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,  
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,  
 Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round  
 again:

<sup>1</sup> Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.



But recollecting with a sudden thought,  
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,  
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,  
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long,  
Perceives in everything that lives a tongue;  
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees  
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;  
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,  
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;  
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,  
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;  
But, with precision nicer still, the mind  
He scans of every locomotive kind;  
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,  
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;  
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears  
Have all articulation in his ears;  
He spells them true by intuition's light,  
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,  
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused; surveying every face,  
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;  
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,  
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,  
That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt,  
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;  
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,  
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;  
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,  
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad addressed:  
"Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard  
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.  
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent  
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,  
And from their prison-house below arise,  
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,  
I could be much composed, nor should appear,  
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.  
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled  
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.  
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,  
I could expound the melancholy tone;  
Should deem it by our old companion made,  
The ass; for he, we know, has lately strayed.

And, being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,  
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.  
But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear  
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear?  
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed.  
And fanged with brass the demons are abroad:  
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit  
That, life to save, we leap into the pit."

Him answered then his loving mate and true,  
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

"How? leap into the pit our life to save?  
To save our life leap all into the grave?  
For can we find it less? Contemplate first  
The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:  
Or should the brambles interposed our fall  
In part abate, that happiness were small;  
For with a race like theirs no chance I see  
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.  
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,  
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,  
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues  
Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,  
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,  
We have at least commodious standing here.  
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast  
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,  
For Reynard, close attended at his heels  
By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,  
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.  
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road  
Following that led me to my own abode,  
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found  
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,  
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

#### MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,  
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

## ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVER

I RANSACKED, for a theme of song,  
 Much ancient chronicle, and long;  
 I read of bright embattled fields,  
 Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields  
 Of chiefs whose single arm could boast  
 Prowess to dissipate a host;  
 Through tomes of fable and of dream  
 I sought an eligible theme,  
 But none I found, or found them shared  
 Already by some happier bard.

To modern times, with truth to guide  
 My busy search, I next applied;  
 Here cities won and fleets dispersed,  
 Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,  
 Deeds of unperishing renown,  
 Our father's triumphs and our own.

Thus as the bee, from bank to bower,  
 Assiduous sips at every flower,  
 But rests on none till that be found  
 Where most nectareous sweets abound,  
 So I from theme to theme display'd  
 In many a page historic stray'd,  
 Siege after siege, fight after fight,  
 Contemplating with small delight,  
 (For feats of sanguinary hue  
 Not always glitter in my view.)  
 Till, settling on the current year,  
 I found the far-sought treasure near  
 A theme for poetry divine,  
 A theme to ennoble even mine,  
 In memorable eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be  
 An æra cherish'd long by me,  
 Which joyful I will oft record,  
 And thankful at my frugal board;  
 For then the clouds of eighty-eight,  
 That threaten'd England's trembling state  
 With loss of what she least could spare,  
 Her sovereign's tutelary care,

One breath of heaven, that cried—Restore!  
Chased, never to assemble more;  
And for the richest crown on earth,  
If valued by its wearer's worth,  
The symbol of a righteous reign  
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd  
Our Queen's long-agitated breast;  
Such joy and peace as can be known  
By sufferers like herself alone,  
Who losing, or supposing lost,  
The good on earth they valued most,  
For that dear sorrow's sake forego  
All hope of happiness below,  
Then suddenly regain the prize,  
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!

O Queen of Albion, queen of isles!  
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,  
The eyes, that never saw thee, shine  
With joy not unallied to thine.  
Transports not chargeable with art  
Illumine the land's remotest part,  
And strangers to the air of courts,  
Both in their toils and at their sports,  
The happiness of answered prayers,  
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.

If they who on thy state attend,  
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,  
'Tis but the natural effect  
Of grandeur that ensures respect;  
But she is something more than Queen  
Who is beloved where never seen.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE  
OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM.<sup>1</sup>

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"  
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,  
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!  
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,  
I will obey, not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own;  
And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead.  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah, that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes  
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.

<sup>1</sup> Received, February 25, 1790. To Lady Hesketh he wrote (April 30, 1790):—"The General's approbation of my picture verses gave me much pleasure. I wrote them not without tears, therefore I presume it may be that they are felt by others. Should he offer me my father's picture, I shall gladly accept it. A melancholy pleasure is better than none—nay, verily, better than most."

May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!  
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern  
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return;  
 What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived;  
 By expectation every day beguiled,  
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.  
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,  
 I learned at last submission to my lot,  
 But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,<sup>1</sup>  
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;  
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
 Drew me to school along the public way,  
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped  
 'n scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,  
 'Tis now become a history little known,  
 That once we called the pastoral house our own.  
 Short-lived possession! But the record fair,  
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced  
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;  
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum;  
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed  
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed:  
 All this, and more endearing still than all,  
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,  
 That humour interposed too often makes;  
 All this still legible in memory's page,  
 And still to be so to my latest age,  
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may;  
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
 Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
 I pricked them into paper with a pin,

<sup>1</sup> The rectory at Great Berkhamstead, where he was born.

(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)  
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here<sup>6</sup>  
 I would not trust my heart;—the dear delight  
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—  
 But no—what here we call our life is such,  
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,  
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
 (The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed,  
 Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,  
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show  
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
 While airs impregnated with incense play  
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;  
 So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore.  
 "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;"  
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide  
 Of life long since has anchored by thy side.  
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
 Always from port withheld, always distressed,—  
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,  
 Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost.  
 And day by day some current's thwarting force  
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.  
 Yet O, the thought that thou art safe, and he!  
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
 My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;  
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—  
 The son of parents passed into the skies.  
 And now, farewell!—Time unrevoked has run  
 His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.  
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;  
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
 Without the sin of violating thine.  
 And while the wings of fancy still are free,  
 And I can view this mimic form of thee,  
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD.<sup>1</sup>

OUR good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,  
 Whose social converse was, itself, a feast.  
 O ye of riper age, who recollect  
 How once ye loved, and eyed him with respect,  
 Both in the firmness of his better day,  
 While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,  
 And when, impair'd by time and glad to rest,  
 Yet still with looks in mild complacence dress'd,  
 He took his annual seat and mingled here  
 His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear.  
 In morals blameless as in manners meek,  
 He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,  
 But, happy in whatever state below,  
 And richer than the rich in being so,  
 Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed  
 At length from One, as made him rich indeed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I make no apology for the introduction of the following lines, though I have never learned who wrote them. Their elegance will sufficiently recommend them to persons of classical taste and erudition, and I shall be happy if the English version that they have received from me, be found not to dishonour them. Affection for the memory of the worthy man whom they celebrate, alone prompted me to this endeavour.

SPOKEN AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION NEXT AFTER HIS DECEASE.

ABIIT senex! periit senex amabilis!  
 Quo non fuit jucundior.  
 Lugete vos, ætas quibus maturior  
 Senem colendum præstitit,  
 Seu quando, viribus valentioribus  
 Firmiter fretus pectore,  
 Florentiori vos juventute excolens  
 Curâ fovebat patriâ;  
 Seu quando fractus, jamque donatus rude  
 Vultu sed usque blandulo,  
 Miscere gaudebat suas facetias  
 His annuis leporibus.  
 Vixit probus, purâque simplex indole,  
 Blandisque comis moribus,  
 Et dives æquâ mente—charus omnibus  
 Unius suctus munere.  
 Ite, tituli! meritis bestioribus  
 Aptate laudes debitas!  
 Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens  
 Fortuna plus arriserat.  
 Placide senex! levi quiescas cespite,  
 Etsi superbum nec vivo tibi  
 Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo  
 Lapis notatus nomine.

<sup>2</sup> He was usher and under master of Westminster near fifty years, and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a handsome pension from the King. The Latin verses, we are informed by Southey, were written by Dr. Vincent.



Hence, then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here,  
 Go, garnish merit in a brighter sphere,  
 The brows of those whose more exalted lot  
 He could congratulate, but envied not.

Light lie the turf, good Senior! on thy breast,  
 And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest!  
 Tho', living, thou hadst more desert than fame,  
 And not a stone, now, chronicles thy name.

---

 TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE  
 "AD LIBRUM SUUM," FEBRUARY 1790.

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd  
 What honour awaited his ode  
 To his own little volume address'd,  
 The honour which you have bestow'd!  
 Who have traced it in characters here,  
 So elegant, even, and neat,  
 He had laugh'd at the critical sneer  
 Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,  
 A nymph shall hereafter arise  
 Who shall give me, when you are all dead,  
 The glory your malice denies;  
 Shall dignity give to my lay,  
 Although but a mere bagatelle;  
 And even a poet shall say,  
 Nothing ever was written so well.

---

 INSCRIPTION

FOR A STONE ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS  
 CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ., 1790.

OTHER stones the era tell,  
 When some feeble mortal fell;  
 I stand here to date the birth  
 Of these hardy sons of earth.

Which shall longest brave the sky,  
 Storm and frost—these oaks or I?  
 Pass an age or two away,  
 I must moulder and decay,  
 But the years that crumble me  
 Shall invigorate the tree,  
 Spread its branch, dilate its size,  
 Lift its summit to the skies.

Cherish honour, virtue, truth,  
 So shalt thou prolong thy youth.  
 Wanting these, however fast  
 Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,  
 He is lifeless even now,  
 Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

---

### A N O T H E R,

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME  
 PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR—ANNO 1791.

READER! behold a monument  
 That asks no sigh or tear,  
 Though it perpetuate the event  
 Of a great burial here.

---

### H Y M N

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r  
 In heaven thy dwelling-place,  
 From infants made the public care,  
 And taught to seek thy face!

'Thanks for thy Word and for thy Day;  
 And grant us, we implore,  
 Never to waste in sinful play  
 Thy holy Sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear—but oh! impart  
 To each desires sincere,  
 That we may listen with our heart,  
 And learn as well as hear.

'or if vain thoughts the mind engage  
Of elder far than we,  
What hope that at our heedless age  
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take  
Under thy gracious sway,  
Who canst the wisest wiser make,  
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,  
A sun that ne'er declines;  
And be thy mercies show'r'd on those  
Who placed us where it shines.<sup>1</sup>

## STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE  
REMAINS OF THE GREAT MILTON—ANNO 1790.<sup>2</sup>

"ME too, perchance, in future days,  
The sculptur'd stone shall show,  
With Paphian myrtle or with bays  
Parnassian on my brow.

"But I, or ere that season come,  
Escaped from every care,  
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb  
And sleep securely there."<sup>3</sup>

So sang, in Roman tone and style,  
The youthful bard, ere long  
Ordain'd to grace his native isle  
With her sublimest song.

<sup>1</sup> This hymn was written at the request of the Rev. James Nease, then Vicar of Olney, to be sung by the children of the Sunday schools of that town, after a charity sermon, preached at the parish church for their benefit, on Sunday, July 31, 1790.—JOHN JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> A coffin, supposed to be that of Milton, was opened at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, in the beginning of August.

<sup>3</sup> Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,  
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri  
Fronda comas, at ego secura pace quiescam.

Who then but must conceive disdain,  
 Hearing the deed unblest  
 Of wretches who have dar'd profane  
 His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heav'd the stone  
 Where Milton's ashes lay,  
 That trembled not to grasp his bones  
 And steal his dust away!

O ill-requited bard! neglect  
 Thy living worth repaid,  
 And blind idolatrous respect  
 As much affronts thee dead.

### TO MRS. KING,

OF HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR—A PATCHWORK  
 COUNTERPANE OF HER OWN MAKING.

THE Bard, if e'er he feel at all,  
 Must sure be quicken'd by a call  
 Both on his heart and head,  
 To pay with tuneful thanks the care  
 And kindness of a Lady fair  
 Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,  
 On Ida's barren top sublime,  
 (As Homer's Epic shows)  
 Composed of sweetest vernal flow'rs,  
 Without the aid of sun or show'rs  
 For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,  
 Is that which in the scorching day  
 Receives the weary swain  
 Who, laying his long scythe aside,  
 Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,  
 Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!  
 Looms numberless have groan'd for me!

Should ev'ry maiden come  
 To scramble for the patch that bears  
 The impress of the robe she wears,  
 The bell would toll for some.

And oh! what havoc would ensue!  
 This bright display of ev'ry hue  
 All in a moment fled!  
 As if a storm should strip the bow'rs  
 Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flow'rs—  
 Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to ev'ry gentle Fair  
 Who will not come to peck me bare,  
 As bird of borrow'd feather;  
 And thanks to One, above them all,  
 The gentle Fair of Pertenhall,  
 Who put the whole together.

## ANECDOTE OF HOMER.

Certain potters, while they were busied in baking their ware, seeing Homer at a small distance, and having heard much said of his wisdom, called to him, and promised him a present of their commodity, and of such other things as they could afford, if he would sing to them, when he sang as follows:—

PAY me my price, Potters! and I will sing.  
 Attend, O Pallas! and with lifted arm  
 Protect their oven; let the cups and all  
 The sacred vessels blacken well, and baked  
 With good success, yield them both fair renown  
 And profit, whether in the market sold  
 Or street, and let no strife ensue between us.  
 But, oh ye Potters! if with shameless front  
 Ye falsify your promise, then I leave  
 No mischief uninvoked t' avenge the wrong.  
 Come, Syntrips, Smaragus, Sabactes, c me,  
 And Asbetus, nor let your direst dread  
 Omodamus, delay! Fire seize your house,  
 May neither house nor vestibule escape;

\* No title is prefixed to this piece, but it appears to be a translation of one of the *Ἐπιγραμματα* of Homer, called 'Ο *Καμινος*, or the Furnace. The pre-  
 tatory lines are from the Greek of Herodotus, or whoever was the author of  
 the Life of Homer ascribed to him.—JOHN JOHNSON.

May ye lament to see confusion mar  
 And mingle the whole labour of your hands,  
 And may a sound fill all your ovens, such  
 As of a horse grinding his provender,  
 While all your pots and flagons bounce within.  
 Come hither, also, daughter of the sun,  
 Circe, the sorceress, and with thy drugs  
 Poison themselves, and all that they have made:  
 Come also, Chiron, with thy num'rous troop  
 Of Centaurs, as well those who died beneath  
 The club of Hercules, as who escaped,  
 And stamp their crockery to dust; down fall  
 Their chimney; let them see it with their eyes  
 And howl to see the ruin of their art,  
 While I rejoice; and if a potter stoop  
 To peep into his furnace, may the fire  
 Flash in his face and scorch it, that all men  
 Observe, thenceforth, equity and good faith.

---

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, ESQ

POETS attempt the noblest task they can,  
 Praising the Author of all good in man,  
 And, next, commemorating worthies lost,  
 The dead in whom that good abounded most.  
 Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more  
 Famed for thy probity from shore to shore.  
 Thee, THORNTON! worthy in some page to shine,  
 As honest and more eloquent than mine,  
 I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,  
 The world, no longer thy abode, not thee,  
 Thee to deplore, were grief mispent indeed;  
 It were to weep that goodness has its meed,  
 That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,  
 And glory for the virtuous, when they die.

What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,  
 Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,  
 Sweet as the privilege of healing woe  
 By virtue suffer'd combating below?  
 That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means  
 T' illumine with delight the saddest scenes,  
 Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn  
 As midnight, and despairing of a morn.

Thou hadst an industry in doing good,  
 Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;  
 A'rice, in thee, was the desire of wealth,  
 By rust unperishable or by stealth;  
 And if the genuine worth of gold depend  
 On application to its noblest end,  
 Thine had a value in the scales of Heav'n,  
 Surpassing all that mine or mint had giv'n.  
 And, tho' God made thee of a nature prone  
 To distribution boundless of thy own,  
 And still by motives of religious force  
 Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,  
 Yet was thy liberality discreet,  
 Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat;  
 And though in act unwearied, secret still,  
 As in some solitude the summer rill  
 Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,  
 And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.

Such was thy charity; no sudden start,  
 After long sleep, of passion in the heart,  
 But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,  
 Of close relation to th' eternal mind,  
 Traced easily to its true source above,  
 To Him whose works bespeak his nature, Love.

Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make  
 This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;  
 That the incredulous themselves may see  
 Its use and power exemplified in Thee.

---

## THE FOUR AGES.<sup>1</sup>

BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED FORM.

"I COULD be well content, allow'd the use  
 Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd  
 From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,  
 To recommence life's trial, in the hope  
 Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"

<sup>1</sup> Two years after this fragment was composed, Cowper told Hayley—"The utmost that I aspire to—and Heaven knows with how feeble a hope—is to write at some better opportunity, and when my hands are free, 'THE FOUR AGES.'"

Thus, while grey ev'ning hull'd the wind, and call'd  
 Fresh odours from the shrubb'ry at my side,  
 Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,  
 And held accustom'd conference with my heart;  
 When from within it thus a voice replied.

“Couldst thou in truth? and art thou taught at  
 length

This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?  
 Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,  
 Time wasted, violated laws, abuse  
 Of talents, judgments, mercies, better far  
 Than opportunity vouchsafed to err  
 With less excuse, and haply, worse effect?”

I heard, and acquiesced: then to and fro  
 Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,  
 My grav'ly bounds, from self to human kind  
 I pass'd, and next consider'd—what is man?

Knows he his origin? can he ascend  
 By reminiscence to his earliest date?  
 Slept he in Adam? and in those from him  
 Through num'rous generations, till he found  
 At length his destined moment to be born?  
 Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?  
 Deep myst'ries both! which schoolmen much have  
 toil'd  
 To unriddle, and have left them myst'ries still.

It is an evil incident to man,  
 And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves  
 Truths useful and attainable with ease,  
 To search forbidden deeps, where myst'ry lies  
 Not to be solved, and useless, if it might.  
 Myst'ries are food for angels; they digest  
 With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,  
 While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean  
 His manna from the ground, or starve, and die.



## THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,  
 Of numerous charms possess'd,  
 A warm dispute once chanced to wage,  
 Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,  
 Had both alike been mild:  
 But one, although her smile was sweet,  
 Frown'd oft'ner than she smiled.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,  
 Would raise her voice and roar,  
 And shake with fury to the ground  
 The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,  
 From all such frenzy clear,  
 Her frowns were seldom known to last,  
 And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song  
 The nymphs referr'd the cause,  
 Who, strange to tell, all judg'd it wrong,  
 And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,  
 The flippant and the scold,  
 And though she changed her mood so oft,  
 That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,  
 Or so resolved to err—  
 In short, the charms her sister had  
 They lavish'd all on her.

Then, thus the God whom fondly they  
 Their great Inspirer call,  
 Was heard, one genial summer's day,  
 To reprimand them all.

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,  
 "My fav'rite nymph to slight,  
 Adorning May, that peevish maid,  
 With June's undoubted right,

“The minx shall, for your folly’s sake,  
 Still prove herself a shrew,  
 Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,  
 And pinch your noses blue.”

### EPITAPH ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror’s tomb,  
 But happiest they, who win the world to come:  
 Believers have a silent field to fight,  
 And their exploits are veil’d from human sight.  
 They in some nook, where little known they dwell,  
 Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;  
 Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,  
 And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

### THE RETIRED CAT.

A POET’S cat, sedate and grave  
 As poet well could wish to have,  
 Was much addicted to inquire  
 For nooks to which she might retire,  
 And where, secure as mouse in chink,  
 She might repose, or sit and think.  
 I know not where she caught the trick—  
 Nature perhaps herself had cast her  
 In such a mould PHILOSOPHIQUE,  
 Or else she learn’d it of her master.  
 Sometimes ascending, *debonnair*,  
 An apple-tree, or lofty pear,  
 Lodg’d with convenience in the fork,  
 She watch’d the gard’ner at his work;  
 Sometimes her ease and solace sought  
 In an old empty wat’ring-pot,  
 There wanting nothing, save a fan,  
 To seem some nymph in her sedan  
 Apparell’d in exactest sort,  
 And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change it seems has place,  
 Not only in our wiser race,

Cats also feel, as well as we,  
 That passion's force, and so did she.  
 Her climbing, she began to find,  
 Expos'd her too much to the wind,  
 And the old utensil of tin  
 Was cold and comfortless within :  
 She therefore wish'd instead of those  
 Some place of more serene repose,  
 Where neither cold might come, nor air  
 Too rudely wanton with her hair,  
 And sought it in the likeliest mode  
 Within her master's snug abode.

A draw'r, it chanc'd, at bottom lined  
 With linen of the softest kind,  
 With such as merchants introduce  
 From India, for the ladies' use,  
 A draw'r impending o'er the rest,  
 Half open in the topmost chest,  
 Of depth enough, and none to spare,  
 Invited her to slumber there;  
 Puss, with delight beyond expression,  
 Surveyed the scene and took possession.  
 Recumbent at her ease ere long,  
 And lull'd by her own humdrum song,  
 She left the cares of life behind,  
 And slept as she would sleep her last;  
 When in came, housewifely inclined,  
 The chambermaid, and shut it fast,  
 By no malignity impell'd,  
 But all unconscious whom it held.

Awaken'd by the shock, (cried puss)  
 " Was ever cat attended thus !  
 The open drawer was left, I see,  
 Merely to prove a nest for me,  
 For soon as I was well composed  
 Then came the maid and it was closed.  
 How smooth these 'kerchiefs and how sweet !  
 Oh what a delicate retreat !  
 I will resign myself to rest  
 Till Sol declining in the west  
 Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,  
 Susan will come and let me out."

The evening came, the sun descended,  
 And puss remained still unattended.  
 The night roll'd tardily away,  
 (With her indeed, 'twas never day)  
 The sprightly morn her course renew'd,  
 The evening grey again ensued,  
 And puss came into mind no more  
 Than if entomb'd the day before.  
 With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room  
 She now presaged approaching doom,  
 Nor slept a single wink or purr'd,  
 Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.

That night, by chance, the poet watching  
 Heard an inexplicable scratching ;  
 His noble heart went pit-a-pat,  
 And to himself he said—"What's that?"  
 He drew the curtain at his side,  
 And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied ;  
 Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd  
 Something imprison'd in the chest,  
 And doubtful what, with prudent care  
 Resolv'd it should continue there.  
 At length, a voice which well he knew,  
 A long and melancholy mew,  
 Saluting his poetic ears,  
 Consoled him and dispell'd his fears ;  
 He left his bed, he trod the floor,  
 He 'gan in haste the draw'rs explore,  
 The lowest first, and without stop  
 The rest in order to the top.  
 For 'tis a truth well known to most,  
 That whatsoever thing is lost,  
 We seek it, ere it come to light,  
 In ev'ry cranny but the right.  
 Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete  
 As erst with airy self-conceit,  
 Nor in her own fond apprehension  
 A theme for all the world's attention ;  
 But modest, sober, cur'd of all  
 Her notions hyperbolical,  
 And wishing for a place of rest  
 Anything rather than a chest.  
 Then stepp'd the poet into bed  
 With this reflection in his head.

## MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense  
 Of your own worth and consequence.  
 The man who dreams himself so great,  
 And his importance of such weight,  
 That all around, in all that's done,  
 Must move and act for him alone,  
 Will learn in school of tribulation  
 The folly of his expectation.

## YARDLEY OAK.

[We owe to Hayley the discovery of this noble fragment. He came suddenly upon it—"a loose half-quire of large quarto paper"—amid a heap of discarded note-books and blotted manuscript; he tells us that he could hardly have been more surprised, if an oak, "in its natural majesty, had started up from the turf of the garden, with full foliage," before him. The walk to this hill was a great favourite with Cowper, though it was five miles at least from Weston Lodge. Mr. Howitt, who visited the spot in 1846, has given a graphic account of the scenery:—"In traversing the park, to reach the woods and Yardley Oak, we come into a genuinely agricultural region, swelling rounded eminences, with little valleys winding between them; here and there a farm-house of the most rustic description, the plough and its whistling followers turning up the ruddy soil. The vast extent of the forest which stretches before you, gives a deep feeling of silence and ancient repose. You descend into a valley, and Kilwick's echoing wood spreads itself before you on the upland. You pass through it, and come out opposite to a lonely farm-house, where, in the opening of the forest, you see the remains of very ancient oaks standing here and there; and amid these venerable trees you soon see the one which, by its bulk, its hollow trunk, and its lopped and dilapidated crown, need not be pointed out as the Yardley Oak." In Cowper's memorandum, the girth of the Yardley Oak is stated to be twenty-two feet six and a half inches; stepping round it at the foot, it appeared to Mr. Howitt to be above thirteen yards in circumference. Yardley Chase is the property of Lord Northampton, and an inscription on a board admonishes all pil-

ferers to respect the poetical relic. The lines were written in 1791  
Cowper produced no strain of a higher or a happier mood, and the  
grace and finish of the language are worthy of the thoughts.]

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all  
That once liv'd here, thy brethren, at my birth,  
(Since which I number threescore winters past)  
A shatter'd vet'ran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,  
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,  
Relics of ages! could a mind, imbued  
With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,  
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.

It seems idolatry with some excuse,  
When our forefather Druids in their oaks  
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet  
Unpurified by an authentic act  
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,  
Lov'd not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom  
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste  
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.

Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball,  
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,  
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd  
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down  
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs  
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.  
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains  
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil  
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,  
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared  
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,  
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,  
Ye reas'ners broad awake, whose busy search  
Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,  
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!  
Thou fell'st mature; and in the loamy clod,  
Swelling with vegetative force instinct,  
Did burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,  
Now stars; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact;  
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf.  
And, all the elements thy puny growth  
Fost'ring propitious, thou becam'st a twig.

Who lived, when thou wast such? Oh, could'st  
 thou speak,  
 As in Dodona once thy kindred trees  
 Oracular, I would not curious ask  
 The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth  
 Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.

By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,  
 The clock of history, facts and events  
 Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts  
 Recov'ring, and misstated setting right—  
 Desp'rate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;  
 And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave  
 For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs  
 O'erhung the champaign; and the num'rous flocks  
 That grazed it, stood beneath that ample cope  
 Uncrowded, yet safe-shelter'd from the storm.  
 No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived  
 Thy popularity, and art become  
 (Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing  
 Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd  
 Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;  
 Then twig; then sapling; and, as cent'ry roll'd  
 Slow after century, a giant-bulk  
 Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root  
 Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd  
 With prominent wens globose—till at the last  
 The rottenness, which time is charged to inflict  
 On other mighty ones, found also thee.

What exhibitions various hath the world  
 Witness'd of mutability in all  
 That we account most durable below!  
 Change is the diet on which all subsist,  
 Created changeable, and change at last  
 Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat  
 Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam  
 Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—  
 Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,  
 Invigorate by turns the springs of life  
 In all that live, plant, animal, and man,

And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,  
 Fine passing thought e'en in her coarsest works,  
 Delight in agitation, yet sustain,  
 The force that agitates, not unimpair'd;  
 But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause  
 Of their best tone their dissolution owe.

Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still  
 The great and little of thy lot, thy growth  
 From almost nullity into a state  
 Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,  
 Slow, into such magnificent decay.  
 Time was, when, settling on thy leaf, a fly  
 Could shake thee to thy root—and time has been  
 When tempests could not. At thy firmest age  
 Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,  
 That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the  
 deck

Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,  
 The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present  
 To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,  
 Warp'd into tough knee-timber, many a load!<sup>1</sup>  
 But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days  
 Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands to supply  
 The bottomless demands of contest, waged  
 For senatorial honours. Thus to time  
 The task was left to whittle thee away  
 With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,  
 Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,  
 Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,  
 Achieved a labour, which had far and wide,  
 By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.

Embowell'd row, and of thy ancient self  
 Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seem'd  
 A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,  
 Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,  
 Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st  
 The feller's toil, which thou could'st ill requite.  
 Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,  
 A quarry of stout spurs, and knotted fangs,  
 Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp  
 The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

<sup>1</sup> Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.—C.



So stands a kingdom whose foundation yet  
Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,  
Though all the superstructure, by the tooth  
Pulverized of venality, a shell  
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them out  
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild,  
With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left  
A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white;  
And some, memorial none where once they grew.  
But life still lingers in thee, and puts forth  
Proof not contemptible of what she can,  
Even where death predominates. The spring  
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force,  
Than yonder upstarts of the neighb'ring wood,  
So much thy juniors, who their birth received  
Half a millennium since the date of thine.

But since, although well qualified by age  
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice  
May be expected from thee, seated here  
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,  
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform  
Myself the oracle, and will discourse  
In my own ear such matter as I may.

One man alone, the father of us all,  
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,  
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,  
On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,  
Nor owed articulation to his ear;  
But, moulded by his Maker into man,  
At once upstood intelligent, survey'd  
All creatures, with precision understood  
Their purport, uses, properties, assign'd  
To each his name significant, and fill'd  
With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heav'n  
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.  
He was excused the penalties of dull  
Minority. No tutor charged his hand  
With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind  
With problems. History, not wanted yet,  
Lean'd on her elbow watching Time, whose course,  
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE,

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792.

WHENCE is it that, amazed I hear,  
 From yonder wither'd spray,  
 This foremost morn of all the year,  
 The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud  
 Of such a favour shown,  
 Am I selected from the crowd,  
 To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,  
 For that I also long  
 Have practised in the groves like thee,  
 Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force  
 Of some divine command,  
 Commission'd to presage a course  
 Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a lon  
 An I joyless year have I,  
 As thou to-day, put forth my song  
 Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,  
 Who only need'st to sing,  
 To make ev'n January charm,  
 And ev'ry season Spring.

<sup>1</sup> "You talk of primroses, that you pulled on Candlemas Day; but what think you of me, who heard a Nightingale on New Year's Day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune."—(To John Jonsson, March 11, 1792.)

## LINES

WRITTEN FOR INSERTION IN A COLLECTION OF HANDWRITINGS AND  
SIGNATURES MADE BY MISS PATTY, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.

IN vain to live from age to age  
While modern bards endeavour,  
I write my name in Patty's page,  
And gain my point for ever.

W. COWPER.

---

 EPITAPH

ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST, A FAVOURITE OF  
MISS SALLY HURDIS.<sup>1</sup>

THESE are not dew-drops, these are tears,  
And tears by Sally shed,  
For absent Robin, who she fears,  
With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand,  
As he was wont to come,  
And, on her finger perch'd, to stand  
Picking his breakfast-crumb.

Alarm'd she call'd him, and perplext  
She sought him, but in vain;  
That day he came not, nor the next,  
Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,  
Though where he fell, or how,  
None knows, so secret was his doom,  
Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died  
In social Robin's stead,  
Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,  
Or haply never shed.

<sup>1</sup> "Here are two nice damsels, not young, but of easy, elegant manners, expected every moment in the turret, and for them you must exert your humanity. This you will doubtless be ready to do, when I tell you they are two interesting sisters of Cowper's friend, poor Hurdis.—his sisters Eliza and Sally. Sally, you know, was his model for Cecilia, in his play of *Sir Thomas More*."—HAYLEY TO JOHN JOHNSON, March 6, 1807. (Life of Hayley, ii. 125.)

But Bob was neither rudely bold  
 Nor spiritlessly tame,  
 Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold.  
 But always in a flame.

---

SONNET TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

THY country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,  
 Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd  
 Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthral'd  
 From exile, public sale, and slav'ry's chain.  
 Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,  
 Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.  
 Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear  
 Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;  
 Hope smiles, joy springs, and though cold caution  
 pause  
 And weave delay, the better hour is near  
 That shall remunerate thy toils severe  
 By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.  
 Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love  
 From all the Just on earth, and all the Blest above.

---

TO DR. AUSTIN, OF CECIL STREET, LONDON

AUSTIN! accept a grateful verse from me,  
 The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.  
 Lov'd by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind  
 Pleasing requital in my verse may find;  
 Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,  
 Immortalizing names which else had died.  
 And oh! could I command the glittering wealth  
 With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;  
 Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,  
 Were in the power of verse like mine to give,  
 I would not recompense his art with less,  
 Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend!<sup>1</sup> I love thee, tho' unknown,  
 And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

<sup>1</sup> Hayley.

## SONNET

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

HAYLEY—thy tenderness fraternal shown,  
 In our first interview, delightful guest!  
 To Mary and me, for her dear sake distress'd,  
 Such as it is has made my heart thy own,  
 Though heedless now of new engagements grown.  
 For threescore winters make a wintry breast,  
 And I had purpos'd ne'er to go in quest  
 Of Friendship more, except with God alone.  
 But Thou hast won me; nor is God my foe,  
 Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,  
 Sent Thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,  
 My Brother, by whose sympathy I know  
 Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,  
 Not more t' admire the Bard than love the Man.

## CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON.<sup>1</sup>

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—  
 And meet perhaps never again;  
 The sun of that moment is set,  
 And seems to have risen in vain.  
 Catharina has fled like a dream,  
 (So vanishes pleasure, alas!)  
 But has left a regret and esteem  
 That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,  
 Catharina, Maria, and I,  
 Our progress was often delayed  
 By the nightingale warbling nigh.  
 We paused under many a tree,  
 And much she was charmed with a tone,  
 Less sweet to Maria and me,  
 Who so lately had witnessed her own.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Mrs. Courtenay.

My numbers that day she had sung,  
 And gave them a grace so divine,  
 As only her musical tongue  
 Could infuse into numbers of mine.  
 The longer I heard, I esteemed  
 The work of my fancy the more,  
 And e'en to myself never seemed  
 So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed  
 In number the days of the year,  
 Catharina, did nothing impede,  
 Would feel herself happier here;  
 For the close-woven arches of limes  
 On the banks of our river, I know,  
 Are sweeter to her many times  
 Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued  
 With a well-judging taste from above.  
 Then, whether embellished or rude,  
 'Tis nature alone that we love.  
 The achievements of art may amuse,  
 May even our wonder excite,  
 But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse  
 A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess  
 Catharina alone can rejoice,  
 May it still be her lot to possess  
 The scene of her sensible choice!  
 To inhabit a mansion remote  
 From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,  
 And by Philomel's annual note  
 To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,  
 To wing all her moments at home;  
 And with scenes that new rapture inspire,  
 As oft as it suits her to roam;  
 She will have just the life she prefers,  
 With little to hope or to fear,  
 And ours would be pleasant as hers,  
 Might we view her enjoying it here.

## CATHARINA:

## THE SECOND PART.

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEO. COURTENAY, ESQ., JUNE, 1792

BELIEVE it or not, as you choose,  
 The doctrine is certainly true,  
 That the future is known to the muse,  
 And poets are oracles too.  
 I did but express a desire,  
 To see Catharina at home,  
 At the side of my friend George's fire,  
 And lo—she is actually come.

Such prophecy some may despise,  
 But the wish of a poet and friend  
 Perhaps is approv'd in the skies,  
 And therefore attains to its end.  
 'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth  
 From a bosom effectually warm'd  
 With the talents, the graces, and worth  
 Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria<sup>1</sup> would leave us, I knew,  
 To the grief and regret of us all,  
 But less to our grief, could we view  
 Catharina the Queen of the Hall;  
 And therefore I wish'd as I did,  
 And therefore this union of hands;  
 Not a whisper was heard to forbid,  
 But all cry—Amen—to the bans.

Since therefore I seem to incur  
 No danger of wishing in vain,  
 When making good wishes for her,  
 I will e'en to my wishes again—  
 With one I have made her a Wife,  
 And now I will try with another,  
 Which I cannot suppress for my life—  
 How soon I can make her a Mother.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Throckmorton.

## AN EPITAPH. 1792.

HERE lies one who never drew  
 Blood himself, yet many slew;  
 Gave the gun its aim, and figure  
 Made in field, yet ne'er pulled trigger;  
 Armed men have gladly made  
 Him their guide, and him obey'd;  
 At his signified desire,  
 Would advance, present, and fire—  
 Stout he was, and large of limb,  
 Scores have fled in spite of him:  
 And to all this fame he rose  
 Only following his nose.  
 Neptune was he call'd; not he  
 Who controls the boist'rous sea,  
 But of happier command,  
 Neptune of the furrow'd land;  
 And, your wonder vain to shorten,  
*Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.*

## EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,  
 Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim  
 No sycophant, although of spaniel race,  
 And though no hound, a martyr to the chase—  
 Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,  
 Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;  
 This record of his fate exulting view,  
 He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.

"Yes—" the indignant shade of Fop replies—  
 "And worn with vain pursuit Man also dies."



## SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.,

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS,

DRAWN AT MARTHAM, IN THE SIXTY-FIRST YEAR OF MY AGE, AND  
IN THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1792.

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace  
 On chart or canvas, not the form alone  
 And semblance, but, however faintly shown,  
 The mind's impression too on every face—  
 With strokes that time ought never to erase  
 Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own  
 The subject worthless, I have never known  
 The artist shining with superior grace.  
 But this I mark—that symptoms none of woe  
 In thy incomparable work appear.  
 Well—I am satisfied it should be so,  
 Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see  
 When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to Thee?

---

## ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

IN language warm as could be breath'd or penn'd,  
 Thy picture speaks th' original my Friend;  
 Not by those looks that indicate thy mind,—  
 They only speak thee Friend of all mankind;  
 Expression here more soothing still I see,  
 That Friend of *all* a partial Friend to *me*.

---

## EPITAPH ON MR. CHESTER, OF CHICHELEY.

TEARS flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,  
 Till all who know him follow to the skies.  
 Tears therefore fall where Chester's ashes sleep;  
 Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants, weep—  
 And justly—few shall ever him transcend  
 As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

## ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S-BOWER,

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

THRIVE, gentle plant! and weave a bow'r  
 For Mary and for me,  
 And deck with many a splendid flow'r  
 Thy foliage large and free.

Thou cam'st from Eartham, and wilt shade  
 (If truly I divine)  
 Some future day th' illustrious head  
 Of him who made thee mine.

Should Daphne show a jealous frown,  
 And Envy seize the bay,  
 Affirming none so fit to crown  
 Such honour'd brows as they,

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,  
 And with convincing pow'r;  
 For why should not the Virgin's Friend  
 Be crown'd with Virgin's Bow'r?

## TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE, MADE BY  
 HERSELF, MAY 4, 1793.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,  
 When I was young, and thou no more  
 Than plaything for a nurse,  
 I danced and fondled on my knee,  
 A kitten both in size and glee,  
 I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;  
 But not of love;—that gem's too dear  
 For richest rogues to win it;  
 I, therefore, as a proof of love,  
 Esteem thy present far above  
 The best things kept within it.

## INSCRIPTION

FOR A HERMITAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S GARDEN, MAY 1733.

THIS cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,  
 Built as it has been in our waning years,  
 A rest afforded to our weary feet,  
 Preliminary to—the last retreat.

## TO MRS. UNWIN.

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,  
 Such aid from Heav'n as some have feign'd they drew  
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new  
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,  
 That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,  
 I may record thy worth with honour due,  
 In verse as musical as thou art true,  
 And that immortalizes whom it sings.  
 But thou hast little need. There is a book  
 By Seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,  
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,  
 A chronicle of actions just and bright;  
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,  
 And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

## TO JOHN JOHNSON,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!  
 When I behold this fruit of thy regard,  
 The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,  
 I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.  
 Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be  
 Wise men and learned, who grudge not to reward,  
 With some applause my bold attempt and hard,

Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.  
 The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine,  
 I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,  
 Handling his gold, which howsoe'er it shine,  
 Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.  
 Be wiser thou—like our forefather Donne,<sup>1</sup>  
 Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

---

### TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN  
 HAD FALLEN THERE.

If Gideon's<sup>2</sup> fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,  
 While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,  
 Might fitly represent the Church, endow'd  
 With heav'nly gifts, to heathens not allow'd;  
 In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,  
 Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.  
 Heav'n grant us half the omen—may we see  
 Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

---

### A T A L E.

In Scotland's realm, where trees are few,  
 Nor even shrubs abound;  
 But where, however bleak the view,  
 Some better things are found;

For husband there and wife may boast  
 Their union undefiled,  
 And false ones are as rare almost  
 As hedge-rows in the wild;

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare  
 The hist'ry chanced of late—  
 This hist'ry of a wedded pair,  
 A chaffinch and his mate.

<sup>1</sup> The maiden name of Cowper's mother was Anne Donne, a descendant of the famous Dean of St. Paul's, whose name and deserts, is the remark of Southey, "if his own works were forgotten, would be preserved by Izaak Walton." Donne is in no danger of oblivion, while any lovers of learning and genius remain.

<sup>2</sup> Judges vi. 37, 38.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast  
 With genial instinct fill'd :  
 They pair'd, and would have built a nest,  
 But found not where to build.

The heaths uncover'd and the moors,  
 Except with snow and sleet,  
 Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores,  
 Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding-place they sought,  
 Till both grew vex'd and tired ;  
 At length a ship arriving brought  
 The good so long desired.

A ship?—could such a restless thing  
 Afford them place of rest ?  
 Or was the merchant charged to bring  
 The homeless birds a nest ?

Hush—silent hearers profit most—  
 This racer of the sea  
 Proved kinder to them than the coast,  
 It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,  
 The tree they call a mast,  
 And had a hollow with a wheel  
 Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft  
 Their roofless home they fix'd,  
 Form'd with materials neat and soft,  
 Bents, wool, and feathers mixt.

Four iv'ry eggs soon pave its floor,  
 With russet specks bedight—  
 The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,  
 And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,  
 As she had changed her kind ;  
 But goes the male ? Far wiser, he  
 Is doubtless left behind ?

No—Soon as from ashore he saw  
 The winged mansion move,  
 He flew to reach it, by a law  
 Of never-failing love.

Then perching at his consort's side,  
 Was briskly borne along,  
 The billows and the blast defied,  
 And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight  
 His feather'd shipmates eyes,  
 Scarce less exulting in the sight  
 Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,  
 And from a chance so new  
 Each some approaching good divines,  
 And may his hopes be true!

Hail honour'd land! a desert where  
 Not even birds can hide,  
 Yet parent of this loving pair  
 Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign  
 Your matrimonial plan,  
 Were not afraid to plough the brine  
 In company with man;

For whose lean country much disdain  
 We English often show,  
 Yet from a richer nothing gain  
 But wantonness and woe;

Be it your fortune, year by year,  
 The same resource to prove,  
 And may ye, sometimes landing here,  
 Instruct us how to love!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This tale is founded on an article of intelligence which the author found in the *Buckinghamshire Herald*, for Saturday, June 1, 1793, in the following words:—

“Glasgow, May 23.

“In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom while the sea never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for

## TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

DEAR architect of fine CHATEAUX in air,  
 Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,  
 Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,  
 For back of royal elephant to bear!  
 O for permission from the skies to share,  
 Much to my own, though little to thy good,  
 With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)  
 A partnership of literary ware!  
 But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth  
 To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;  
 Bards, I acknowledge, of unequal'd worth!  
 But what is commentator's happiest praise?  
 That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,  
 Which they, who need them, use, and then despise;

ON A SPANIEL CALLED BEAU KILLING  
 A YOUNG BIRD.<sup>1</sup>

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,  
 Well-fed, and at his ease,  
 Should wiser be than to pursue  
 Each trifle that he sees.  
 But you have kill'd a tiny bird,  
 Which flew not till to-day,  
 Against my orders, whom you heard  
 Forbidding you the prey.  
 Nor did you kill that you might eat,  
 And ease a doggish pain,  
 For him, though chased with furious heat,  
 You left where he was slain.  
 Nor was he of the thievish sort,  
 Or one whom blood allures,  
 But innocent was all his sport  
 Whom you have torn for yours

<sup>1</sup> BEAU died of old age at the end of 1796, and was sent to London to be preserved in a glass case. Hayley, writing to the poet's kinsman, January 13, 1797, expresses a wish that an object, so interesting to the heart of Cowper, might "make a pleasing and salutary impression on his reviving fancy."

My dog! what remedy remains,  
 Since, teach you all I can,  
 I see you, after all my pains,  
 So much resemble Man?

---

BEAU'S REPLY.

SIR, when I flew to seize the bird,  
 In spite of your command,  
 A louder voice than yours I heard,  
 And harder to withstand.

You cried—fobear—but in my breast  
 A mightier cried—proceed—  
 'Twas nature, Sir, whose strong behest  
 Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect,  
 I ventured once to break  
 (As you perhaps may recollect)  
 Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,  
 Passing his prison door,  
 Had flutter'd all his strength away,  
 And panting press'd the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,  
 Not destined to my tooth,  
 I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,  
 And lick'd the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse  
 My disobedience now,  
 Nor some reproof yourself refuse  
 From your aggrieved Bow-wow;

If killing birds be such a crime  
 (Which I can hardly see),  
 What think you, Sir, of killing *time*?  
 With verse address'd to me?



## ANSWER TO STANZAS

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH, BY MISS CATHARINE FANSHAWE, IN  
RETURNING A POEM OF MR. COWPER'S, LENT TO HER, ON CONDITION  
SHE SHOULD NEITHER SHOW IT, NOR TAKE A COPY.

To be remember'd thus is fame,  
And in the first degree ;  
And did the few like her the same,  
The Press might sleep for me.

So Homer, in the mem'ry stored  
Of many a Grecian belle,  
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,  
But never lodged so well.

## TO THE SPANISH ADMIRAL COUNT GRAVINA,

ON HIS TRANSLATING THE AUTHOR'S SONG ON A ROSE  
INTO ITALIAN VERSE.

My rose, Gravina, blooms anew,  
And steep'd not now in rain,  
But in Castalian streams by you,  
Will never fade again.

ON FLAXMAN'S PENELOPE.<sup>1</sup>

THE suitors sinn'd, but with a fair excuse,  
Whom all this elegance might well seduce:  
Nor can our censure on the husband fall,  
Who, for a wife so lovely, slew them all.

<sup>1</sup> "I am glad that my poor and hasty attempts to express some little civility to Miss Fanshawe have your and her approbation. The lines addressed to her were not what I would have made them; but the lack of time would not suffer me to improve them."—(To Lady Hesketh, Aug. 12, 1793.)

<sup>2</sup> "I am charmed with Flaxman's Penelope, and will send you a few lines, such as they are, with which she inspired me, the other day, while I was taking my noonday walk."—(To Hayley, Sept. 8, 1793.)

ON RECEIVING HEYNE'S VIRGIL FROM  
MR. HAYLEY.

I SHOULD have deem'd it once an effort vain  
To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,  
But from that error now behold me free,  
Since I received him as a gift from thee.

TO MARY.<sup>1</sup>

THE twentieth year is well nigh past,  
Since first our sky was overcast,  
Ah would that this might be the last!  
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,  
I see thee daily weaker grow—  
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,  
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,  
For my sake restless heretofore,  
Now rust disused, and shine no more,  
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil  
The same kind office for me still,  
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,  
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,  
And all thy threads with magic art  
Have wound themselves about this heart,  
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem  
Like language utter'd in a dream;  
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,  
My Mary!

<sup>1</sup> Written in the autumn of 1793; the last effort of his pen at Weston. "The poem," remarks Hayley, "describes not his residence, but the increasing infirmities of his aged companion. I question if any language on earth can exhibit a specimen of verse more exquisitely tender."

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,  
 Are still more lovely in my sight  
 Than golden beams of orient light,  
 My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,  
 What sight worth seeing could I see?  
 The sun would rise in vain for me,  
 My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,  
 Thy hands their little force resign;  
 Yet gently prest, press gently mine,  
 My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,  
 That now at every step thou mov'st  
 Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,  
 My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,  
 In wintry age to feel no chill,  
 With me is to be lovely still,  
 My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,  
 How oft the sadness that I show,  
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,  
 My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast  
 With much resemblance of the past,  
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,  
 My Mary!

---

MONTES GLACIALES,

IN OCEANO GERMANICO NATANTES, (MARCH 12, 1799.)

EN, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata, remotis,  
 Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras!  
 Non equidem priscae sæclum rediisse videtur  
 Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes

Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vix leviora  
 Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti  
 In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant.  
 Quid verò hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu?  
 Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro  
 Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,  
 Baccâ cæruleâ, et flammâ imitante pyropo.  
 Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus  
 Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu  
 Ingenti finxere sibi diademata reges?  
 Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos  
 Mercatorum oculos: prius et quàm littora Gangis  
 Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.  
 Ortos unde putemus? An illos Ves'vius atrox  
 Protulit, ignivomisme eiecit faucibus Ætna?  
 Luce micant propriâ, Phœbive, per aëra purum  
 Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent?  
 Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis  
 Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,  
 Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est  
 Multâ onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis.  
 Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma ferè  
 omnes  
 Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis  
 Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo  
 Clivorum fluere in littora prona, solutæ  
 Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,  
 Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese  
 Mirum cœpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum  
 In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tander:  
 Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.  
 Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset,  
 Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,  
 Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,  
 Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum  
 Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,  
 Tum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,  
 Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,  
 Insula, in Ægæo fluitasse erratica ponto.  
 Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum  
 Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.  
 Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam  
 Decidua lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.  
 At vos, erroneas horrendi, et caligine digni  
 Cimmericâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,  
 Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri

Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum!  
 Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni lenitè austro  
 Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas  
 Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

---

ON THE ICE ISLANDS,

SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN, (MARCH 19, 1799.)

WHAT portents, from what distant region, ride,  
 Unseen till now in ours, th' astonish'd tide?  
 In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves  
 Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves.  
 But now, descending whence of late they stood,  
 Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood.  
 Dire times were they, full-charg'd with human woez,  
 And these, scarce less calamitous than those.  
 What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!  
 Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;  
 And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,  
 And all around the ruby's fiery glow.  
 Come they from India, where the burning Earth,  
 All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;  
 And where the costly gems, that beam around  
 The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?  
 No. Never such a countless dazzling store  
 Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore.  
 Rapacious hands, and ever-watchful eyes,  
 Should sooner far have mark'd and seiz'd the prize.  
 Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come  
 From Ves'vius', or from Ætna's burning womb?  
 Thus shine they self-illum'd, or but display  
 The borrow'd splendours of a cloudless day?  
 Withborrow'd beams they shine. The gales, that breathe  
 Now landward, and the current's force beneath,  
 Have borne them nearer: and the nearer sight,  
 Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.  
 Their lofty summits crested high, they show.  
 With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow,  
 The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,  
 Bleak Winter well-nigh saddens all the year,  
 Their infant growth began. He bade arise  
 Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.

Oft as dissolv'd by transient suns, the snow  
 Left the tall cliff, to join the flood below,  
 He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast  
 The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.  
 By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,  
 And long successive ages roll'd the while,  
 Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand  
 Tall as its rival mountains on the land.  
 Thus stood, and unremovable by skill,  
 Or force of man, had stood the structure still;  
 But that, though firmly fix'd, supplanted yet  
 By pressure of its own enormous weight,  
 It left the shelving beach—and, with a sound  
 That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around  
 Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,  
 As if instinct with strong desire to lave,  
 Down went the pond'rous mass. So bards of old,  
 How Delos swam th' Ægean deep, have told.  
 But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore  
 Herb, fruit, and flow'r. She, crown'd with laurel, wore,  
 Ev'n under wintry skies, a summer smile;  
 And Delos was Apollo's fav'rite isle.  
 But, horrid wand'ers of the deep, to you  
 He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.  
 Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,  
 But, mournful, turn'd his glorious eyes away—  
 Hence! Seek your home, nor longer rashly dare  
 The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air:  
 Lest ye regret, too late, your native coasts,  
 In no congenial gulph for ever lost.

---

### ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INEGGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains  
 That, to the wrong side leaning,  
 Indite much metre with much pains,  
 And little or no meaning;  
 Ah, why since oceans, rivers, streams,  
 That water all the nations,  
 Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,  
 In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,  
 Too covetous of drink,  
 Apollo, hast thou stolen away  
 A poet's drop of ink!

Upborne into the viewless air,  
 It floats a vapour now,  
 Impelled through regions dense and rare,  
 By all the winds that blow;

Ordained perhaps ere summer flies,  
 Combined with millions more,  
 To form an iris in the skies,  
 Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then  
 Beyond the happiest lot,  
 Of all that ever passed my pen,  
 So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,  
 To place it in thy bow,  
 Give wit, that what is left may shine  
 With equal grace below.

## THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat;  
 My shrubs displaced from that retreat  
 Enjoyed the open air;  
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song  
 Had been their mutual solace long,  
 Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing  
 That flutter loose on golden wing,  
 And frolic where they list;  
 Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,  
 But that delight they never knew,  
 And therefore never missed.

But nature works in ev'ry breast,  
 With force not easily suppress'd;  
 And Dick felt some desires,  
 That, after many an effort vain,  
 Instructed him at length to gain  
 A pass between his wires.

The open windows seemed t' invite  
 The freeman to a farewell flight;  
 But Tom was still confined;  
 And Dick, although his way was clear,  
 Was much too generous and sincere  
 To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,  
 And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say,  
 You must not live alone;—  
 Nor would he quit that chosen stand  
 Till I, with slow and cautious hand,  
 Returned him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys  
 Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,  
 Fandango, ball, and rout!  
 Blush when I tell you how a bird  
 A prison with a friend preferred  
 To liberty without.

---

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM NORTHCOT.

Hic sepultus est  
 Inter suorum lacrymas  
 GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,  
 GULIELMI et MARIE filius  
 Unicus, unicé dilectus,  
 Qui floribus ritu succisus est semihiantis,  
 Aprilis die septimo,  
 1780. Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valetō!  
 Namque iterum tecum, sim modò dignus, ero.  
 Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros.  
 Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.



## TRANSLATION.

FAREWELL! "But not for ever," Hope replies,  
 "Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies!  
 There nothing shall renew our parting pain,  
 Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again."

## THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,  
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade!  
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view  
 Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;  
 And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
 And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,  
 Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
 And the scene where his melody charmed me before  
 Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hastening away,  
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,  
 With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,  
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can  
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;  
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see  
 Have a being less durable even than he.

ON A MISTAKE IN THE TRANSLATION  
 OF HOMER.

COWPER had sinned with some exactae,  
 If, bound in rhyming tethers,  
 He had committed this abuse  
 Of changing ewes for wethers.

But male for female is a trope,  
 A rather bold misnomer,  
 That would have startled even Pope,  
 When he translated Homer.<sup>1</sup>

### ON THE NEGLECT OF HOMER.

COULD Homer come himself, distressed and poor,  
 And tune his harp at Rhedicina's door,  
 The rich old vixen would exclaim, (I fear,)  
 "Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

### ON THE RECEIPT OF A HAMPER.

(IN THE MANNER OF HOMER.)

THE straw-stuffed hamper with his ruthless steel  
 He opened, cutting sheer the inserted cords,  
 Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came  
 The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat,  
 Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green  
 Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distilled  
 Drop after drop odorous, by the art  
 Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

### ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INST

Go!—thou art all unfit to share  
 The pleasures of this place  
 With such as its old tenants are,  
 Creatures of gentler race.

<sup>1</sup> "I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. First from a sensible little man, curate of a neighbouring village, (the Rev. John Buchanan); then from Walter Bagot; then from Henry Cowper; and now from you. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it."—(To Bill, April 16, 1782.)

The squirrel here his hoard provides,  
 Aware of wintry storms;  
 And woodpeckers explore the sides  
 Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn  
 With frictions of her fleece;  
 And here I wander eve and morn,  
 Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity the exiled  
 From this secure retreat;—  
 I would not lose it to be styled  
 The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;  
 Thy pleasure is to show  
 Thy magnanimity in fight,  
 Thy prowess,—therefore, go!

I care not whether east or north,  
 So I no more may find thee;  
 The angry Muse thus sings thee forth,  
 And claps the gate behind thee.

---

### TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind,  
 While young, humane, conversable, and kind;  
 Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,  
 Now grown a villain, and the worst of men:  
 But rather some suspect, who have oppressed  
 And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

## LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets<sup>1</sup> (poets by report  
 Not oft so well agree,)  
 Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!  
 Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,  
 Who oft themselves have known  
 The pangs of a poetic birth,  
 By labours of their own.

We therefore pleased extol thy song  
 Though various yet complete,  
 Rich in embellishment as strong,  
 And learnèd as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;  
 Though, could our hearts repine  
 At any poet's happier lays,  
 They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit  
 Of friendship's closest tie,  
 Can gaze on even Darwin's wit  
 With an unjaundiced eye:

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,  
 And howsoever known,  
 Who would not twine a wreath for thee,  
 Unworthy of his own.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to Hayley, who contributed a poem upon the same author. It has been inconsiderately said, that Cowper's praise of Darwin was only the tribute of courtesy; but we learn from his comments upon the "Loves of the Plants," in the *Analytical Review*, that he perfectly appreciated the peculiar powers of the writer. He calls the "descriptions luminous as language selected with the finest taste can make them;" and meeting "the eye with a boldness of projection unattainable by any hand but that of a master;" and he particularly notices the beauty of the expression—the "eye-tipt horns of the snail;" which an ordinary writer, he says, would not have attained in half-a-dozen laboured couplets.

## ON THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON LITERATURE"

THE Genius of th' Augustan age  
 His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,  
 And bursting with heroic rage,  
 When literary Heron appear'd,

"Thou hast," he cried, "like him of old,  
 Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,  
 By being scandalously bold,  
 Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

"And for traducing Virgil's name  
 Shalt share his merited reward;  
 A perpetuity of fame,  
 That rots, and stinks, and is abhorred."

## IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM,

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTIAM.

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,  
 Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.  
 Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit  
 Undique privatas patriciasque domos.  
 Nequiquàm conata suâ, fœdissima sperat  
 Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.  
 Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces  
 Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

## TRANSLATION.

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,  
 France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,  
 To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,  
 Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.

<sup>1</sup> The author was John Pinkerton. Cowper wrote of these letters with great indignation to Newton, Nov. 5, 1785:—"What enterprises will not an inordinate passion for fame suggest? It prompted one man to fire the temple of Ephesus; another, to ding himself into a volcano; and now has induced this wicked and unfortunate squire either to deny his own feelings, or to publish to all the world that he has no feelings at all."

Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,  
 She hires the worst and basest of our own.  
 Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,  
 We always spare a coward on his knees.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

June 23, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF reading verse be your delight,  
 'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;  
 But what we would, so weak is man,  
 Lies oft remote from what we can.  
 For instance, at this very time  
 I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme  
 To soothe my friend, and, had I power,  
 To cheat him of an anxious hour;  
 Not meaning (for I must confess,  
 It were but folly to suppress)  
 His pleasure or his good alone,  
 But squinting partly at my own.  
 But though the sun is flaming high  
 In the centre of yon arch, the sky,  
 And he had once (and who but he?)  
 The name for setting genius free,  
 Yet whether poets of past days  
 Yielded him undeserved praise,  
 And he by no uncommon lot  
 Was famed for virtues he had not;  
 Or whether, which is like enough,  
 His Highness may have taken huff,  
 So seldom sought with invocation,  
 Since it has been the reigning fashion  
 To disregard his inspiration,  
 I seem no brighter in my wits,  
 For all the radiance he emits,  
 Than if I saw, through midnight vapour,  
 The glimmering of a farthing taper.  
 Oh for a succedaneum, then,  
 T' accelerate a creeping pen!  
 Oh for a ready succedaneum,  
 Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium

Pondere liberet exoso,  
Et morbo jam caliginoso!  
'Tis here; this oval box well filled  
With best tobacco, finely milled,  
Beats all Anticyra's pretences  
To disengage the encumbered senses.  
Oh Nymph of transatlantic fame,  
Where'er thy haunt, whate'er thy name,  
Whether reposing on the side  
Of Oroonquo's spacious tide,  
Or listening with delight not small  
To Niagara's distant fall,  
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed  
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,  
Which, whether pulverised it gain  
A speedy passage to the brain,  
Or whether, touched with fire, it rise  
In circling eddies to the skies,  
Does thought more quicken and refine  
Than all the breath of all the Nine—  
Forgive the bard, if bard he be,  
Who once too wantonly made free,  
To touch with a satiric wipe  
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;  
So may no blight infest thy plains,  
And no unseasonable rains;  
And so may smiling peace once more  
Visit America's sad shore;  
And thou, secure from all alarms,  
Of thundering drums and glittering arms,  
Rove unconfined beneath the shade  
Thy wide expanded leaves have made;  
So may thy votaries increase,  
And fumigation never cease.  
May Newton with renewed delights  
Perform thy odoriferous rites,  
While clouds of incense half divine  
Involve thy disappearing shrine;  
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull  
Be always filling, never full.

VERSES PRINTED BY HIMSELF, ON A FLOOD  
AT OLNEY, AUGUST 12, 1782.

To watch the storms, and hear the sky  
Give all our almanacks the lie ;  
To shake with cold, and see the plains  
In autumn drowned with wintry rains ;  
'Tis thus I spend my moments here,  
And wish myself a Dutch mynheer ;  
I then should have no need of wit,  
For lumpish Hollander unfit !  
Nor should I then repine at mud,  
Or meadows deluged with a flood ;  
But in a bog live well content,  
And find it just my element :  
Should be a clod, and not a man ;  
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,  
With charitable aid to drag  
My mind out of its proper quag ;  
Should have the genius of a boor,  
And no ambition to have more.

---

ANTI-THELYPHTHORA.

A TALE IN VERSE.

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

[THIS playful satire was recovered by Southey, who found it mentioned in a letter of Mr. Rose, which had been accidentally left as a marker in a volume of the "Biographia Britannica." It appeared in 1781, without the author's name. The poem is an attack upon a treatise, "Thelyphthora," written by Martin Madan, a popular preacher, and cousin of Cowper, in vindication of polygamy. The following is a pleasing specimen of the poet's lighter style.]

AIRY DEL CASTRO was as bold a knight  
As ever earned a lady's love in fight.  
Many he sought, but one above the rest  
His tender heart victoriously impressed :



In fairy land was born the matchless dame,  
 The land of dreams, Hypothesis her name.  
 There Fancy nursed her in ideal bowers,  
 And laid her soft in amaranthine flowers;  
 Delighted with her babe, the enchantress smiled,  
 And graced with all her gifts the favourite child.  
 Her wooed Sir Airy, by meandering streams,  
 In daily musings and in nightly dreams;  
 With all the flowers he found, he wove in haste  
 Wreaths for her brow, and girdles for her waist;  
 His time, his talents, and his ceaseless care  
 All consecrated to adorn the fair;  
 No pastime but with her he deigned to take,  
 And,—if he studied, studied for her sake.  
 And, for Hypothesis was somewhat long,  
 Nor soft enough to suit a lover's tongue,  
 He called her Posy, with an amorous art,  
 And graved it on a gem, and wore it next his heart.

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

Nor he alone addressed the wayward fair;  
 Full many a knight had been entangled there.  
 But still, whoever wooed her or embraced,  
 On every mind some mighty spell she cast,  
 Some she would teach, (for she was wondrous wise,  
 And made her dupes see all things with her eyes,)  
 That forms material, whatsoe'er we dream,  
 Are not at all, or are not what they seem;  
 That substances and modes of every kind  
 Are mere impressions on the passive mind;  
 And he that splits his cranium, breaks at most  
 A fancied head against a fancied post:  
 Others, that earth, ere sin had drowned it all,  
 Was smooth and even as an ivory ball;  
 That all the various beauties we survey,  
 Hills, valleys, rivers, and the boundless sea

Are but departures from the first design,  
 Effects of punishment and wrath divine.  
 She tutored some in Dædalus's art,  
 And promised they should act his wildgoose part  
 On waxen pinions soar without a fall,  
 Swift as the proudest gander of them all.

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

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

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

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

That curtained round the scene where they reposed,  
 And wood and lawn in dusky folds enclosed.

Fear seized the trembling sex; in every grove  
 They wept the wrongs of honourable love,  
 In vain, they cried, are hymeneal rites,  
 Vain our delusive hope of constant knights;  
 The marriage bond has lost its power to bind,  
 And flutters loose the sport of every wind.  
 The bride, while yet her bride's attire is on,  
 Shall mourn her absent lord, for he is gone,  
 Satiated of her, and weary of the same,  
 To distant wilds in quest of other game.  
 Ye fair Circassians! all your lutes employ,  
 Seraglios sing, and harems dance for joy!  
 For British nymphs whose lords were lately true,  
 Nymphs quite as fair, and happier once than you,  
 Honour, esteem, and confidence forgot,  
 Feel all the meanness of your slavish lot.  
 Oh curst Hypothesis! your hellish arts  
 Seduce our husbands, and estrange their hearts.—  
 Will none arise? no knight who still retains  
 The blood of ancient worthies in his veins,  
 To assert the charter of the chaste and fair,  
 Find out her treacherous heart, and plant a dagger there!  
 A knight--(can he that serves the fair do less?)  
 Starts at the call of beauty in distress;  
 And he that does not, whatsoe'er occurs,  
 Is recreant, and unworthy of his spurs.<sup>1</sup>

Full many a champion, bent on hardy deed,  
 Called for his arms and for his princely steed.  
 So swarmed the Sabine youth, and grasped the shield,  
 When Roman rapine, by no laws withheld,  
 Lest Rome should end with her first founders' lives,  
 Made half their maids, *sans* ceremony, wives.  
 But not the mitred few, the soul their charge,  
 They left these bodily concerns at large;  
 Forms or no forms, pluralities or pairs,  
 Right reverend sirs! was no concern of theirs.  
 The rest, alert and active as became  
 A courteous knighthood, caught the generous flame:  
 One was accoutred when the cry began,  
 Knight of the Silver Moon, Sir Marmadan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When a knight was degraded, his spurs were chopped off.—G.

<sup>2</sup> Monthly Review for October.—C.

Oft as his patroness, who rules the night,  
 Hangs out her lamp in yon cærulean height,  
 His vow was, (and he well performed his vow,)  
 Armed at all points, with terror on his brow,  
 To judge the land, to purge atrocious crimes,  
 And quell the shapeless monsters of the times.  
 For cedars famed, fair Lebanon supplied  
 The well-poised lance that quivered at his side :  
 Truth armed it with a point so keen, so just,  
 No spell or charm was proof against the thrust.  
 He couched it firm upon his puissant thigh,  
 And darting through his helm an eagle's eye,<sup>1</sup>  
 On all the wings of chivalry advanced  
 To where the fond Sir Airy lay entranced.

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

The trumpet now spoke Marmadan at hand,  
 A trumpet that was heard through all the land.  
 His high-bred steed expands his nostrils wide,  
 And snorts aloud to cast the mist aside ;  
 But he the virtues of his lance to show,  
 Struck thrice the point upon his saddle bow ;  
 Three sparks ensued that chased it all away,  
 And set the unseemly pair in open day.  
 "To horse," he cried, "or, by this good right hand  
 And better spear, I smite you where you stand."

Sir Airy, not a whit dismayed or scared,  
 Buckled his helm, and to his steed repaired ;  
 Whose bridle, while he cropp'd the grass below,  
 Hung not far off upon a myrtle bough.

<sup>1</sup> On this line, Southey remarks—"This is one of the instances in which Cowper's remembrance of a passage in Milton has betrayed him into an incorrect use of a word in it:—

—"He through the armed files  
 Darts his experienced eye."

PAR. LOST, i. 569.

I am quite unable to discover the incorrectness specified. The knight darting his eye through the bars of his helmet, is surely in harmony with the manners of chivalry; and the expression is clear and distinct.

He mounts at once,—such confidence infused  
 The insidious witch that had his wits abused;  
 And she, regardless of her softer kind,  
 Seized fast the saddle and sprang up behind.  
 “Oh shame to knighthood!” his assailant cried;  
 “Oh shame!” ten thousand echoing nymphs replied.  
 Placed with advantage at his listening ear,  
 She whispered still that he had nought to fear;  
 That he was cased in such enchanted steel,  
 So polished and compact from head to heel,  
 “Come ten, come twenty, should an army call  
 Thee to the field, thou shouldst withstand them all.”

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

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

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

### ON THE HIGH PRICE OF FISH.

COCOA-NUT naught,  
 Fish too dear,  
 None must be bought  
 For us that are here:

No lobster on earth,  
 That ever I saw,  
 To me would be worth  
 Sixpence a claw.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers, xxv. 7. 8.

So, dear Madam, wait  
Till fish can be got  
At a reasonable rate,  
Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch  
Have quitted the seas,  
And then send as much  
And as oft as you please.

---

TO MRS. NEWTON.

A NOBLE theme demands a noble verse,  
In such I thank you for your fine *oysters*,  
The barrel was magnificently large,  
But, being sent to Olney at free charge,  
Was not inserted in the driver's list,  
And therefore overlooked, forgot, or missed;  
For, when the messenger whom we despatch'd  
Inquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd;  
Denying that his waggon or his wain  
Did any such commodity contain.  
In consequence of which, your welcome boon  
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;  
In consequence of which some chanced to die,  
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.  
Now Madam says, (and what she says must still  
Deserve attention, say she what she will,  
That what we call the Diligence, be-case  
It goes to London with a swifter pace,  
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,  
Returning downward with a pace as swift;  
And therefore recommends it with this aim—  
To save at least three days,—the price the same;  
For though it will not carry or convey  
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you may;  
For oysters bred upon the salt sea-shore,  
Packed in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write,  
Save that it rained prodigiously last night;  
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,  
Caught in the first beginning of the shower;

But walking, running, and with much ado,  
 Got home—just time enough to be wet through;  
 Yet both are well, and, wondrous to be told,  
 Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;  
 And wishing just the same good hap to you,  
 We say, good Madam, and good Sir, adieu!

---

MARY AND JOHN.

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,  
 'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.  
 Should John wed a score, oh the claws and the scratches!  
 It can't be a match:—'tis a bundle of matches.

---

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DEAR President, whose art sublime  
 Gives perpetuity to time,  
 And bids transactions of a day,  
 That fleeting hours would waft away  
 To dark futurity, survive,  
 And in unfading beauty live,—  
 You cannot with a grace decline  
 A special mandate of the Nine—  
 Yourself, whatever task you choose,  
 So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the sisterhood: We come—  
 Fix well your pallet on your thumb,  
 Prepare the pencil and the tints—  
 We come to furnish you with hints.  
 French disappointments, British glory,  
 Must be the subject of the story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,  
 Then slope it to a point below;  
 Your outline easy, airy, light,  
 Filled up becomes a paper kite.  
 Let independence, sanguine, horrid,  
 Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:  
 Beneath (but lay aside your graces)  
 Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,  
 Each with a staring, steadfast eye,  
 Fixed on his great and good ally.

France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—  
 Britannia's lightning cuts the string.  
 The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,  
 Just rends it into thirteen pieces,  
 Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,  
 And lays them all at George's feet.  
 Iberia, trembling from afar,  
 Renounces the confederate war;  
 Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,  
 France calls her shatter'd navies home.  
 Repenting Holland learns to mourn  
 The sacred treaties she has torn;  
 Astonishment and awe profound  
 Are stamp'd upon the nations round;  
 Without one friend, above all foes,  
 Britannia gives the world repose.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,  
 ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued  
 Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'd,  
 Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?  
 Roar as they might, the overbearing winds  
 That rocked the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—  
 And in thy minnikin and embryo state,  
 Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,  
 Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd  
 The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,  
 And whelmed them in the unexplor'd abyss.  
 Indebted to no magnet and no chart,  
 Nor under guidance of the polar fire,  
 Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,  
 Grazing at large in meadows submarine,  
 Where fiat Batavia, just emerging, peeps  
 Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks  
 Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots  
 Her wondrous causeway far into the main.  
 Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,  
 And I not more, that I should feed on thee.  
 Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,  
 To him who sent thee! and success, as oft  
 As it descends into the bill-y gulf,



To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!  
 Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin  
 Would envy, could they know that thou wast doomed  
 To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

## PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

## A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau<sup>1</sup>  
 If birds confabulate or no;  
 'Tis clear that they were always able  
 To hold discourse, at least in fable;  
 And even the child who knows no better  
 Than to interpret by the letter,  
 A story of a cock and bull,  
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then on a winter's day,  
 But warm and bright and calm as May,  
 The birds conceiving a design  
 To forestall sweet St. Valentine,  
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove  
 Assembled on affairs of love,  
 And with much twitter and much chatter  
 Began to agitate the matter.  
 At length a Bullfinch, who could boast  
 More years and wisdom than the most,  
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,  
 A moment's liberty to speak;  
 And silence publicly enjoined,  
 Delivered briefly thus his mind:

“My friends! be cautious how ye treat  
 The subject upon which we meet;  
 I fear we shall have winter yet.”

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,  
 With golden wing and satin poll,  
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried  
 What marriage means, thus pert replied:

“Methinks the gentleman,” quoth she,  
 “Opposite in the apple tree,

<sup>1</sup> It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses P—C.

By his good will would keep us single  
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle;  
Or (which is likelier to befall)  
Till death exterminate us all.

I marry without more ado;  
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?"

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,  
Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,  
Attested, glad, his approbation  
Of an immediate conjugation.  
Their sentiments so well expressed,  
Influenced mightily the rest;  
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,  
The leaves came on not quite so fast,  
And destiny, that sometimes bears  
An aspect stern on man's affairs,  
Not altogether smiled on theirs.  
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,  
Now shifted east, and east by north;  
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,  
Could shelter them from rain or snow:  
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,  
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled;  
Soon every father bird and mother  
Grew quarrelsome, and pecked each other,  
Parted without the least regret,  
Except that they had ever met,  
And learned in future to be wiser  
Than to neglect a good adviser.

## MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate  
This lesson seems to carry—  
Choose not alone a proper mate,  
But proper time to marry.

## EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
 Who, nursed with tender care,  
 And to domestic bounds confined,  
 Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
 His pittance every night,  
 He did it with a jealous look,  
 And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
 And milk, and oats, and straw;  
 Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
 With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
 On pippin's russet peel,  
 And, when his juicy salads failed,  
 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
 Whereon he loved to bound,  
 To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
 And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
 For then he lost his fear,  
 But most before approaching showers,  
 Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons  
 He thus saw steal away,  
 Dozing out all his idle noons,  
 And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
 For he would oft beguile  
 My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
 And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade  
 He finds his long last home,  
 And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
 Till gentler Pass shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks  
 From which no care can save,  
 And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
 Must soon partake his grave.

## EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,  
 Qui totum novennium vixit,  
 Puss.  
 Siste paulisper,  
 Qui præteriturus es,  
 Et tecum sic reputa—  
 Hunc neque canis venaticus,  
 Nec plumbum missile,  
 Nec laqueus,  
 Nec imbres nimii,  
 Confecere:  
 Tamen mortuus est—  
 Et moriar ego.

---

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER  
BIRTHDAY.

DEEM not, sweet rose, that bloom'st 'midst many a  
 thorn,  
 Thy friend, though to a cloister's shade consigned,  
 Can e'er forget the charms he left behind,  
 Or pass unheeded this auspicious morn!  
 In happier days to brighter prospects born,  
 Oh tell thy thoughtless sex, the virtuous mind,  
 Like thee, content in every state may find,  
 And look on Folly's pageantry with scorn;  
 To steer with nicest art betwixt the extreme  
 Of idle mirth, and affectation coy;  
 To blend good sense with elegance and ease;  
 To bid Affliction's eye no longer stream;  
 Is thine; best gift, the unfailing source of joy,  
 The guide to pleasures which can never cease!

AN APOLOGY FOR NOT SHOWING HER  
WHAT I HAD WROTE.

[THESE Poems were printed in 1825, the year following the death of the lady to whom they had been addressed. "To her credit," is the remark of the Editor, Mr. Croft, "she remained constant to him on whom she had placed her affections. Neither time nor absence could diminish her attachment. She preserved with the greatest care, for many years, these pleasing memorials of the beloved author; when, for reasons known only to herself, she sent them in a sealed packet to a lady (her particular friend) with directions not to be opened till after her decease." The "Delia" of the rhymes was Theodora Jane Cowper, the second daughter of Ashley Cowper, and the cousin of the poet. The interest of the poems is chiefly biographical, the traces of literary merit in some being so slight as to be nearly inappreciable by analysis. Johnson observes, in his life of Hammond, that he who courts his mistress with Romau imagery deserves to lose her; because fiction destroys passion. But Cowper's pastoral mythology does not extend beyond a name; his Delia watches no sheep, and he shows few signs of the despairing shepherd. The first poem is dated "Catfield, July, 1752;" and I find an affecting allusion to the place and its associations in Cowper's letter to Lady Hesketh, from Mundsley, forty-six years afterwards (October 13, 1798). "Why is scenery like this, I had almost said, why is the very scene, which many years since I could not contemplate without rapture, now become, at the best, an insipid wilderness to me! It neighbours nearly, and as nearly resembles the scenery of Catfield; but with what different perceptions does it present me?" Catfield was the residence of the brother of Cowper's mother.]

DID not my Muse (what can she less?)  
Perceive her own unworthiness,  
Could she by some well-chosen theme,  
But hope to merit your esteem,  
She would not thus conceal her lays,  
Ambitious to deserve your praise.  
But should my Delia take offence,  
And frown on her impertinence,

In silence, sorrowing and forlorn,  
 Would the despairing trifler mourn,  
 Curse her ill-tuned, unpleasing lute,  
 Then sigh and sit for ever mute.  
 In secret therefore let her lay,  
 Squandering her idle notes away  
 In secret as sis chants along,  
 Cheerful and careless in her song;  
 Nor heeds she whether harsh or clear,  
 Free from each terror, every fear,  
 From that, of all most dreaded, free,  
 The terror of offending Thee.

---

At the same place,

DELIA, the unkindest girl on earth,  
 When I besought the fair,  
 That favour of intrinsic worth,  
 A ringlet of her hair,

Refused that instant to comply  
 With my absurd request,  
 For reasons she could specify,  
 Some twenty score at least.

Trust me, my dear, however odd  
 It may appear to say,  
 I sought it merely to defraud  
 Thy spoiler of his prey.

Yet when its sister locks shall fade,  
 As quickly fade they must,  
 When all their beauties are decayed,  
 Their gloss, their colour, lost—

Ah then! if haply to my share  
 Some slender pittance fall,  
 If I but gain one single hair,  
 Nor age usurp them all;—

When you behold it still as sleek,  
 As lovely to the view,  
 As when it left thy snowy neck,  
 That Eden where it grew,—

Then shall my Delia's self declare  
 That I professed the truth,  
 And have preserved my little share  
 In everlasting youth.

At the same place.

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

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

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

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

---

WRITTEN IN A QUARREL,

(THE DELIVERY OF IT PREVENTED BY A RECONCILIATION)

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

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

Sure in those eyes I loved so well,  
 And wished so long to see,  
 Anger I thought could never dwell,  
 Or anger aimed at me.

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

With kindness bless the present hour,  
 Or oh! we meet in vain!  
 What can we do in absence more  
 Than suffer and complain?

Fated to ills beyond redress,  
 We must endure our woe;  
 The days allowed us to possess,  
 'Tis madness to forego.

---

### THE SYMPTOMS OF LOVE.

Would my Delia know if I love, let her take  
 My last thought at night, and the first when I wake;  
 When my prayers and best wishes preferred for her sake

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

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

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

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



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

---

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

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

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

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

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

O then, my life, at last relent!  
Though cruel the reproach I sent,  
My sorrow was unfeigned:  
Your passion, had I loved you not,  
You might have scorned, renounced, forgot,  
And I had ne'er complained.

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

---

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

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

Thus, Delia, while thy love endures,  
 The flame my happy breast secures  
 From fortune's fickle power ;  
 Change as she list, she may increase,  
 But not abate my happiness,  
 Confirmed by thee before.

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

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

Berkhampstead.

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

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

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

---

 At Berkhampstead

## WRITTEN AFTER LEAVING HER AT NEW BURNS.

How quick the change from joy to woe!  
 How chequered is our lot below!  
 Seldom we view the prospect fair,  
 Dark clouds of sorrow, pain, and care,  
 (Some pleasing intervals between,)  
 Scowl over more than half the scene.  
 Last week with Delia, gentle maid,  
 Far hence in happier fields I strayed,  
 While on her dear enchanting tongue  
 Soft sounds of grateful welcome hung,  
 For absence had withheld it long.  
 "Welcome, my long-lost love," she said,  
 "E'er since our adverse fates decreed  
 That we must part, and I must mourn  
 Till once more blessed by thy return,  
 Love, on whose influence I relied  
 For all the transports I enjoyed,

Has played the cruel tyrant's part,  
 And turned tormentor to my heart.  
 But let me hold thee to my breast,  
 Dear partner of my joy and rest,  
 And not a pain, and not a fear,  
 Or anxious doubt shall enter there."  
 Happy, thought I, the favoured youth,  
 Blessed with such undissembled truth!  
 Five suns successive rose and set,  
 And saw no monarch in his state,  
 Wrapped in the blaze of majesty,  
 So free from every care as I.

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

---

ON HER ENDEAVOURING TO CONCEAL HER  
 GRIEF AT PARTING.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Had you, my love, forbade me to pursue  
 My fond attempt, disdainfully retired,  
 And with proud scorn compelled me to subdue  
 Th' ill-fated passion by yourself inspired ;

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

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

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

---

R. S. S.

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

But, greatly pitying whom the world calls happy,  
 Gently spin out the silken thread of life;  
 While from her lips attentive I receive  
 The tenderest dictates of the purest flame,  
 And from her eyes (where soft complacence sits  
 Illumined with radiant beams of sense,  
 Tranquillity beyond a monarch's reach.  
 Forgive me, Heaven, this only avarice  
 My soul indulges; I confess the crime,  
 (If to esteem, to covet such perfection  
 Be criminal.) Oh grant me Delia! grant me wealth  
 Wealth to alleviate, not increase my wants;  
 And grant me virtue, without which nor wealth  
 Nor Delia can avail to make me blessed.

---

 WRITTEN IN A FIT OF ILLNESS.

R. S. S.

IN these sad hours, a prey to ceaseless pain,  
 While feverish pulses leap in every vein,  
 When each faint breath the last short effort seems  
 Of life just parting from my feeble limbs;  
 How wild soe'er my wandering thoughts may be,  
 Still, gentle Delia, still they turn on thee!  
 At length if, slumbering to a short repose,  
 A sweet oblivion frees me from my woes,  
 Thy form appears, thy footsteps I pursue.  
 Through springy vales, and meadows washed in dew;  
 Thy arm supports me to the fountain's brink,  
 Where by some secret power forbid to drink,  
 Gasping with thirst, I view the tempting flood  
 That flies my touch, or thickens into mud;  
 Fill thine own hand immersed the goblet dips,  
 And bears it streaming to my burning lips.  
 There borne aloft on fancy's wing we fly,  
 Like souls embodied to their native sky;  
 Now every rock, each mountain disappears:  
 And the round earth an even surface wears;  
 When lo! the force of some resistless weight  
 Bears me straight down from that pernicious height;  
 Parting, in vain our struggling arms we close;  
 Abhorred forms, dire phantoms interpose;

With trembling voice on thy loved name I call;  
 And gulfs yawn ready to receive my fall.  
 From these fallacious visions of distress  
 I wake; nor are my real sorrows less.  
 Thy absence, Delia, heightens every ill,  
 And gives e'en trivial pains the power to kill.  
 Oh! wert thou near me; yet that wish forbear!  
 'Twere vain my love,—'twere vain to wish thee near;  
 Thy tender heart would heave with anguish too,  
 And by partaking, but increase my woe.  
 Alone I'll grieve, till gloomy sorrow past,  
 Health, like the cheerful day-spring, comes at last,—  
 Comes fraught with bliss to banish every pain,  
 Hope, joy, and peace, and Delia in her train!

---

TO DELIA, 1755.

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