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ROUTLEDGE'S BRITISH POETS.

The Poems

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

WM. COWPER.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

EDITED BY

THE REV. ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT.

INCUMBENT OF BEAR WOOD.

Illustrated by Birket Foster.

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TO

T. B. CHARLTON, ESQ.,

OF CHILWELL HALL, NOTTINGHAM,

THESE POEMS OF A TRUE ENGLISHMAN

Are Inscribed

BY R. A. WILLMOTT.

PREFACE.

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

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

St. Catherine's, Bear Wood,
October 9, 1854.

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WILLIAM COWPER.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God's revenge hung heavy on his soul.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

May 28, 1784.[1]

[1] MEMORANDUM FOUND AMONG MR. COWPER'S PAPERS.

"Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

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

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

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

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

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

> Nor less it pleased in livelier mood
> Beyond the bounding hills to stray,
> And break the live-long summer day,
> With banquet in the distant woods.

Who has forgotten the pic-nic in the Spinnie? From

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

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

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

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

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

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

[1] Correspondence, i. 167.

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

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

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

The translator of the Iliad and Odyssey had hardly

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

Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> In Memory of WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.
> Born in Hertfordshire 1731.
> Buried in this Church 1800.
>
> Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
> Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
> Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
> Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
> England, exulting in his spotless fame,
> Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name.
> Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
> So clear a title to affection's praise.
> His highest honours to the heart belong;
> His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE

POEMS OF COWPER.

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

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

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

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

AN ODE.

ON READING SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, IN 1753

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, ESQ. 1754.

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

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

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

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

Then there's another reason yet,
Which is, t'[illegible] I may fairly quit
The debt which justly became due

And you might grumble, crony mine,
If paid in any other coin;
Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,
(I would say twenty sheets of prose,)
Can ne'er be deem'd worth half so much
As one of gold, and yours was such.
Thus, the preliminaries settled,
I fairly find myself *pitch-kettled*;[1]
And cannot see, tho' few see better,
How I shall hammer out a letter.
First, for a thought—since all agree—
A thought—I have it—let me see
'Tis gone again—plague on't! I thought
I had it—but I have it not.
Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,
That useful thing, her needle, gone!
Rake well the cinders:—sweep the floor,
And sift the dust behind the door;
While eager Hodge beholds the prize
In old grimalkin's glaring eyes;
And Gammer finds it on her knees
In every shining straw she sees.
This simile were apt enough;
But I've another, critic-proof!
The virtuoso thus, at noon,
Broiling beneath a July sun,
The gilded butterfly pursues,
O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews
And after many a vain essay,
To captivate the tempting prey,
Gives him at length the lucky pat,
And has him safe beneath his hat:
Then lifts it gently from the ground;
But ah! 'tis lost as soon as found;
Culprit his liberty regains;
Flits out of sight, and mocks his pains.
The sense was dark; 'twas therefore fit
With simile t' illustrate it;

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

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

THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDRESSED TO MISS MACARTNEY,[1]

ON READING THE PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE. 1762

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE TALK.

Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ
Abjicito. Hor. Lib. i. Epis. 13.

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

The volume was in many respects remarkable; but it scarcely

[1] To Hill, May 9, 1781.

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

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

A. You told me, I remember, glory built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt.
The deeds that men admire as half divine,
Stark[1] naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares,
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant, that men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war.
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.
Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his mem'ry, dear to ev'ry muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heav'n bestows,
And when recording history displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died
Where duty placed them, at their country's side,
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.
But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch to nought but his ambition true,
Who for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself station'd on a tow'ring rock,
To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels,
Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette,
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet,
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And death's own scythe would better speak his pow'r,

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

Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade,
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.
A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man,
Kings do but reason on the selfsame plan.
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.
B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains.
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! those optics are but dim
That tell you so—say rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glitt'ring store,
Just what the toy will sell for and no more.
Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in virtue's lap her just reward,
Keep vice restrain'd behind a double guard:
To quell the faction that affronts the throne,
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,
Watch every beam philosophy imparts;
To give religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity and love unfeign'd,
To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise,
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw,
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close,
With joy, beyond what victory bestows,—
Blest country! where these kingly glories shine,
Blest England! if this happiness be thine.
A. Guard what you say, the patriotic tribe
Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A bribe?
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy.
To lure me to the baseness of a lie.
And of all lies (be that one poet's boast)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.

Those arts be theirs that hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.
A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown address'd,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.
B. Quevedo,[1] as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd, when in hell, to see the royal jail,
Approved their method in all other things,
But where, good Sir, do you confine your kings?
There—said his guide, the group is full in view.
Indeed? replied the Don—there are but few.
His black interpreter the charge disdain'd—
Few, fellow? There are all that ever reign'd.
Wit undistinguishing is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty, both alike.
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here,
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's grace th' historic page.
A. Kings then at last have but the lot of all,
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.
B. True. While they live, the courtly laureat pays
His quit-rent ode, his pepper-corn of praise,
And many a dunce whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite;
A subject's faults, a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game.
Thus free from censure, over-awed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage,
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask with busy scorn, Was this the man?
I pity kings whom worship waits upon
Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne,
Before whose infant eyes the flatt'rer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows.
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;

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

If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks;
Should'ring and standing as if struck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on:
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!
To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
Ev'n when he labours for his country's good,
To see a band call'd patriot for no cause,
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all th' anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels,
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong,——
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I be poor and free.
To be the Table Talk of clubs upstairs,
To which th' unwash'd artificer repairs,
T' indulge his genius after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue,
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play,)
To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
But to be rudely censured when they fail,
To doubt the love his fav'rites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend,
If he indulge a cultivated taste
His gall'ries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it call'd extravagance and waste,
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease;
However humble and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear.

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

Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse,
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fixt attention more than you.
B. Not Brindley[1] nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way;
Nor would the nine consent, the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stock-jobbers and Jews.
A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts,
Patriots who love good places at their hearts,
When Admirals extoll'd for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill;
Gen'rals who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay,
When freedom wounded almost to despair,
Though discontent alone can find out where;—
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a syren sung.
Or tell me if you can, what pow'r maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains?
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.
B. The cause, tho' worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Lib'ral in all things else, yet nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flow'rs,
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending, curl the streams,
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work,
Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
She rears her fav'rite man of all mankind.
His form robust, and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,

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

Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence liberty, sweet liberty inspires,
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul,
But if authority grow wanton, woe
To him that treads upon his free-born toe.[1]
One step beyond the bound'ry of the laws
Fires him at once in freedom's glorious cause.
Thus proud prerogative, not much revered,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard:
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.
Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such Herculean pow'rs,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of mis'ry far away.
He drinks his simple bev'rage with a gust,
And feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel th' alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols, *Vive le Roy*,
Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee,
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.
Thus happiness depends, as nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid,
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage slav'ry to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.
A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level, and you prove too much.
If all men indiscriminately share
His fost'ring pow'r and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land.
B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.

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

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

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

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

No. His high mettle under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.
Let discipline employ her wholesome arts,
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desp'rate task;
Let active laws apply the needful curb
To guard the peace that riot would disturb,
And liberty preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set Plebeian thousands in a roar,
When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face,
When the rude rabble's watch-word was, destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy,
Liberty blush'd and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread.
Blush'd that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.
Incomparable gem! thy worth untold,
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold;
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend;
Prize it ye ministers, ye monarchs spare,
Ye patriots guard it with a miser's care.
A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene, when Chatham died.
B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him, Demosthenes was heard again,
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,[1]

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

He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul, or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave that dared oppose
Her sacred cau..., but trembled when he rose,
And every venal stickler for the yoke,
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.
Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.
He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon[1] earn'd a vict'ry not his own,
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.
Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with ev'ry ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey,
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd,
Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next?
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
The prize of happier times will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
Patterns of ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace,
Confess'd a God, they kneel'd before they fought,
And praised him in the victories he wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream that feeds the well-spring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine,
The pow'rs that sin has brought to a decline.
A. Th' inestimable estimate of Brown,[2]
Rose like a paper kite, and charm'd the town;

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

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

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

[1] By number.

What follows next let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate proclaim:
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
Speak to the present times and times to come,
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
Stop, while ye may, suspend your mad career;
O learn from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late.[1]
Not only vice disposes and prepares
The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to tyranny's usurp'd command,
And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause,)
But Providence himself will intervene
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores,
The standards of all nations are unfurl'd,
She has one foe, and that one foe, the world.
And if he doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with the seal of wrath, press'd down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars above,
But nothing scares them from the course they love;
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf from which is no return.
They trust in navies and their navies fail,
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail;
They trust in armies, and their courage dies,
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;
But all they trust in, withers, as it must,
When He commands in whom they place no trust.

[1] "It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. But the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees." 1781.

Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast,
A long despised, but now victorious host,
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege,
Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock,
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.
A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?
B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of ev'ry feeling line.
But if a deed not tamely to be borne,
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.
So when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart, he looks to distant storms,
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,
And, arm'd with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet was the same,
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And ev'ry hallow'd druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong,
I play with syllables, and sport in song.
A. At Westminster,[1] where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where discipline helps opening buds of sense,
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too—but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus, all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,

[1] He speaks of having received a "silver groat" from the Master, as a reward for an exercise.

If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse,
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.[1]
B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line, that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conq'ring the stream by force,
That like some cottage beauty strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When labour and when dulness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clock-work tintinnabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be,
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.
From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song,
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there,
Or having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;
A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke,
An art contrived to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between;
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.
To dally much with subjects mean and low,
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
Neglected talents rust into decay,
And ev'ry effort ends in push-pin play.
The man that means success, should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove,
Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream.
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stoop'd from his highest pitch to pounce a wren;
As if the poet purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.
Ages elapsed e'er Homer's lamp appear'd,
And ages e'er the Mantuan swan was heard,

[1] Butler has—

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

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

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

B. These were the chief, each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light;
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star, in these, the sun.
The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly,
Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command,
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence that hems the paddock round.
In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art;
Language above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,
Not prompted as in our degen'rate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent, a God the theme.
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love,
Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things,
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings,
But still, while virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind,
To joys less innocent, as less refined,
Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crown'd
The brimming goblet seized the thyrsus, bound

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

Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Ev'n on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And ev'ry warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.
A. Are we then left—*B*. Not wholly in the dark,
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind and flings himself abroad.
Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one,
Short his career, indeed, but ably run.
Churchill,[1] himself unconscious of his pow'rs,
In penury consumed his idle hours,
And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length by dignity of thought,
And dint of genius to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took too often there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed and never drawing bit,

[1] Churchill drew his own portrait in the same colours:—

"Had I the power, I could not have the time,
Whilst spirits flow, and life is in her prime,
Without a sin 'gainst Pleasure, to design
A plan, to methodize each thought, each line
Highly to finish, and make every grace,
In itself charming, take new charms from place.
Nothing of books, and little known of men,
When the mad fit comes on, I seize the pen,—
Rough as they run, the rapid thoughts set down,—
Rough as they run, discharge them on the town."

GOTHAM, b. ii.

He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command,
He snatch'd it rudely from the muse's hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied pow'r,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to ev'ry flower,
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads,
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads,
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes,
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own;
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy, that, from the bow that spans the sky,
Brings colours dipp'd in heav'n that never die;
A soul exalted above earth, a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
And as the sun, in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
E'er yet his race begins, its glorious close,
An eye like his to catch the glorious goal,
Or e'er the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On ev'ry scene and subject it surveys,
Thus graced the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.[1]
Pity! Religion has so seldom found,
A skilful guide into poetic ground,
The flow'rs would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,
And ev'ry muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penn'd,
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
Stands in the desert shiv'ring and forlorn,
A wint'ry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,
Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread,
Satire has long since done his best, and curst
And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst;

[1] Hayley quotes these lines as containing a masterly picture of Cowper himself.

Fancy has sported all her pow'rs away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed, to see a bard all fire,
Touch'd with a coal from heav'n, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That he who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is love.
For after all, if merely to beguile
By flowing numbers and a flow'ry style,
The tedium that the lazy rich endure,
Which now and then sweet poetry may cure,
Or if to see the name of idol self,
Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim.
Debased to servile purposes of pride,
How are the powers of genius misapplied?
The gift whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace him in his word, his works, his ways,
Then spread the rich discov'ry, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight,
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
Is profanation of the basest kind,
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.
A. Hail Sternhold then and Hopkins hail! *B.* Amen.
If flatt'ry, folly, lust employ the pen,
If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce;
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,[1]
With all that fancy can invent to please,

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

Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.
A. 'Twould [illegible] the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.
B. No matter—we could shift when they were not,
And should no doubt if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

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

Sing muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a muse to grace it with a song)
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent error twines round human hearts,
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flow'ry shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The pois'nous, black, insinuating worm,
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine!
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine;
Truths that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.
Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end,
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear,
Like quicksilver, the rhet'ric they display,
Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at slips away.[1]
Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose, or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse.
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say, to what bar amenable were man?
With nought in charge, he could betray no trust,
And, if he fell, would fall because he must;
If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
His recompence in both, unjust alike.

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

Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action to the test,
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.
Heav'n from above, and conscience from within,
Cry in his startled ear, Abstain from sin.
The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treach'rous fire,
While all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows virtue as its sure reward,
And pleasure brings as surely in her train
Remorse, and sorrow, and vindictive pain.
Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice.
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight;
These open on the spot their honey'd store,
Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine, the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
Here, various motives his ambition raise,
Pow'r, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise;
There, beauty woos him with expanded arms;
E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.
Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his unexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dang'rous in th' excess.
Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air,
Oh what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis harmony from yon sequester'd bow'r,
Sweet harmony that soothes the midnight hour;
Long e'er the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, th' enchantment was begun,
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
E'er yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.
Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent
That virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heav'n's harmony is universal love;

And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave vice and folly unsubdu'd behind.
Gray dawn appears, the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain,
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighb'ring lairs,
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle, as the stanchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy, the danger, and the toil o'erpays,
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies,
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.
Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race—
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigious, ominous, and view'd with fear.
The comet's baneful influence is a dream,
Yours real, and pernicious in th' extreme.
What then—are appetites and lusts laid down,
With the same ease the man puts on his gown?
Will av'rice and concupiscence give place,
Charm'd by the sounds, your rev'rence, or your grace?
No. But his own engagement binds him fast,
Or if it does not, brands him to the last
What atheists call him, a designing knave.
A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest;
He from Italian songsters takes his cue,
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries, Well done, saint—and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth Street,
The sacred function, in your hands is made,
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade.

Occiduus[1] is a pastor of renown;
When he has pray'd and preach'd the sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quav'ring and semiquav'ring care away.
The full concerto swells upon your ear;
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summon'd them to serve his golden god;
So well that thought th' employment seems to suit,
Psalt'ry and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
Oh fie! 'Tis evangelical and pure;
Observe each face, how sober and demure,
Ecstasy sets her stamp on ev'ry mien,
Chins fall'n, and not an eyeball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charm'd me much, not ev'n Occiduus more,
Love, joy, and peace, make harmony, more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
Will not the sickliest sheep of ev'ry flock,
Resort to this example as a rock,
Thère stand and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath hours, with plausible excuse?
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.
Oh Italy! Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mumm'ry and buffoon;
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcell'd out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.

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

What says the prophet?[1] Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest;
Pastime and b· '..ess both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude,
Nobly distinguish'd above all the six,
By deeds in which the world must never mix.
Hear him again. He calls it a delight,[2]
A day of luxury, observed aright,
When the glad soul is made heav'n's welcome guest,
Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*
Oh the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again.
Cards with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
Where night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless and refined,
The balm of care, elysium of the mind.
Innocent! Oh if venerable time
Slain at the foot of pleasure, be no crime,
Then with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus[3] rise Archbishop of the land,
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.
Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,
Not of the moral, but the dancing school,
Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical as others at his own.
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more;
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
Go fool, and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread;

[1] "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you."—Exodus xxxi. 14.
[2] Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.
[3] The god of night-feasting, whose torch falling from his hand was the emblem of his riot.

But know, the law that bids the drunkard die
Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
Both baby-featured and of infant size,
View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
Folly and innocence are so alike,
The diff'rence, though essential, fails to strike.
Yet folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simp'ring countenance, a trifling air;
But innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
Man, nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat.
But if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed.
For nature, nice, as lib'ral to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice, example rare!
Heav'n bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair,[1]
Gorgonius sits abdominous and wan,
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan.
He snuffs far off th' anticipated joy,
Turtle and ven'son all his thoughts employ,
Prepares for meals, as jockeys take a sweat,
Oh nauseous! an emetic for a whet—
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if he could.
That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all.
And some that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful, in th' abuse, or by th' excess.
Is man then only for his torment placed,
I' the centre of delights he may not taste?
Like fabled Tantalus condemn'd to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept, that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.

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

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

[1] St. Matthew xxii. 20 21.

Then welcome errors of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon,
So sophistry cleaves close to, and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are:
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true
To give to virtue what is virtue's due,
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth,
Than vice's mean and disingenuous race,
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair,
Then kiss their idol and pronounce her fair.
The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy,
A trifle if it move but to amuse,
But if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.
Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that fancy leads,
Ye novelists who mar what ye would mend,
Sniv'ling and driv'ling folly without end,
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
With sentimental frippery and dream,
Caught in a delicate soft silken net
By some lewd Earl, or rake-hell Baronet:
Ye pimps, who under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;
Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire,
Though all your engineering proves in vain,
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again;
Oh! that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away, these flesh flies of the land,
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck, and leave a craving maggot there.
However disguised the inflammatory tale,
And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil,

Such writers and such readers owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.
But the muse eagle-pinion'd, has in view
A quarry more important still than you,
Down, down the wind she swims and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.
Petronius![1] all the muses weep for thee,
But ev'ry tear shall scald thy memory.
The graces too, while virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
Graybeard corrupter of our list'ning youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son
To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own.*
Now while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worst part, thy principles live yet;
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years,
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong,
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong,
And without discipline the fav'rite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow,
We give some Latin and a smatch[2] of Greek,
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week,
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.
From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome.

[1] Lord Chesterfield and his Letters.
[2] Cowper remembered Shakspere's

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

With rev'rend tutor, clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day,
With memorandum-book for ev'ry town,
And ev'ry post, and where the chaise broke down:
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart,
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wand'rer into foreign lands;
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair
With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples tow'ring high, much like our own,
But show peculiar light by many a grin,
At Popish practices observed within.
Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart Abbé
Remarks two loit'rers that have lost their way,
And being always primed with *politesse*
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task,
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But being canker'd now, and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt:
Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows,
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculanean pots and pans,
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.
Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new lights he draws,
The Squire, once bashful, is shame-faced no more,
But teems with pow'rs he never felt before:
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
As axles sometimes kindle as they go,
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow;
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flow'rs so sweet and fair,
Fresh'ning his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially, and spread the man;—
Returning he proclaims by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
And wisdom falls before exterior grace;
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools intend;
Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash;
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray
Where children would with ease discern the way.
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is Scripture warp'd from its intent.
The carriage bowls along and all are pleased
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased,
But if the rogue have gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
When some hypothesis absurd and vain
Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular, and out of course,
And judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.
A critic, on the sacred book, should be
Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free·
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence, and intemp'rate zeal.
But, above all, (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he cannot but profane,)
Free from the domineering pow'r of lust,
A lewd interpreter is never just.
How shall I speak thee, or thy pow'r address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?

By thee, religion, liberty, and laws,
Exert their influence, and advance their cause,
By thee worse plagues, than Pharaoh's land befel,
Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell:
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies,
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.
No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
Till half mankind were like himself possess'd
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt,
Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discov'rers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds, the blind that lead the blind,
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Pois'ning the waters where their swarms abound:
Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,
Minnows and gudgeons gorge th' unwholesome food
The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Lewenhoek[1] himself would stand aghast,
Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing pow'rs o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.
Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes,
And therefore prints. Himself but half-deceived,
'Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.
Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey,
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend;
If languages and copies all cry, No—
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic, in despair,
Darts to the mud and finds his safety there.

[1] A Dutch naturalist, born at Delft in 1632. With single lenses of extreme polish, he made some very curious microscopic investigations. In 1698, he showed to Peter the Great the circulation of the blood in the tail of an eel. He died in 1723.

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

[1] Pygmalion, a sculptor of Cyprus, who, becoming enamoured of a marble statue, prevailed on Venus to turn it into a woman, whom he married.
[2] Newton.

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

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

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

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

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

Then laugh at all you trembled at before,
And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense,
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense:
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.
Some dream that they can silence when they will
The storm of passion, and say, "Peace, be still;"
But "Thus far and no farther," when address'd
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.
But, muse, forbear, long flights forebode a fall,
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.
Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies.
And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast.
But if the wand'rer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss,
For ever and for ever? No—the Cross.
There, and there only (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave),
There, and there only, is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair,
No mock'ry meets you, no deception there;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.
I am no preacher, let this hint suffice,
The Cross once seen, is death to ev'ry vice:
Else He that hung there suffer'd all His pain,
Bled, groan'd, and agonized, and died in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ. Hor. Lib. ii. Ep. i.

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

Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams,
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!
He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.
Hard lot of man! to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it—wherefore hard?
He, that would win the race, must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course,
Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way, if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue;
Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.
Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile,
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quick'ning words—BELIEVE AND LIVE.
Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction and are lost.
Heav'n on such terms! they cry with proud disdain,
Incredible, impossible, and vain—
Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,
And scorn for its own sake the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains;
The rest, too busy or too gay to wait
On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day and perish in a night,
The foam upon the waters not so light.
Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord)

No—the man's morals were exact, what then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
The self-applauding bird, the peacock see—
Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold;
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were govern'd by his ear,
And seems to say, Ye meaner fowl, give place;
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace.
Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he, too, has a glory in his plumes;
He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien,
To the close copse or far sequester'd green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heav'n turns from with abhorrence and disdain:
Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise,
What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
As stoop from heav'n to sell the proud a throne.
His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
Book, beads, and maple-dish his meagre stock,
In shirt of hair and weeds of canvass dress'd,
Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd,
Adust[1] with stripes told out for ev'ry crime,
And sore tormented long before his time,
His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid,
His praise postponed, and never to be paid,
See the sage hermit by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts, inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
'Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
You think him humble, God accounts him proud:
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct, this the genuine sense—
My penitential stripes, my streaming blood
Have purchased heav'n, and prove my title good.

[1] Burnt up. Dryden has "choler adust."

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply,
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The Bramin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade,
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barb'rous air to British song,
Nor grand inquisitor could worse invent,
Than he contrives to suffer, well content.
Which is the saintlier worthr of the two?
Past all dispute, yon ancnorite say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
I say the Bramin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings, Scripture nowhere recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree,
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.
The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear)
Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
And poison'd every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean,
Humility may clothe an English Dean;
That grace was Cowper's—his confess'd by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a Bishop's board,
His palace, and his lackeys, and, 'my Lord!'
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice.
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows
In misery fools upon themselves impose.
But why before us Protestants produce
An Indian mystic, or a French recluse?
Their sin is plain, but what have we to fear,
Reform'd and well instructed? You shall hear.
Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon am'rous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs,
Duly at clink of bell, to morning pray'rs.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;

The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages are yet doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.
She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and item, goes to church.
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name,
Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper ev'ry day.
Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp,
In faithful mem'ry she records the crimes
Or real, or fictitious, of the times,
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified.
Take, Madam, the reward of all your pray'rs,
Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs,
Your portion is with them: nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.
Artist attend—your brushes and your paint—
Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint.
Oh sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks, a Niobe appears.
Is this a Saint? Throw tints and all away,
True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep indeed, and heave a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.
What purpose has the King of Saints in view?
Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove.
Or if a chain, the golden one of love;

No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
Shall he for such deliv'rance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought:
His master's int'rest and his own combined,
Prompt ev'ry movement of his heart and mind;
Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.
Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force,
His utmost he can render is but small,
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta now in vogue;
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
Expert in all the duties of his place:
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
Has he a world of gratitude and love?
No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play;
He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay;
Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with, Your most obedient, Sir—
The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command,
Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail,
And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your int'rest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please,
And proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risk his own.
Now, which stands highest in your serious thought?
Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought;
One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
Thus Heav'n approves, as honest and sincere,
The work of gen'rous love and filial fear,
But with averted eyes th' omniscient Judge,
Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.
Where dwell these matchless saints? Old Curio cries—
Ev'n at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
The favour'd few, th' enthusiasts you despise.
And pleased at heart because on holy ground,
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,

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

A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise,
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,
And the world's hatred as its sure effect.
Some lead a life unblamable and just,
Their own dear virtue, their unshaken trust.
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the Pope has lost his int'rest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground:
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek,
Mercy is infinite and man is weak,
The future shall obliterate the past,
And heav'n no doubt shall be their home at last.
Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear,
He has no hope that never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.
The path to bliss abounds with many a snare,
Learning is one, and wit, however rare:
The Frenchman first in literary fame,
(Mention him if you please—Voltaire? the same)
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died:
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew:
An infidel in health, but what when sick?
Oh then a text would touch him at the quick:
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on ev'ry side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death.
Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Content though mean, and cheerful, if not gay
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,

TRUTH.

"Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillows and bobbins all her little store."—P. 60

Receives no praise, but (though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh happy peasant! Oh unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward:
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home;
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers.
Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heav'nly ground:
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heav'n without regret;
Regret would rouse them and give birth to pray'r,
Pray'r would add faith, and faith would fix them there.
Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice,
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heav'nly call,
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all;
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss, (how strange soe'er it seem,)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open and ye cannot enter—why?
Because ye will not, Conyers[1] would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
Oh bless'd effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.

[1] I suppose the allusion is to Dr. Richard Conyers, rector of St. Paul's, Deptford; on whose death Mr. Newton preached a sermon, May 7, 1786. One passage is singularly applicable to Cowper himself:—"Through the agitation of his spirits, he spent his days, and almost every hour, in trepidation and alarm. The slightest incidents were sufficient to fill him with fears, which, though he knew to be groundless, he could not overcome."—page 23.

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

So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent, the theme a worm:
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight:
See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
His passions tamed and all at his control,
How perfect the composure of his soul!
Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail:
His books well trimm'd and in the gayest style,
Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care,
And like an infant, troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.
What shall the man deserve of human kind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined,
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat?
The praises of the libertine profess'd,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes,
The dying, trembling at their awful close,
Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
Where should they find (those comforts at an end
The Scripture yields) or hope to find a friend?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
Thus often unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife,
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court:
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of woe:
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road;
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief.

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

Perish the vi[illegible], as it ought, abhorr'd,
And the fool with it that insults his Lord.
Th' atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you, the righteous need it not.
See'st thou yon harlot wooing all she meets,
The worn out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heav'n denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.
Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both.
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
For ignorance of what they could not know?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong;
Truly not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employ'd may save,
While he that scorns the noonday beam perverse,
Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought.
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see;
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law,
That rule, pursued with rev'rence and with awe,
Led them, however falt'ring, faint and slow,
From what they knew, to what they wish'd to know;
But let not him that shares a brighter day,
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime;
The wretch that slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks while favour'd with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount,
The good he scorn'd all carried to account.
Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder and earthquake and devouring flame,

From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
Life for obedience, death for ev'ry flaw.
When the great Sov'reign would his will express,
He gives a perfect rule; what can he less?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with his name:
He bids him glow with unremitting love
To all on earth, and to himself above;
Condemns the injurious deed, the sland'rous tongue,
The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:
Brings not alone, the more conspicuous part,
His conduct to the test, but tries his heart.
Hark! universal nature shook and groan'd,
'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned:
Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What, silent? Is your boasting heard no more?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.
All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling, yet happy, confident yet meek.
Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in Thy righteousness divine;
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child,
Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart:
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil and accept their good;
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.
Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
Dona sines? VIRGIL.

WHY weeps the muse for England? What appears
In England's case to move the muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle,
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can nature add a charm or art confer
A new-found luxury not seen in her?
Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
Her fields, a rich expanse of wavy corn,
Pour'd out from plenty's overflowing horn,
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;
Her peaceful shores, where busy commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates,
Whom fiery suns that scorch the russet spice
Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets,
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports,
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age in spite of weakness and of pain
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again:
All speak her happy—let the muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found,
Or only what, in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind;
Then wherefore weep for England, what appears
In England's case to move the muse to tears?
The prophet wept[1] for Israel, wish'd his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;

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

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

[1] Ezekiel xiii 18.

And had the grace, in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe.
But man is frail and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain.
And after all the joys that plenty leads,
With tiptoe step vice silently succeeds.
When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came not expected in that humble guise,
To sift, and search them with unerring eyes,
He found conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness and worm of pride,
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat,
The pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.
When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:
The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own:
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
And tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot:
Then truth is hush'd that heresy may preach,
And all is trash that reason cannot reach;
Then God's own image on the soul impress'd,
Becomes a mock'ry and a standing jest,
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream:
Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find a single friend:
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand,
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form and gesture and grimace.
Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were,

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

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

Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
A people planted, water'd, blest as they?
Let Egypt's plagues, and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name;
Their freedom purchased for them, at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most,
Their title to a country not their own,
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown,
For them, the state they left made waste and void,
For them, the states to which they went, destroy'd;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way,
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and when it stay'd, to rest.
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food;
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And time forbid to touch them as he flew;
Streams swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand,
While they pass'd through to their appointed land;
Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
And graced with clear credentials from above,
Themselves secured beneath th' Almighty wing,
Their God their captain,[1] lawgiver, and king.
Crown'd with a thousand vict'ries, and at last
Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
There name far publish'd and revered as far;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wish'd, or Heav'n bestow'd?
They, and they only amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of th' Eternal Mind,
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err,
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conqu'ring Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome,

[1] See Joshua v. 14.

And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds;
Cured of the golden calves their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol-god within,
View'd a Deliv'rer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state,
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree:
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flow'r of Israel's infamy full blown;
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.
Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favour'd land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies;
In other climes perhaps creative art,
With pow'r surpassing theirs perform'd her part,
Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all th' embroid'ry of poetic dreams;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That truth and mercy had reveal'd to man.
And while the world beside, that plan unknown,
Deified useless wood, or senseless stone,
They breathed in faith their well-directed pray'rs,
And the true God, the God of truth was theirs.
Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first,
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn—
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn:
If we escaped not, if Heav'n spared not us,
Peel'd,[1] scatter'd, and exterminated thus;
If vice received her retribution due
When we were visited, what hope for you?
When God arises with an awful frown,
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,

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

Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land,
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.
O Israel, of all nations most undone!
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst;
Thy services, once holy without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er ev'ry country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;
Cry aloud thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust,
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears,
Say wrath is coming and the storm appears,
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.
What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succour thee;
Countries indebted to thy pow'r, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine;
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face:
Thy rulers load thy credit year by year
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear,
As if like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.
The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame.
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France;
But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought:
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war,
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight;

Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what policy has plann'd;
Where policy is busied all night long
In setting right what faction has set wrong;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of labour sweats in vain;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight,
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.
Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease,
Providence adverse in events like these?
Know then, that heav'nly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all:
That while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine:
Blind to the working of that secret power
That balances the wings of ev'ry hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither, as moons wax and wane,
Even as his will and his decrees ordain;
While honour, virtue, piety bear sway,
They flourish, and as these decline, decay.
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause,
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart,
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
None bars him out from his most secret thought;
Darkness itself before his eye is light,
And Hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
Stand now and judge thyself—hast thou incurr'd
His anger who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,

And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosp'rous wars,
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of his just praise to lavish it on them?
Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That courage is his creature, and dismay
The post that at his bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stamm'ring tongue,
With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatant a woman's part?
That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as he will by many, or by few,
And claims for ever as his royal right
Th' event and sure decision of the fight.
Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast,
Exported slav'ry to the conquer'd East,
Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead,
Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with pow'r obtain'd by wealth,
And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind,
And, having *truck'd*[1] thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?
Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write,
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.

[1] *Bartered*—so Churchill in the "Duellist":—

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

And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
'Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin.
Kiss the book's outside who ne'er look within?
Hast thou, when Heav'n has clothed thee with disgrace,
And long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
(For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow,
And never of a sabler hue than now,)
Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience sear'd,
Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
And, having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
That cried repent—and gloried in thy choice?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests th' expedient of a yearly fast,
What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a pow'r
In lighter diet, at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threat'nings of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
The fast that wins deliv'rance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy, to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law,
To war with pleasures idolized before,
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.
Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
Brought fire from heav'n, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace
Baboons are free from, upon human race?
Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,[1]
Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:
Then nature, injured, scandalized, defiled,
Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smiled,
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

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

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And further still the form'd and fix'd design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest,
Against an innocent unconscious breast:
The man, that dares traduce because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man:
An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark,
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.
The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-int'rest and ambition clear,
Their hope in heav'n, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn.
Their wisdom pure, and giv'n them from above,
Their usefulness insured by zeal and love,
As meek as the man Moses, and withal
As bold as, in Agrippa's presence, Paul,
Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted—are thine such?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest
Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.[1]
Where shall a teacher look in days like these,
For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?
Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain;
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return:
Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock,
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent at least, try them:
Oh vain inquiry! They, without remorse,
Are altogether gone a devious course,
Where beck'ning pleasure leads them, wildly stray,
Have burst the bands and cast the yoke away.
Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime;
This island spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd;

[1] See 1 Samuel ii. iii.

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

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

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

[1] Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.—C.
[2] The Crusades.

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

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

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

Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth what cannot but be true,
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart:
Happy the man there seeking and there found,
Happy the nation where such men abound.
How shall a verse impress thee? By what name
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
By theirs, whose bright example unimpeach'd
Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires?
Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age
Whom all the vanities they scorn'd, engage,
And his that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on ev'ry trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war,
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If int'rest move thee, to persuade ev'n thee:
By ev'ry charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word;
That gratitude and temp'rance in our use
Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights that millions envy thee appear,
And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when giv'n
Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heav'n,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine
Which make that Heav'n, if thou desire it, thine;
'Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved,)
Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
With cold disgust, or philosophic pride,
And that judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error and darkness occupy their place.

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

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

HOPE.

——— docens iter, et sacra ostia pandas.—VIRGIL, En. vi.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment low'ring in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.—
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
So shifting and so various is the plan,
By which Heav'n rules the mix'd affairs of man;
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud:
Bus'ness is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.
Dangling his cane[1] about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, what philosophic stuff!
Oh querulous and weak! whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain,
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheart'ning waste,
Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,

[1] How much happier is Pope—

"And the nice conduct of a clouded cane."

See nature gay as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer, man,
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils,
The sun obedient at her call appears
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears,
Banks clothed with flow'rs, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth,[1] green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fatt'ning ev'ry field
Where'er they flow, now seen, and now conceal'd,
From the blue rim where skies and mountains meet,
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
Ten thousand charms that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indiff'rent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice.
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires,
Not that his hours devoted all to care,
Hollow-eyed abstinence and lean despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
She holds a paradise of rich delight,
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere,
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heav'n's intentions are not what they seem,
That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but woe.
Thus things terrestrial wear a diff'rent hue,
As youth, or age persuades, and neither true;
So Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,
The rose, or lily, appears blue or green,
But still th' imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.
To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
'Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four,
And just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day,
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heav'nly beams produce,

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

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

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

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

Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator has no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, pow'r, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wand'ring notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reas'ning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature employ'd in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace,
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood.
That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture with a glow
Bright as the covenant-insuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.
  Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall.
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use,
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives with chymic art
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wing sails through th' immense [illegible]
Plucks amaranthine joys from bow'rs of bli
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner he[illegible]
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits w[illegible]
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast;
Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure;
Hope! let the wretch once conscious of the joy
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.

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

[1] This admirable person died at St. Alban's in 1788. His "Fireside" still read; but Cowper has given to him a brighter memory.

Starts from the down on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept;
Shows with a pointing finger, and no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
And life abused—and not to be suborn'd.
Mark these, she says, these summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar.
There find a judge, inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must.
Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead ev'n while they live,
Born capable indeed of heav'nly truth,
But down to latest age from earliest youth,
Their mind a wilderness, through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never ent'ring there.
Peace (if insensibility may claim
A right to the meek honours of her name)
To men of pedigree, their noble race
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of grace.
Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
Revere the laws they dream that Heav'n ordains,
Resort on Sundays to the house of pray'r,
And ask, and fancy they find blessings there;
Themselves perhaps, when weary they retreat
T'enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
T'exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps and lawns and temples and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray for good example sake;
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves without remorse despise,
Nor hope have they nor fear of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb;
They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
And truth proposed to reas'ners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.
They die—Death lends them, pleased and as in sport,
All the grim honours of his ghastly court;
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow;

The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful 'scutcheons and dim lamps between,
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they, that wore them, move not at the sound;
The coronet placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead.
And ev'n the star that glitters on the bier,
Can only say, Nobility lies here.
Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend
By useless censure whom we cannot mend.
Life without hope can close but in despair.
'Twas there we found them and must leave them there
As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way,
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain opinion's waste and dang'rous wild;
Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
But here, alas! the fatal diff'rence lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
And he, that blames what they have blindly chose,
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.
Say, botanist! within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bow'rs,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish ev'ry cultivated kind,
The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane! in thy dear, hallow'd ground,
That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,—
Oh cast them from thee! are weeds, arrant weeds.
Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in th' appointed ONE.
And they might enter at his open door,
Ev'n till his spacious hall would hold no more.

He sent a servant forth by ev'ry road,
To sound his l[illegible], and publish it abroad.
That all might mark, knight, menial, high and low,
An ord'nance it concern'd them much to know.
If after all, some headstrong, hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just and without flaw,
And he that made, had right to make the law;
His sov'reign power and pleasure unrestrain'd
The wrong was his, who wrongfully complain'd.
Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With him, the donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot insures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours;
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this and live.
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold,
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold,
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful gen'rous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can—for this plain cause, express'd
In terms as plain; himself has shut the rest.
But oh, the strife, the bick'ring, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heav'n create!
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound,
And beaus, adepts in ev'ry thing profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
Th' explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
Where mould'ring abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;
The screaming nations hov'ring in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,

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

A lawyer's dealing should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there;
Fasting and pray'r sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd,
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay,
A hand as lib'ral as the light of day;
The soldier thus endow'd who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thought whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heav'n—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug! he cries (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug,
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug)
Your office is to winnow false from true,
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us what think you.
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,
Is still found fallible, however wise,
And differing judgments serve but to declare
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read
Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charm'd me most
Was,—well-a-day, the title-page was lost.
The writer well remarks, a heart, that knows
To take with gratitude what Heav'n bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is—to which of my own store
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I wave just now, for conversation sake.——
Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
And add Right Rev'rend to Smug's honour'd name.
And yet our lot is giv'n us in a land
Where busy arts are never at a stand,
Where science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky,
Where bold inquiry diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light,
Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.

But above all, in her own light array'd,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd!
The sacred Book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue,
But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound:
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
And in the gulphs of her Cornubian mines.
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her[1] sons to pour it on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.
Oh blest within th' inclosure of your rocks,
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks,
No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
That show reversed the villas on their side;
No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
Or voice of turtle in your land is heard,
Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at ev'ning where ye dwell—
But winter arm'd with terrors, here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne,
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built, stand fast,
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes, to make your land a prey,
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
—Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle,
And peace, the genuine offspring of her smile;
The pride of letter'd ignorance that binds,
In chains of error, our accomplish'd minds,
That decks with all the splendour of the true
A false religion, is unknown to you.
Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night,
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flow'r, and ev'ry creature here,

[1] The Moravian missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.—C.

But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,
Have ris'n at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day
From which our nicer optics turn away.
Here see th' encouragement grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price!
What were they?—what some fools are made by art
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach;
Not ev'n the glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most that seldom will appear,
And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,
May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,
Not ev'n the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one vot'ry there;
They were what base credulity believes
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
The full-gorged savage at his nauseous feast,
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one, whom justice on an equal plan
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might almost have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.
What are they now?—morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there.
The wretch, that once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd
And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays;
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet,[1] Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.
Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand,
If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
Glist'ning at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one whose birth was in a land of light,

[1] Isaiah lv. 12, 13.

Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.
These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood—
Yet charge not heav'nly skill with having plann'd
A plaything world unworthy of his hand—
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works,
Deem life a blessing with its num'rous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
Hard task indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?
Yes, but an object bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride and moves our envy less.
Leuconomos[1] (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age,
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For ev'ry dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mention'd *him* at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense,
A knave when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd,
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.
Now truth perform thine office, waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride.

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

Reveal (the man is dead)[1] to wond'ring eyes,
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him: the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere.
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's int'rest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed;
He follow'd Paul: his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same;
Like him cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he labour'd, and like him, content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.
Blush calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced th' offended skies,
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image in thy saint, O Lord!
No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he that must have pleasure, come what will;
He laughs, whatever weapon truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain, but God and he
On scripture-ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than that his Maker has seen fit to give,
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain,
Contriv'd to suit frail nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.

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

By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well-poised estimate of right and wrong,
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.
Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please,
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that hope the Scripture has required:
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy for ever teems,
(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by:
But if unblamable in word and thought,
A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,
To storm the citadels they build in air,
And smite th' untemper'd wall, 'tis death to spare;
To sweep away all refuge of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
LAMA SABACHTHANI before their eyes,
To prove that without Christ, all gain is loss,
All hope, despair, that stands not on his Cross;
Except the few his God may have impress'd,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.
Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
There dwells a consciousness in ev'ry breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
And he that finds his heav'n must lose his sins:
Nature opposes with her utmost force
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce,
And while religion seems to be her view
Hates with a deep sincerity *the true;*
For this of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free,
Sounds forth the signal as she mounts her car
Of an eternal, universal war,
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles,

Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
Pow'rs of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry, and push by God's word
With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.
Parent of hope, immortal Truth, make known
Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own·
The silent progress of thy pow'r is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.
Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
That while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light and shade and ev'ry stroke be thine
If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever, when he sigh'd, hast sigh'd again,
If ever on thine eyelid stood the tear
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy--had the world's good word,
And with it ev'ry joy it can afford;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good-breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And, whether at the toilette of the fair
He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there;
Or, if in masculine debate he shared,
Insured him mute attention and regard.
Alas how changed! expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined,
Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin,
Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within,
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart;
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends.

Hard task! for one who lately knew no care
And harder still as learnt beneath despair:
His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
A dark importance saddens every day,
He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd,
And cries,—Perhaps eternity strikes next.
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear,
His grief the world of all her pow'r disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now, by the voice of his experience, true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.
Now let the bright reverse be known abroad,
Say, man's a worm, and pow'r belongs to God.
As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years,
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When hope, long ling'ring, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear,
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him whom hope has with a touch made whole:
'Tis heav'n, all heav'n descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through ev'ry part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
Oh, welcome now, the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright,
Not kindred minds alone are call'd t'employ
Their hours, their days in list'ning to his joy,
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth:
These move the censure and illib'ral grin
Of fools that hate thee, and delight in sin:
But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,
And heav'n is all departed as a scroll:
And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they that share
That Hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.
Happy the bard (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song)
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And while they captivate, inform the mind.
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil:
But happier far who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth, at Judah's hallow'd gate;
Their language simple as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek,
Nor labour they, nor time, nor talents waste
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
Th' abundant harvest, recompence divine,
Repays their work—the gleaning only, mine

CHARITY.

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

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

Oh, never seen but in thy blest effects,
Nor felt but in the soul that Heav'n selects,
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man:
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind,
That ev'ry tribe, though placed as he sees best,
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Diff'ring in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook[1]—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own;
Wherever he found man, to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view:
He sooth'd with gifts and greeted with a smile
The simple native of the new-found isle,
He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood,
Nor would endure that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.
But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved!
Where wast thou then sweet Charity, where then
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
Wast thou in Monkish cells and nunn'ries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground?
No—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love, and Heav'n abhors the fee;
Wherever found (and all men need thy care)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.

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

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

Again—the band of commerce was design'd
T' associate all the branches of mankind,
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe:
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful nature's various scenes,
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the gen'ral use;

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

No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all;
This genial intercourse and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else an universal shade,
Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rockwork into men.
Ingenious Art with her expressive face
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,
Not only fills necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand;
Capricious taste itself can crave no more,
Than she supplies from her abounding store;
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.
These are the gifts of art, and art thrives most,
Where commerce has enrich'd the busy coast.
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
'Tis thus reciprocating each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach;
While Providence enjoins to every soul
An union with the vast terraqueous whole.
Heav'n speed the canvass gallantly unfurl'd
To furnish and accommodate a world;
To give the Pole the produce of the sun,
And knit the unsocial climates into one.—
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.—
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, nature's rarest birth,
That flies like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love, to pagan lands.—

But, ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end,
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far receding shore,
But not the thought that they must meet no more;
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind,
Puts off his gen'rous nature, and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
  Oh, most degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate!
All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure;
Grief is itself a med'cine, and bestow'd
T' improve the fortitude that bears the load,
To teach the wand'rer, as his woes increase,
The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace.
But slav'ry!—virtue dreads it as her grave,
Patience itself is meanness in a slave:
Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see
That has a heart and life in it, Be free;
The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack,
And, conscious of an unencumber'd back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein;
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane,
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs,
Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
  Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?

Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold;
So may the ruffian who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
Not he, but his emergence[1] forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then giv'n its sweetness to the cane
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd?
Impudent blasphemy! so folly pleads,
And, av'rice being judge, with ease succeeds.
But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey because he *must*,
Still there is room for pity to abate
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view,
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
Has one that notices his silent grief,
He, from whose hands alone all pow'r proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown,
But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone, the whip and bell in that hard hand,
Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command,
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heav'n has an avenging rod;
To smite the poor is treason against God.
Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd.
We wander o'er a sun-burnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,

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

> "When from the deep thy bright emergence sprung,
> And nature on thy form divinely hung."
>
> *Universal Beauty*, b. i.

Forget t' enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighb'ring glade:
Else who would lose, that had the pow'r t' improve,
Th' occasion of transmuting fear to love?
Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.—
Inform his mind, one flash of heav'nly day,
Would heal his heart and melt his chains away;
'Beauty for ashes' is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed:
Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet,—
My dear deliv'rer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged and ignorance made fast the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;[1]
Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore,
Serving a benefactor I am free,
At my best home, if not exiled from thee.
Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of lib'ral and heroic deeds,
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposit, on the bord'ring lands:
These have an ear for *his* paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all,
God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ,
And THORNTON[2] is familiar with the joy.
Oh, could I worship aught beneath the skies,
That earth hath seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flow'rs as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.

[1] "What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do;
This, teach me more than hell to shun;
That, more than heaven pursue."
POPE'S *Universal Prayer*.

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

Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light;
Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise
For the chief blessings of my fairest days:
But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
But His who gave thee and preserves thee mine:
Else I would say, and as I spake, bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky,
This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home;
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly pow'r,
While conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong
Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long,
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share
The fears and hopes of a commercial care;
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless and to punish guilt;
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood,
And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound:
Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind,
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent innocence go free.
Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed,
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,[1]
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home—
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,

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

But knowled[illegible]uch as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers and enjoy her cage;—
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
Oh, that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favour of thy gen'rous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee.
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with nature all his way,
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep inquiry recommends,
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan,
That heav'n spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him with a pleasure always new:
He too has a connecting pow'r, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious if not all divine,
And what dilates the pow'rs must needs refine;
He reads the skies, and watching ev'ry change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range,
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the gen'ral scale.
But reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought:
The lamp of revelation only, shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught down falls the plumage of his pride,
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more.
Unless the pow'r that bade him stand, restore.

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

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

The soul, whose sight all-quick'ning grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As di'monds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires,
And, in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys,
Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long,
And from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence;
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The truth she loves, a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream,
The danger they discern not, they deny,
Laugh at their only remedy, and die:
But still a soul, thus touch'd, can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace,
Pure in her aim and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child,
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased,
She rather waives than will dispute her right,
And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
Such was the portrait an apostle[1] drew,
The bright original was one he knew,
Heav'n held his hand, the likeness must be true.
When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis ev'n as if an angel shook his wings;

[1] St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.

Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,[1]
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor and her canvass furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.
Some seek, when queazy conscience has its qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms;
But Charity, not feign'd, intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own;
And too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of a sister's fame,
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But if she touch a character, it dies.[2]
The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price,
No charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.[3]
How many deeds, with which the world has rung,
From pride in league with ignorance have sprung?
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will.
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food,
Extravagance and av'rice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bribe;
The brief proclaim'd, it visits ev'ry pew,
But first the Squire's, a compliment but due:
With slow deliberation he unties
His glitt'ring purse, that envy of all eyes,
And while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm,
'Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum;

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

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

[3] A mantel to a fireplace. "Upon the mantel-tree, for I am a pretty curious observer, stood a pot of Cambative electuary, with a stick of liquorish."—*Tatler*, No. 268.

Gold to be si[illegible]:—throughout the town 'tis told
How the good Squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distress'd,
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that office clips it as it goes.
But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine,)
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is more than those he brands, to blame,
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare,
Affects indeed a most humane concern
That men if gently tutor'd will not learn,
That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd
By softer methods, must be made ashamed,
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)[1]
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most sat'rists are indeed a public scourge,
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge,
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd,
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse;
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poinarg whomsoe'er they meet;
No skill in swordsmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust,
And even virtue so unfairly match'd,
Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.
When scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
Gath'ring around it with erected ears;
A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd,
Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud,
Just as the sapience[2] of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dang'rous to be plain.

[1] Swift.
[2] Wisdom; so, in Hudibras, Sidrophel, looking wise,

"Of sapience, and began to bluster."

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

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

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

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

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

CONVERSATION.

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

VIRGIL, Ecl. v.

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

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

As alphabets in ivory employ
Hour after hour the yet unletter'd boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science called his A B C,
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh th' importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or Algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of ev'ry wrong
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue,
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market-price,
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb;
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up ev'ry satyr in his den.
Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting pow'r
Taints in its rudiments the promised flow'r,
Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful for it smells of you.
Not ev'n the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just,
For making speech the pamperer of lust;
But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful and no longer green,
The sapless wood divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at ev'ry spark.
Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life,

Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris,[1] or the naval force,
Asseveration blust'ring in your face
Makes contradiction such an hopeless case;
In every tale they tell, or false, or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain,
And even when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who though devout yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest,
Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begg'd an int'rest in his frequent pray'rs.
Go quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
Henceforth associate in one common herd,
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense
Pronounce your human form a false pretence,
A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
Ye pow'rs who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate:
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
For opposition gives opinion strength,
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably-disposed to death.
Oh thwart me not, Sir Soph. at ev'ry turn,
Nor carp at ev'ry flaw you may discern,
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not, surely, always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right, by chance,
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame,
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground.
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around,

[1] A celebrated Italian dancer, who died in 1808.

Discourse may want an animated—No—
To brush the surface and to make it flow,
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake;
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch,
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapp'd again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge *himself* deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right,
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly—to be sure—no doubt.
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes, presumes it may be so.
His evidence, if he were call'd by law,
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense,
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not,
What he remembers seems to have forgot,
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centring at last in having none at all.
Yet though he tease and balk your list'ning ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme,
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool,
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach:
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind and deaf and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The Positive pronounce without dismay,

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

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

[1] The construction requires, *is fittest auditor*.

Tell not as new what ev'rybody knows,
And new or old, still hasten to a close,
There, centring in a focus round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet:
What neither yields us profit or delight,
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night,
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack would please me more.
The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
Such often like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilizes ours:
Thou art indeed the drug a gard'ner wants,
To poison vermin that infest his plants;
But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And show the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy, as he, grubs and worms?
They dare not wait the riotous abuse,
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
When wine has giv'n indecent language birth,
And forced the flood-gates of licentious mirth;
For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element from which she rose,
And, with a quiet which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.
  Th' emphatic speaker dearly loves t'oppose
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touch'd with a magnet had attracted his.
His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain
Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stept home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please,
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees,
But we that make no honey though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to mawl the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mixt resort,
What makes some sick, and others *à la mort*,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such an one should keep *himself* away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
Quite as absurd though not so light as he:
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop; significant and budge;[1]
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge;
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock it never is at home:
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage,
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love,
But when unpack'd, your disappointment groans
To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.
Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us in recitals of disease
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees:
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped,
Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper spite of draught or pill
Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap, and relapse;
They thought they must have died they were so bad,
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
Some fretful tempers wince at ev'ry touch,
You always do too little, or too much:

[1] Rigid, or austere; so Milton speaks of—
"—— those budge doctors of the stoic fur."

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

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

In other eyes our talents, rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place,
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t'appear;
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nurst.
The circle form'd we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate,
Yes, ma'am, and no, ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Ev'ry five minutes, how the minutes go;
Each individual suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats if such there are,
And coughs and rheums and phthisic and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Fill'd up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed,
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
Recov'ring what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seem'd reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.
The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desp'rate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd.
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.

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

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

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

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

Found him as prompt[1] as their desire was true,
To spread the new-born glories in their view.
Well, what are ages and the lapse of time
Match'd against truths as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact,
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
No—marble and recording brass decay,
And like the graver's mem'ry pass away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty and return to dust;
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head as guarded as its base is sure;
Fixt in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that Architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found that harbour, at this hour,
That love of Christ in all its quick'ning pow'r,
And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for th' ablution of our woes.
Oh days of heav'n and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heav'nly days,
When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.
What, always dreaming over heav'nly things,
Like angel-heads in stone, with pigeon-wings?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his pray'rs,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away,
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heav'n e'er he becomes divine,
Leaves saints t'enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

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

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

And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years;
Yet age by long experience well inform'd,
Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
That fire abated which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a rev'rence in its short'ning day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around,
And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.
What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dang'rous, and approve your fear,
That fire is catching if you draw too near,
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.
To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an almighty pow'r)
Before His presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
Though common sense allow'd a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in th' extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease when soberly defined
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by,
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause,
And, while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
Presumes itself chief fav'rite of the skies.
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feed
Shines in the dark, but usher'd into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

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

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

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

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

That while in health, the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short,
That sick, she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
That while she dotes and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warpt to what they never meant;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel,
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And, while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design,
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond th' example of our sires, digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met,
I owed a trifle and have paid the debt;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd
Since she and I conversed together last,
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occurr'd,
And blest reforms that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found,
Where once intoxication press'd the ground,
The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd,
Charity may relax the miser's fist,
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)

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

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 21.

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

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

RETIREMENT.

——— studiis florens ignobilis oti.—Virg. Geor. Lib. iv.

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

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

Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
These are thy glorious works, thou Source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood!—
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wond'rous fair;
Thy pow'r divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought;
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
Thy words, more clearly than thy works display,
That while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble thee and call thee mine.
Oh blest proficiency! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompence that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers what have courts to show?
Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,
Whatever *is*, seems form'd indeed for us,
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires;
But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.
Not that I mean t' approve, or would enforce
A superstitious and monastic course:
Truth is not local,[1] God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be fear'd amid the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest pow'rs,

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

And in a world where (other ills apart)
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish fancy points the way,
To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
Resign our own, and seek our Maker's will;
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there,
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no fav'rite sin,
And search the themes important above all,
Ourselves and our recov'ry from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
How to secure in some propitious hour,
The point of int'rest, or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired,
From objects too much dreaded, or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.
Op'ning the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man,
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years;
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dang'rous shore.
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some, shining pebbles, and some, weeds and shells;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great.
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight;
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep;
A few forsake the throng, with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heav'n, and gain a real prize.
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with His signet whom they serve and love;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And, unregretted, are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.
Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use,

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

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

Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy pow'rs away.
Up—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue,
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
When he design'd a paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart,
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.
Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN![1] whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove,
Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fixt, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye, distress
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now, that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure, or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short,
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer-brook are past away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion and receives the least;
Job felt it when he groan'd beneath the rod,
And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God,

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

"Physic, obtaining succour from the pen
Of her soft son, the gentle Heberden."

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

Ask not the boy who when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glitt'ring drops from ev'ry thorn

Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound:
Then heav'n, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth
Shall seem to start into a second birth;
Nature assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.
Ye groves, (the statesman at his desk exclaims
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims)
My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
Receive me languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heav'n might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay
A fallen empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come,
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends, my choice,
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
'Tis done,—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from bus'ness and debate,
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glitt'ring drops from ev'ry thorn,

Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free—
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew:
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss, we rarely prize.
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in freedom's smile express'd,
In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd,
The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stamm'rer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in ev'ry form inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that
spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs that almost escape th' inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all th' enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand.
Then, swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the 'squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding
tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;

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

Oh, sweet Retirement, who would balk the thought,
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate,
A step if fair, and. if a show'r approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
There prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of bus'ness and his friends compress'd,
Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From ev'ry window, and the fields are green,
Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?
A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can;
And he that deems his leisure well bestow'd
In contemplations of a turnpike road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his pow'rs,
As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
Yet hence, alas! insolvencies, and hence
Th' unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with bus'ness, and retires indeed.
Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,
When health required it would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home;
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.—
Ocean[1] exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the pow'r and majesty of God.

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

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

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

The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song,[1]
And Cobham's groves and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.
Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, e'er he mounted, kiss'd his horse;
Th' estate his sires had own'd in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
Jack vanish'd, was regretted and forgot,
'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hop'd in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
Curried his nag and look'd another way.
Convinced at last upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He press'd him much to quit his base employ,—
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Infl'ence and pow'r were all at his command.
Peers are not always gen'rous as well-bred,
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
Jack bow'd and was obliged—confess'd 'twas strange
That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint, three thousand pounds a year.
Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe,
Some seeking happiness not found below,
Some to comply with humour, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined,
Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust,
Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must,
But few that court Retirement are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.
Lucrative offices are seldom lost[2]
For want of pow'rs proportion'd to the post:

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

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

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

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

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

[1] The allusion is to Voltaire.

Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one gen'ral cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars invention and makes fancy lame,
Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,
And novels (witness ev'ry month's review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Gives truth a lustre, and makes wisdom smile.
Friends (for I cannot stint as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one,
Though one, I grant it, in th' gen'rous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
Flow'rs by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all),
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well-born, well-disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And (though the world may think th' ingredients odd)
The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
Such friends prevent, what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean,
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene.
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman,[1] his remark was shrewd—
How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper,—Solitude is sweet.[2]

[1] Bruyère.—C.

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

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

[1] David.

To give dissimil... yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant, that each demands;
To cherish virtue in a humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create;
To mark the matchless workings of the power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
To teach the canvas innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet;—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of time.
Me poetry (or rather notes that aim
Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse;
Content if, thus sequester'd I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise,
And while I teach an art, too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

THE DOVES.[1]

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

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

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

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

[1] The doves were Mr. Newton and his wife.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A FABLE.

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

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

MORAL.

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

A COMPARISON.

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

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

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

VERSES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ODE TO PEACE.

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

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

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

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

HUMAN FRAILTY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS. BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

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

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

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

ON THE SAME.

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

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

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

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

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
Good Mussulman abstain from pork;
There is a part in ev'ry swine,
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part express'd
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarr'd,
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head,
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from ev'ry clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
Renounce the world, the preacher cries—
We do—a multitude replies;
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;

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

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

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.[1]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

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

But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.
Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace, both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

ON A GOLDFINCH

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

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

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

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

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

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

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

HORACE.

BOOK THE SECOND—ODE THE TENTH.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

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

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I.—THE GLOW-WORM.

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

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

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

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

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

[1] To Unwin, May 23, 1781.

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

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

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

II. — THE JACKDAW.

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

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

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

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

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

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

III.—THE CRICKET.

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

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

Though in voice and shape they be
Form'd as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Their's is but a summer song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpair'd and shrill and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

[1] "You will find, in comparing the Jackdaw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point, which, though smart enough in the Latin, would in English have appeared as plain and as blunt as the tag of a lace."—(To Unwin, May 28, 1781.)

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

IV.—THE PARROT.

In painted plumes superbly dress't,
A native of the gorgeous east,
By many a billow tost;
Poll gains at length the British shore,
Part of the captain's precious store,
A present to his toast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE SHRUBBERY.[1]

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

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

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

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

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE.

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE

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

Those hangings with their worn-out grace,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.
—Sir Humphry, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.
You are so deaf, the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)
You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?
Dismiss poor Harry! he replies,
Some people are more nice than wise,—
For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride, whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile—your fav'rite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.
Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl,
I tell you you can't hear at all;
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd,
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On ev'ry trivial provocation?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear,
And something ev'ry day they live
To pity and, perhaps, forgive.
But if infirmities that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish, or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar
And tumult, and intestine war.
The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,

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

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TRANSLATION OF PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA.

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

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

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

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

BOADICEA:

AN ODE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HEROISM.

THERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves that girdled her around.
Her unctuous olives and her purple vines,
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
When on a day, like that of the last doom,
A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,
She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth,
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
And hang their horrors in the neighb'ring skies,
While through the Stygian veil that blots the day,
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
But, oh! what muse, and in what pow'rs of song,
Can trace the torrent as it burns along?
Havock and devastation in the van,
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man—
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.
  Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an'uninform'd and idle mass,
Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,
Or blade that might redeem it from despair.
Yet time at length (what will not time achieve?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
Oh bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
Oh charming paradise of short-lived sweets!
The selfsame gale that wafts the fragrance round,
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound;
Again the mountain feels th' imprison'd foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below.
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.
  Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,

Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence —
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence;
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires.
Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their own.
Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road,
At ev'ry step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.
Famine, and pestilence, her first-born son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun;
And echoing praises such as fiends might earn,
And folly pays, resound at your return.
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.
Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the tow'rs that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.
Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqu'ror's part,
And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, laurel'd heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suff'ring world ye sway?
Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroid'ry rare,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe,
And stands a witness at truth's awful bar,
To prove you, there, destroyers as ye are.
Oh place me in some heav'n-protected isle,
Where peace and equity and freedom smile,
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood,

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

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

An Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded:
Ah, hapless wretch! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell,
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease;
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now *in* in the water, and now *out;*
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against ev'ry rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.
When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there?
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.
You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you.
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think——

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

TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

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

An union form'd, as mine with thee,
Not rashly or in sport,
May be as fervent in degree,
And faithful in its sort,
And may as rich in comfort prove,
As that of true fraternal love

The bud, inserted in the rind,
The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though diff'ring in its kind,
The stock whereon it grows.
With flow'r as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may—
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be, in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart,
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

THE TASK.

BOOK I.—THE SOFA.[1]

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

The author's vindication of the title is given in a letter to Mr. Newton, December 13, 1784: "As to the title I take it to be the best that is to be had. It is not possible that a book including such a variety of subjects, and in which no particular one is predominant, should find a title adapted to them all. In such a case, it seemed almost necessary to accommodate the name to the incident that gave birth to the poem; nor does it appear to me that because I performed more than my task, therefore the Task is not a suitable title. A house would still be a house, though the builder of it should make it ten times as big as he at first intended. I might, indeed, following the example of the Sunday newspaper, call it the Olio; but I should do myself wrong; for though it have much variety, it has, I trust, no confusion." Newton disliked the name, but the poet was resolute in his choice.]

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa—A schoolboy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude, corrected—Colonnades

[1] "None of the titles apply themselves to the contents at large of that book to which they belong. They are, every one of them, taken from the leading (I should say the introductory) passage of that particular book, or from that which makes the most conspicuous figure in it. The Sofa, being, as I may say, the starting-post from which I addressed myself to the long race, that I soon conceived a design to run, it acquired a just pre-eminence in my account, and was very worthily advanced to the titular honour it enjoys, its right being at least so far a good one, that no word in the language could pretend a better."—(To Newton, Dec. 13, 1784.)

commended—Alcove and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to and in some instances inimitable by art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of Crazy Kate introduced upon it—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South Sea Islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

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

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the grav'lly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next
The birth-day of invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen, but perforated sore
And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan, made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,

Induced a splendid cover green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tap'stry richly wrought
And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

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

United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two Kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens who take the air,
Close pack'd and smiling in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame
By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
Was bliss reserved for happier days; so slow
The growth of what is excellent, so hard
T' attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
And luxury th' accomplished Sofa last.

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

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs: have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames.
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hung'ring pennyless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,

For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth close cropp'd by nibbling sheep — P. 190

Or blushing crabs, or berries that imboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
By culinary arts unsav'ry deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return,
No SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that sooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence,[1] our pace

[1] "From the town of Olney, westward, over three fields, the ascent is gradual to the eminence referred to by the poet in these lines. From this elevation is seen a prospect extensive in every direction but the north, which is bounded by a quick hedge, on rising ground. To the eastward is Steventon, in Bedfordshire; further east stands the 'square tower' of Clifton Church, and ranging still eastward, the prospect is bounded by Clifton Wood; till, due east, is seen the 'tall spire' of Olney Church, and a considerable part of the town. To the southward is the pleasant village of Emberton, on the right of which appears, when the weather is clear, Bowbrick-hill, the church on its summit, at the distance of nearly fourteen miles. Due south, in an extensive valley, appear the devious windings of the river Ouse, whose mazy and deceptive course assumes the semblance of various streams. The meadows are likewise intersected by dikes, cut for the purpose of draining floods, which give the land, even in times of drought, a delightful verdure."—*Cowper Illustrated*, 1803, p. 31.

Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene!
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow-moving, and beside
His lab'ring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond and overthwart the stream
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the list'ning ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years;
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast flutt'ring, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated Nature sweeter still
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.

Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one[1]
The livelong night: nor these alone whose notes
Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and ev'n the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season and with such a charge
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.[2]
And hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clam'rous whether pleased or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,

[1] Cowper's ornithology was only poetical; the nightingale has a rival in the blackcap.
[2] It stood about half a mile from Weston House.

And heavy-laden brings his bev'rage home,
Far-fetch'd and little worth:[1] nor seldom waits,
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad and his last crust consumed.
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*.
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view,
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us: monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns, and, in their shaded walks
And long-protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus[2]—he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge[3]
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence ankle-deep in moss and flow'ry thyme
We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth, and plotting in the dark
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.
The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove[4]
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures

[1] A well was afterwards sunk. In 1847 the "peasant's nest" had grown into a farm-house, with its ricks and out-buildings.
[2] John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.
[3] The bridge spanned a brook, which, after winding through the Park, crossed the road from Olney to Northampton, at a place called Overs Brook.
[4] A graceful little structure of wood.

The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure rude name
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal t'immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that ev'n a few
Few transient years, won from th' abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
And posted on this speculative height
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There, from the sunburnt hay-field homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team,
Vocif'rous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene
Diversified with trees of ev'ry growth,
Alike yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades:
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish gray; the willow such,
And poplar that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
O'er these, but far beyond, (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between)
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little Naiad[1] her impov'rish'd urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now,
But that the lord of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share:[2] the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath,
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And dark'ning and enlight'ning, as the leaves
Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits cheer'd,
We tread the wilderness,[3] whose well-roll'd walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump, resounds the constant flail
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not: see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,

[1] The Naiad was a narrow channel to drain the hollow.
[2] Sir John Throckmorton allowed Cowper to have the key of the grounds.
[3] On the left is the statue of a lion, finely carved in a recumbent posture this is placed on a basement at the end of a grassy walk, which is shaded by yews and elms, mingled with the drooping foliage of the laburnum, and adorned with wreaths of flaunting woodbine. (1803.)

But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health.
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams
All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation: ev'n the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixt below, the more disturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,
To which he forfeits ev'n the rest he loves.
Not such th' alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
Ev'n age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The vet'ran shows, and gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oft'nest sacrifice are favour'd least.
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found
Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who, satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art,
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye, sweet Nature ev'ry sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd,
Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours dank
And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light;
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array.
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire;
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic, who can hold her cards
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters; and once seated, sit
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet ev'n these
Themselves love life, and cling to it as he,
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers saturate with dew
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those

Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed;
And save me, too, from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance:
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects however lovely may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce a while,
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man: his hoary head
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common[1] overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd
And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days

[1] "I never answered your question concerning my strong partiality to a common. I well remember making the speech of which you remind me, and the very place where I made it was upon a common, in the neighbourhood of Southampton. My nostrils have hardly been regaled with those wild odours from that day to the present. We have no such here, but we have a scent in the fields about Olney that to me is equally agreeable: it proceeds, so far as I can find, neither from herb, nor tree, nor shrub; I should suppose therefore that it is in the soil. I had a strong desire to describe it when I was writing the Common-scene in the Task, but feared lest the unfrequency of such a singular property in the earth should have tempted the reader to ascribe it to a fanciful nose—at least to have suspected it for a deliberate fiction."—(To Lady Hesketh, Dec. 6, 1785.)

Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid ribbon bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again. And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed![1]

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast

[1] "For two excellent prints, I return you my sincere acknowledgments. I cannot say that poor Kate resembles much the original, who was neither so young nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her; but she was a figure well suited to the account given of her in the Task, and has a face exceedingly expressive of despairing melancholy."—(To Hill, May 24, 1788.)

In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature, and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil.
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers, and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
Is obvious; placed within the easy reach
Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole;
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot;
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shiv'ring natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,

Towards th' Antarctic. Ev'n the favour'd isles,[1]
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals, what they gain
In manners, victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause
Thee, gentle savage![2] whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past. And thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And, having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too that duly ev'ry morn

[1] The South Sea. [2] Omai.

Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste,
For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry speck,
Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes, and richer fruits than yours.[1]

But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft. In proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities; thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
In cities, foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there,
Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurs'ries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital in all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there

[1] Cowper wrote to Newton (October 6, 1783):—"Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. We brought away an Indian, and having debauched him, we sent him home again, to communicate the infection to his country;—fine sport, to be sure, but such as will not defray the cost. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future."

Gives more than female beauty to a stone,[1]
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soc'er she will,
The richest scen'ry and the loveliest forms.
Where finds philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied,
As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth, than she
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law:
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and ofttimes honour too,
To peculators of the public gold:
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presumed t' annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;

[1] The allusion, I suppose, is to the figure of "Commerce," in the monument to Lord Chatham. In a letter to Newton (October 22, 1783), he calls it "a perfect beauty;" and adds, "It is a literal truth, that I felt the tears flush into my eyes while I looked at her."

Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And centring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are wellnigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs
Scared, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

BOOK II.

THE TIMEPIECE.[1]

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, reproved—Our own late miscarriages accounted for—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons—Petit-maître parson—The good preacher—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved—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,[1]
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.[2]
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r
T' 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

[1] "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.)

[2] 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.[1] 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[2] from above,
Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the skies, and th' old

[1] Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica.—C.
[2] August 18, 1783.—C.

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[1] 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![2] 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 fixt and rooted earth

[1] Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.—C.

[2] 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 refluent wave into the deep,
A prince with half his people. Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee dear,
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 heav'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 homogeneal and discordant springs

And principles; of causes how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and reaction. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels.
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy 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!
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,

[1] Wolfe died Sept. 13, 1759; Chatham, May 14, 1778; 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 stablishes 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 man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the 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 rivel'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 candour too.

And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and 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 lot.

But thus admonish'd we can walk erect.
One proof at ' _st 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[1] 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,

[1] "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, 1785.)

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 unlacker'd; who, in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's 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 priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use;
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the 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
That would have shock'd credulity herself,
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse;—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?
This does Profusion, and th' 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[1] 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,[2] 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

[1] Laziness; the *Spectator* speaks of "the oscitancy of transcribers."
[2] Ben'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 infest
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 itself
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[1] 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.

[1] 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 chirrups 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 cleanlier 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 to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far

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

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' adultress from her bond.
Th' adultress! 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,[1]
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 judged offenders well. Then he that shar'p'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 equipaged, 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 charged, 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,

[1] Not dirtied, or stained. Shakspere (*Hamlet*, Act iv. Scene 5) has "unsmirched 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 ruminate, 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'rers, 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 blear 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 amused.
Defend me therefore common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?—
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream 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 perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in th' earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax[1] 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.

[1] 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,[1] and all its glory fades
Like the fair flow'r dishevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings,[2] 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.[3]
The only amaranthine flow'r on earth
Is virtue; th' only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth? 'twas Pilate's question[4] 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.

[1] Isaiah xl. 6, 7.
[2] Proverbs xxiii. 5.
[3] Ecclesiastes i. 2.
[4] 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 shricks
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[1] 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

[1] 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.[1]
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] "Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma." VIRGIL.—C.

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 delicates for you),
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
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 charged 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[1] 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,

[1] Ahasuerus; 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,[1] 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

[1] 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 murm'ring 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'ller'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 incurr'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 MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That, at the sound of Winter's hoary wing,
Unpeople all our counties of such herds
Of 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 conduc. 't 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 awaked?
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 hercic 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 snows
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,[1]
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.

[1] "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,[1]
Unsoil'd and swift and of a silken sound.
But the world's time is time in masquerade.
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes, and, where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of 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,

[1] 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.[1]
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild

[1] 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'ller 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 cow'ring 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,

[1] Smith.

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 Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard;
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride,
And smiles delighted with 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,[1] 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,[2] 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 umbrella all her care.

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

[1] Sir Philip Sidney, in the "Arcadia."

[2] *Tramontane* is properly applied to people living beyond the mountains it has, therefore, a general signification of "foreign." We read in the *Tatler* (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 unsuspicious 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 rev'rence 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 looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn and form'd of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.
He stands erect, his slouch becomes a walk,
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat or his plumed helmet with a grace,
And, his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.

He hates the field in which no fife or drum
Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink, to 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 framed a wish, or form'd a plan
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too
The 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 [1] 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.

[1] 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 ease I wish'd.

BOOK V.

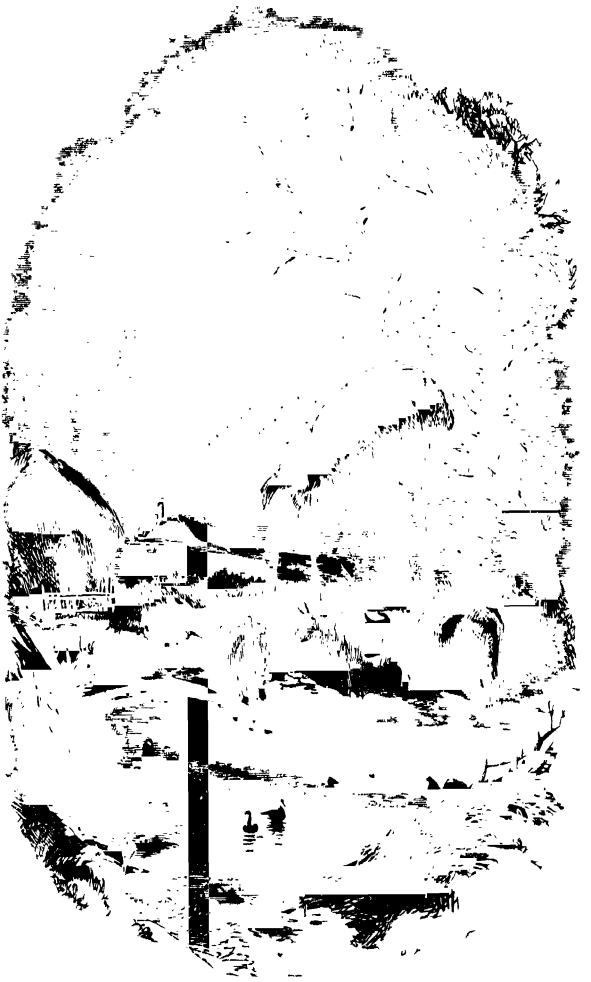
THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

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[1]

[1] "It is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster, in the first coming forth."—BACON, on "Gardens."



A WINTER'S MORNING WALK

The cattle mourn in corners where the fenc
Screens them and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness —1 267

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' accustom'd load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy and lean and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow, and now with many a frisk,
Wide-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 p"ch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the trav'ller'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[1] 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[2] 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 trav'ller'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

[1] The ice-palace of Catherine, in her road to the Ukraine.
[2] 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 died.
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[1] 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,

[1] Judges ix. 7, &c.

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 diff'rence, 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.[1]

[1] 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 not 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[1]
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

[1] The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.—Daniel ii. 31–33.

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 aslant
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon 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 whoso 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[1] 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

[1] 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. Pee ceases,
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 tamp'ring 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, overpow'ring 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 suff'rers little praise.[1]

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,

[1] 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[1] thyself with God if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone,
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate, heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleased 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,

[1] 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 reproved—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 pleased
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
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 ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' 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 enthrall'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 roo
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 lo
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[1] tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,

[1] The Guelder-rose.—C.

"The haunts of deer . . .
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose in her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student."—Pp. 290, 291.

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 knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not, ere to-morrow's sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour, whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites and under various names
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods
That were not, and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One spirit—His
Who 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 suff'rer'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 murd'rer 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
T' 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,[1]
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,[2] 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,

[1] Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7. [2] 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[1]
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 trav'ller of far diff'rent 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

[1] 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 o'er the craggy barrier, and, immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,

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

I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes
A visitor unwelcome into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die.[1]
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;

[1] 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 ofttimes 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.[1]
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

[1] 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 William, and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.
—Man praises man; and Garrick's 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 stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself:
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
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 car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic 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 t' 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[1] and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks.[2] All bask at noon

[1] Spenser uses this name instead of the leopard. [2] Isaiah lxv. 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. Discase
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,[1] 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.

[1] 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?"[1]
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 hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such: and noting down
The features of the last 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 a world.

[1] 2 Peter iii 3, 4.

He is the happy man, whose life ev'n now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
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, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That, as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,[1]
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

[1] "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."
HERBERT'S *Temple*, p. 113.

And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,
When, Isaac-like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,[1]
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

[1] "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 perfumed 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' unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit;
Roved far and gather'd much; some harsh, 'tis true
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
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.[1]

[1] "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[1]
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 occurr'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;

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

Milton, Sonnet xx.

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, νεων τροφα.
DIOG. 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.[1] 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 unpleasing. "I, the other day," he told Unwin, "sent my imagination upon a trip thirty years

[1] "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 me. 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 age,
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more:

Though ladc-, 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 when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths, on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and 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'rence 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 denied.

That 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.
Lisping 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,[1] 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;

[1] 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,
Blaspheme 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[1]
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.

[1] 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,[1]
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.

[1] 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,[1] 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,

[1] "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.[1]

[1] 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, where he display'd his own.
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,
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,[1] or Bagot, there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;

[1] 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, *quâ* Bishop; in the second place, because "the brothers were all five 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 distinguished 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 warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known;
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
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.[1]
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.

[1] 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 dismission 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 fav'rite 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 miscroscopic 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 trifler, vain, and empty of all good?
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where 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 fall 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 schools
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still,
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
Prove rather than impeach the just remark:
As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to 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 Cheapside were mad.

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

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

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

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

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,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones
With caution and good heed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all,
And 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![1]

[1] "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.

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
Once 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.

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.[1]
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,[2]
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,

[1] An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.
[2] 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 minutiæ 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.[1]

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.

[1] 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 townsfolk 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 ca.
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.[1]

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.

[1] 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 distressful,
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 tatlers; 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 het'rogeneous 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,[1]
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.

[1] 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. Periêre fortes,
Patrium propter periêre 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 voluêre 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 jocosi
Voce fallebant hilari laborem,
Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram impleverat heros.

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

Hi quidem (sic Dîs placuit) fuêre:
Sed ratis, nondùm putris, ire possit
Rursùs 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 AUSTEN.

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.[1]

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.

[1] "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 unscholarlike 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 like 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![1] 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,[2]
Amusement-monger of a trifling age,
Illustrious histrionic patentee,
Terentius,[3] 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[4] swung the birch and twined the bays,
And having known thee bearded and full grown,
The weekly censor of a laughing town,[5]

[1] Lord Thurlow.
[2] Colman.
[3] Colman had translated Terence.
[4] The master of Westminster school.
[5] 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 mutatæ 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 tabe peredit,
Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque sereni
Temperies anni, fœcundo 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; serener 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![1]

[1] "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 Cassiopeïa 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,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH MARCH, 1789.

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

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

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

Bright shone the roofs, the 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.[1]

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.

[1] 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.[1]

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.

1 "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 Cæsar 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 suff'rer'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 won ler'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 æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres. HORACE.
Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

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

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

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

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![1]

[1] "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 can not understand him.' I confess to you I felt all the force of the compliment." (To Lady Hesketh, Nov. 27 1787.)

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.[1]

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

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

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

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

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

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

Then doubtless many a 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 migl t 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.

[1] "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. VIRG.
There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

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

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

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

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

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

That rule he prized, by that he 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 commonentem 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
Subjecit 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![1] 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?

[1] 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 pays
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 plaguy 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 Defense 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[1] 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,
Dispersing 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:

[1] Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

I saw him with that lily cropped
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach and soon he drop
The treasure at my feet —P. 492

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-blanched, 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 yon bright regent of the day,
The Plume and Poet both, we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless fav'rites shed,
  O, share Maria's grief!
Her favr'ite, 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.

Maria 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[1] and all Dinglederry[1] 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:

[1] 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 RECOVERY

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
Illume 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.[1]

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.

[1] 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,[1]
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
In 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,

[1] The rectory at Great Berkhampstead, 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?
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.[1]

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.[2]

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

[2] 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.

ANOTHER,

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.

HYMN

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.

For 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.[1]

STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF THE GREAT MILTON—ANNO 1790.[2]

"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."[3]

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

[1] This hymn was written at the request of the Rev. James Bean, 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.

[2] A coffin, supposed to be that of Milton, was opened at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, in the beginning of August.

[3] Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas, at ego secura pace quiescam.
MILTON—MANSUS.

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 stones
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,

ON 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.[1]

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, come,
And Asbetus, nor let your direst dread
Omodamus, delay! Fire seize your house,
May neither house nor vestibule escape;

[1] No title is prefixed to this piece, but it appears to be a translation of on of the Επιγραμματα of Homer, called Ὁ Καμινος, or the Furnace. The pre-latory 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,

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;
Av'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.[1]

A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM.

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

[1] 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 lull'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'lly 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 judged it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

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

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

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

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,
"My 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 conqu'ror'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![1]
But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands to supply
The bottomless demands of contest, waged
For senatorial honours. Thus to time
The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labour, which had far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.

Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that 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.

[1] 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 off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild,
With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some, memorial none where once they grew.
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 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.

[1] "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 Johnson, 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.[1]

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.

[1] "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. 158.)

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 enthrall'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![1] I love thee, tho' unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

[1] 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.[1]

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.

[1] 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[1] 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.

[1] 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 EARTHAM, 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 1793.

This cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to—the last retreat.

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 fav'rite bard,
I rev'rence 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,[1]
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[2] 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 TALE.

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.

[1] 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.

[2] 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![1]

[1] 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 hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food."

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 unequall'd worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?
That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they, who need them, use, and then despise.

ON A SPANIEL CALLED BEAU KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.[1]

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

[1] 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 15, 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—forbear—but in my breast
A mightier cried—proceed—
'Twas nature, Sir, whose strong behest
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect,
I ventured once to break
(As you perhaps may recollect)
Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
And panting press'd the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destined to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
And 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.[1]

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.

[1] "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.)

[2] "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.[1]

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!

[1] 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 priscæ sæclum redïisse videtur
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes

Et sylvas. egit. Sed tempora vix leviora
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitùs 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 flammas imitante pyropo.
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxêre 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 ejecit 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 fer
omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona, solutæ
Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cœpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum
In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tandem
Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset,
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,
Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,
Insula, in Ægæo fluitâsse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Deciduâ lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.
At vos, errones horrendi, et caligine digni
Cimmeriâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri

Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum!
Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni lenitèr 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 woes,
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning Earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore.
Rapacious hands, and ever-watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have 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'rers 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 INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

Patron of all those luckless brains
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;

Ah, why since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink!

Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapour now,
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 MARIÆ filius
Unicus, unicé dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780. Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
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 hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

ON A MISTAKE IN THE TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

COWPER had sinned with some excuse,
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers.

But male for female is a trope,
A rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope,
When he translated Homer.[1]

ON THE NEGLECT OF HOMER.

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.

[1] "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 Hill, April 15, 1793.)

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[1] (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.

[1] 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."[1]

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 EXORTAM.

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquàm conata suâ, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION.

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,
To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.

[1] 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 fling 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 22, 1782.

My dear Friend,

If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time
I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I must confess,
It were but folly to suppress)
His pleasure or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
In the centre of yon arch, the sky,
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him 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 Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or listening with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverised it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, 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,
Satiate 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.[1]
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.[2]

[1] When a knight was degraded, his spurs were chopped off.—C.
[2] 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,[1]
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 cropped the grass below,
Hung not far off upon a myrtle bough.

[1] 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 inexact 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[1] 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.

[1] 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 oys*ters*,
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, 178

Where hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'
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 flat Batavia, just emerging, peeps
Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fis!
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf,

To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doomed
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau[1]
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,

[1] It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?—C.

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 Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, 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 præterituras es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,
Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre:
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 Roman 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 she chants along,
Cheerful and careless in her song;
Nor heeds she whether harsh or clear,
Free from each terror, every fear,
From that, of all most dreaded, free,
The terror of offending Thee.

At the same place.

DELIA, the unkindest girl on earth,
When I besought the fair,
That favour of intrinsic worth,
A ringlet of her hair,

Refused that instant to comply
With my absurd request,
For reasons she could specify,
Some twenty score at least.

Trust me, my dear, however odd
It may appear to say,
I sought it merely to defraud
Thy spoiler of his prey.

Yet when its sister locks shall fade,
As quickly fade they must,
When all their beauties are 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;
Till thine own hand immerged 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;

The trivial strifes that cause a real pain;
The real bliss when reconciled again?
Let him alone dispute the real prize,
And read his sentence in my Delia's eyes;
There shall he read all gentleness and truth,
But not himself, the dear distinguished youth;
Pity for him perhaps they may express—
Pity that will but heighten his distress.
But, wretched rival! he must sigh to see
The sprightlier rays of love directed all to me.
And thou dear antidote of every pain
Which fortune can inflict, or love ordain,
Since early love has taught thee to despise
What the world's worthless votaries only prize,
Believe, my love! no less the generous god
Rules in my breast, his ever blest abode;
There has he driven each gross desire away,
Directing every wish and every thought to thee!
Then can I ever leave my Delia's arms,
A slave devoted to inferior charms?
Can e'er my soul her reason so disgrace?
For what blest minister of heavenly race
Would quit that Heaven to find a happier place?

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Doomed as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost,
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humour or of spleen!
Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
Him snatched by fate in early youth away;[1]
And her through tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fixed in her choice and faithful—but in vain!
Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear;
O prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;
See me—ere yet my destined course half done,
Cast forth a wanderer on a world unknown!

[1] Sir William Russell, his companion at Westminster

See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
And ready tears wait only leave to flow!
Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
All that delights the happy—palls with me!

ODE.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND.

Thou magic lyre, whose fascinating sound
Seduced the savage monsters from their cave,
Drew rocks and trees, and forms uncouth around,
And bade wild Hebrus hush his listening wave;
No more thy undulating warblings flow
O'er Thracian wilds of everlasting snow!

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

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

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

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

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

SONG.

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

The fragrant flowers that once would bloom
And flourish in her hair,
Since she no longer breathes perfume
Their odours to repair,
Must fade, alas! and wither now,
As placed on any common brow,
With my fa, la, la.

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

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

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

AN ATTEMPT AT THE MANNER OF WALLER.

Drayton, March, 1753.

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

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

Nay, this were less absurd and vain
Than disobedience to thy reign;
His beams are often too severe;
But thou art mild as thou art fair;
First from necessity we own your sway,
Then scorn our freedom, and by choice obey.

A SONG.

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

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

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

A SONG.

On the green margin of the brook
  Despairing Phyllida reclined,
Whilst every sigh, and every look,
  Declared the anguish of her mind.

Am I less lovely then? (she cries,
  And in the waves her form surveyed;)
Oh yes, I see my languid eyes,
  My faded cheek, my colour fled;
These eyes no more like lightning pierced,
These cheeks grew pale, when Damon first
  His Phyllida betrayed.

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

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

UPON A VENERABLE RIVAL.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ON THE PICTURE OF A SLEEPING CHILD.

FROM THE LATIN OF VINCENT BOURNE.

SWEET babe, whose image here expressed
Does thy peaceful slumbers show;
Guilt or fear, to break thy rest,
Never did thy spirit know.

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

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE CASTAWAY.

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain;
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevailed,
That pitiless perforce
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delayed not to bestow:
But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

"Obscurest night involved the sky
The Atlantic billows roar'd
When such a destined wretch as I
Wash'd headlong from on board" —P. 486

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled:
And ever as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalise the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.[1]

[1] Written March 20, 1799; being the last original poem of the Author. It is founded on a story in Anson's Voyage, which Cowper had not looked into for nearly twenty years.

TRANSLATION OF DRYDEN'S EPIGRAM ON MILTON.

"Three Poets in three distant ages born," &c.

Tres tria, sed longè distantia, sæcula vates
Ostentant tribus è gentibus eximios.
Græcia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrique parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est,
Tertius ut fieret, consociare duos.

TRANSLATION OF A SIMILE IN PARADISE LOST.

"So when, from mountain tops, the dusky clouds
Ascending," &c.

Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quiêrunt,
Cælum hilares abdit, spissa caligine, vultus:
Tum si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat,
Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
Balatuque ovium colles vallesque resultant.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE LATIN AND ITALIAN POEMS OF MILTON.

ELEGY I.

TO CHARLES DEODATI.

[It was during the lull which followed Cowper's Homeric labours, that the proposal came to him to translate the Latin and Italian poems of Milton. His veneration for the English author was only exceeded by that which he felt towards the Greek, and he embraced the offer with pleasure and hope. But the season was unfortunate. Sickness had visited Mrs. Unwin, and Cowper entered with her into the darkest shade. Often and often he complained of having been caught by this Miltonic trap; and though his disquiet was chiefly occasioned by the critical notes, the poetical portion of the task seems never to have worn a sunny look. His success was moderate. Miss Seward, in a letter to Southey, speaks of the "pedantic, tuneless, and spiritless look and sound" of the translations, and contrasts the version by Cowper with the sweet and touching composition which Langhorne formed of the Elegy on Damon. The defects did not grow of neglect. During Cowper's visit to Eartham, the mornings were chiefly occupied with Hayley, in the revision of the translations. He spared no pains. "I give them," he told Hill, "all the varieties of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven, and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse." The Sonnet beginning—

"As on a hill-top rude, when closing day—"

is, I think, the happiest specimen. The translations were begun September, 1791, and finished in the March of the following year.]

At length, my friend, the far-sent letters come,
Charged with thy kindness, to their destined home
They come, at length, from Deva's western side,
Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian tide.
Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
And that my sprightly friend now free to roam,
Must seek again so soon his wonted home.

I well content, where Thames with influent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside,
Nor zeal nor duty, now, my steps impel
To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell.
Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That, to the musing bard, all shade deny.
'Tis time, that I a pedant's threats disdain.
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.
If peaceful days, in letter'd leisure spent,
Beneath my father's roof, be banishment,
Then call me banish'd, I will ne'er refuse
A name expressive of the lot I choose.
I would, that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
Rome's hapless bard had suffer'd nothing more.
He then had equall'd even Homer's lays,
And Virgil! thou hadst won but second praise:
For here I woo the muse, with no control;
And here my books—my life—absorb me whole.
Here too I visit, or to smile, or weep,
The winding theatre's majestic sweep;
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits;
Whether some senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
Suitor or soldier, now unarm'd, be there,
Or some coif'd brooder o'er a ten years' cause,
Thunder the Norman gibb'rish of the laws.
The lacquey, there, oft dupes the wary sire,
And, artful, speeds th' enamour'd son's desire.
There, virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
What love is know not, yet, unknowing, love.
Or, if impassion'd Tragedy wield high
The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly
Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye,
I gaze, and grieve, still cherishing my grief,
At times, e'en bitter tears! yield sweet relief.
As when from bliss untasted torn away,
Some youth dies, hapless on his bridal day,
Or when the ghost, sent back from shades below,
Fills the assassin's heart with vengeful woe,
When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
Or Creon's hall laments its guilty lords.
Nor always city pent, or pent at home,
I dwell; but, when spring calls me forth to roam,
Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm, that never sun pervades.

Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by.
Oh forms divine! Oh looks that might inspire
E'en Jove himself, grown old, with young desire.
Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
Out-sparkling every star that gilds the skies.
Necks whiter than the ivory arm bestowed
By Jove on Pelops, or the milky road!
Bright locks, Love's golden snare! these fallen low.
Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow!
Cheeks too, more winning sweet than after shower
Adonis turn'd to Flora's fav'rite flower!
Yield, heroines, yield, and ye who shar'd th' embrace
Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place!
Give place, ye turban'd fair of Persia's coast!
And ye, not less renown'd, Assyria's boast!
Submit, ye nymphs of Greece! ye, once the bloom
Of Ilion! and all ye, of haughty Rome,
Who swept, of old, her theatres with trains
Redundant, and still live in classic strains!
To British damsels beauty's palm is due,
Aliens! to follow them is fame for you.
Oh city, founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realms commands,
Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.
The virgin multitude that daily meets,
Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets,
Out-numbers all her train of starry fires,
With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
Fame says, that wafted hither by her doves,
With all her host of quiver-bearing loves,
Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
Has fix'd her empire on thy nobler shore;
But lest the sightless boy enforce my stay,
I leave these happy walls, while yet I may.
Immortal Moly shall secure my heart
From all the sorc'ry of Circæan art,
And I will e'en repass Cam's reedy pools
To face once more the warfare of the schools.
Meantime accept this trifle! rhymes though few,
Yet such as prove thy friend's remembrance true!

ELEGY II.

ON THE DEATH OF THE UNIVERSITY BEADLE AT CAMBRIDGE.

Composed by Milton in the Seventeenth Year of his Age.

THEE, whose refulgent staff, and summons clear,
Minerva's flock long time was wont t' obey,
Although thyself an herald, famous here,
The last of heralds, Death, has snatch'd away.
He calls on all alike, nor even deigns
To spare the office that himself sustains.

Thy locks were whiter than the plumes display'd
By Leda's paramour in ancient time,
But thou wast worthy ne'er to have decay'd,
Or Æson-like to know a second prime,
Worthy, for whom some goddess should have won
New life, oft kneeling to Apollo's son.

Commission'd to convene, with hasty call,
The gowned tribes, how graceful wouldst thou stand!
So stood Cyllenius erst in Priam's hall,
Wing-footed messenger of Jove's command!
And so Eurybates, when he address'd
To Peleus' son, Atrides' proud behest.

Dread queen of sepulchres! whose rig'rous laws
And watchful eyes, run through the realms below,
Oh, oft too adverse to Minerva's cause!
Too often to the Muse not less a foe!
Choose meaner marks, and with more equal aim
Pierce useless drones, earth's burthen, and its shame!

Flow, therefore, tears for him, from ev'ry eye,
All ye disciples of the Muses, weep!
Assembling, all, in robes of sable dye,
Around his bier, lament his endless sleep!
And let complaining elegy rehearse,
In every school, her sweetest, saddest verse.

ELEGY III.

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

Composed in the Author's Seventeenth Year.[1]

SILENT I sat, dejected, and alone,
Making, in thought, the public woes my own,
When first arose the image in my breast
Of England's suffering by that scourge, the Pest!
How Death, his fun'ral torch and scythe in hand,
Entering the lordliest mansions of the land,
Has laid the gem-illumin'd palace low,
And levell'd tribes of nobles at a blow.
I next deplor'd the fam'd paternal pair,
Too soon to ashes turn'd, and empty air!
The heroes next, whom snatch'd into the skies,
All Belgia saw, and follow'd with her sighs;
But thee far most I mourn'd, regretted most,
Winton's chief shepherd, and her worthiest boast
Pour'd out in tears I thus complaining said:
"Death, next in pow'r to him who rules the dead!
Is't not enough that all the woodlands yield
To thy fell force, and ev'ry verdant field,
That lilies, at one noisome blast of thine,
And ev'n the Cyprian queen's own roses, pine;
That oaks themselves, although the running rill
Suckle their roots, must wither at thy will;
That all the winged nations, even those
Whose heav'n-directed flight the future shows,
And all the beasts that in dark forests stray,
And all the herds of Proteus are thy prey.
Ah envious! arm'd with pow'rs so unconfin'd!
Why stain thy hands with blood of human kind?
Why take delight, with darts that never roam,
To chase a heav'n-born spirit from her home?"

While thus I mourn'd, the star of evening stood,
Now newly risen above the western flood,

[1] "I would beat Warton if he were living, for supposing that Milton ever repented of his compliment to the memory of Bishop Andrews. I neither do, nor can, nor will believe it. Milton's mind could not be narrowed by anything."—(To Walter Bagot, October 25, 1791.)

And Phœbus from his morning-goal again
Had reach'd the gulfs of the Iberian main.
I wish'd repose, and on my couch reclin'd,
Took early rest, to night and sleep resign'd:
When—Oh for words to paint what I beheld!
I seem'd to wander in a spacious field,
Where all the champaign glow'd with purple light
Like that of sunrise on the mountain height;
Flow'rs over all the field, of every hue
That ever Iris wore, luxuriant grew.
Nor Chloris, with whom am'rous Zephyrs play,
E'er dress'd Alcinous' garden half so gay.
A silver current, like the Tagus, roll'd
O'er golden sands, but sands of purer gold,
With dewy airs Favonius fann'd the flow'rs,
With airs awaken'd under rosy bow'rs.
Such, poets feign, irradiated all o'er
The sun's abode on India's utmost shore.

While I, that splendour, and the mingled shade
Of fruitful vines, with wonder fixt survey'd,
At once, with looks, that beam'd celestial grace,
The seer of Winton stood before my face.
His snowy vesture's hem descending low
His golden sandals swept, and pure as snow
New-fallen shone the mitre on his brow.
Where'er he trod a tremulous sweet sound
Of gladness shook the flow'ry scene around:
Attendant angels clap their starry wings,
The trumpet shakes the sky, all ether rings,
Each chants his welcome, folds him to his breast,
And thus a sweeter voice than all the rest:
"Ascend, my son! thy father's kingdom share!
My son! henceforth be freed from ev'ry care!"

So spake the voice, and at its tender close
With psaltry's sound th' angelic band arose,
Then night retired, and chas'd by dawning day
The visionary bliss pass'd all away.
I mourn'd my banish'd sleep, with fond concern;
Frequent to me may dreams like this return!

ELEGY IV.

TO HIS TUTOR, THOMAS YOUNG, CHAPLAIN TO THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT HAMBURGH.

Written in the Author's Seventeenth Year.

HENCE my epistle—skim the deep—fly o'er
Yon smooth expanse to the Teutonic shore!
Haste—lest a friend should grieve for thy delay—
And the gods grant that nothing thwart thy way!
I will myself invoke the king who binds,
In his Sicanian echoing vault, the winds,
With Doris and her nymphs, and all the throng
Of azure gods, to speed thee safe along.
But rather to insure thy happier haste,
Ascend Medea's chariot, if thou mayst;
Or that whence young Triptolemus of yore
Descended, welcome on the Scythian shore.
The sands, that line the German coast, descried,
To opulent Hamburga turn aside!
So called, if legendary fame be true,
From Hama, whom a club-arm'd Cimbrian slew!
There lives, deep-learn'd and primitively just
A faithful steward of his Christian trust,
My friend, and favourite inmate of my heart,
That now is forc'd to want its better part!
What mountains now, and seas, alas! how wide!
From me this other, dearer self divide,
Dear, as the sage renown'd for moral truth
To the prime spirit of the Attic youth!
Dear, as the Stagyrite to Ammon's son!
His pupil, who disdain'd the world he won!
Nor so did Chiron, or so Phœnix shine
In young Achilles' eyes, as he in mine.
First led by him thro' sweet Aonian shade,
Each sacred haunt of Pindus I survey'd;
And favour'd by the Muse, whom I implor'd,
Thrice on my lip the hallow'd stream I pour'd.
But thrice the sun's resplendent chariot roll'd
To Aries, has new-tinged his fleece with gold,
And Chloris twice has dress'd the meadows gay,
And twice has summer parch'd their bloom away,

Since last delighted on his looks I hung,
Or my ear drank the music of his tongue:
Fly, therefore, and surpass the tempest's speed;
Aware thyself that there is urgent need!
Him, entering, thou shalt haply seated see
Beside his spouse, his infants on his knee,
Or turning, page by page, with studious look,
Some bulky father, or God's holy book.
Or minist'ring (which is his weightiest care)
To Christ's assembled flock their heavenly fare.
Give him, whatever his employment be,
Such gratulation, as he claims from me!
And, with a downcast eye, and carriage meek,
Addressing him, forget not thus to speak!

"If, compass'd round with arms thou canst attend
To verse, verse greets thee from a distant friend.
Long due, and late, I left the English shore;
But make me welcome for that cause the more!
Such from Ulysses, his chaste wife to cheer,
The slow epistle came, though late, sincere.
But wherefore this? why palliate I the deed,
For which the culprit's self could hardly plead?
Self-charged, and self-condemn'd, his proper part
He feels neglected, with an aching heart;
But thou forgive—delinquents, who confess,
And pray forgiveness, merit anger less;
From timid foes the lion turns away,
Nor yawns upon or rends a crouching prey;
Even pike-wielding Thracians learn to spare,
Won by soft influence of a suppliant prayer;
And Heav'n's dread thunderbolt arrested stands
By a cheap victim, and uplifted hands.
Long had he wish'd to write, but was withheld,
And, writes at last, by love alone compell'd;
For fame, too often true, when she alarms,
Reports thy neighbouring fields a scene of arms;
Thy city against fierce besiegers barr'd,
And all the Saxon chiefs for fight prepared.
Envo wastes thy country wide around,
And saturates with blood the tainted ground;
Mars rests contented in his Thrace no more,
But goads his steeds to fields of German gore,
The ever-verdant olive fades and dies,
And Peace, the trumpet-hating goddess, flies,

Flies from that earth which justice long had left,
And leaves the world of its last guard bereft.

"Thus horror girds thee round. Meantime alone
Thou dwell'st, and helpless in a soil unknown;
Poor, and receiving from a foreign hand
The aid denied thee in thy native land.
Oh, ruthless country, and unfeeling more
Than thy own billow-beaten chalky shore!
Leav'st thou to foreign care the worthies, given
By Providence to guide thy steps to heav'n?
His ministers, commission'd to proclaim
Eternal blessings in a Saviour's name?
Ah then most worthy, with a soul unfed,
In Stygian night to lie for ever dead!
So once the venerable Tishbite stray'd
An exiled fugitive from shade to shade,
When, flying Ahab, and his fury wife,
In lone Arabian wilds, he shelter'd life;
So, from Philippa, wander'd forth forlorn
Cilician Paul, with sounding scourges torn;
And Christ himself, so left, and trod no more,
The thankless Gergesene's forbidden shore.

"But thou take courage! strive against despair!
Quake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care!
Grim war, indeed, on ev'ry side appears,
And thou art menaced by a thousand spears;
Yet none shall drink thy blood, or shall offend
Ev'n the defenceless bosom of my friend.
For thee the ægis of thy God shall hide,
Jehovah's self shall combat on thy side.
The same, who vanquish'd under Sion's tow'rs,
At silent midnight, all Assyria's pow'rs,
The same, who overthrew in ages past,
Damascus' sons that laid Samaria waste!
Their king he fill'd and them with fatal fears
By mimic sounds of clarions in their ears,
Of hoofs, and wheels, and neighings from afar,
Of clashing armour, and the din of war.

"Thou, therefore, (as the most afflicted may,)
Still hope, and triumph, o'er thy evil day!
Look forth, expecting happier times to come,
And to enjoy, once more, thy native home!"

ELEGY V.

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Written in the Author's Twentieth Year.

Time, never wand'ring from his annual round,
Bids Zephyr breathe the spring, and thaw the ground;
Bleak winter flies, new verdure clothes the plain,
And earth assumes her transient youth again.
Dream I, or also to the spring belong
Increase of genius and new pow'rs of song?
Spring gives them, and, how strange soe'er it seems,
Impels me now to some harmonious themes.
Castalia's fountain and the forked hill,
By day, by night, my raptured fancy fill;
My bosom burns and heaves, I hear within
A sacred sound, that prompts me to begin.
Lo! Phœbus comes, with his bright hair he blends
The radiant laurel wreath; Phœbus descends;
I mount, and, undepress'd by cumb'rous clay,
Through cloudy regions win my easy way;
Rapt, through poetic shadowy haunts I fly:
The shrines all open to my dauntless eye,
My spirit searches all the realms of light,
And no Tartarean gulfs elude my sight.
But this ecstatic trance—this glorious storm
Of inspiration—what will it perform?
Spring claims the verse, that with his influence glows,
And shall be paid with what himself bestows.

Thou, veiled with op'ning foliage, lead'st the throng
Of feather'd minstrels, Philomel! in song;
Let us, in concert, to the season sing,
Civic and sylvan heralds of the spring!
With notes triumphant spring's approach declare!
To spring, ye Muses, annual tribute bear!
The Orient left, and Æthiopia's plains,
The Sun now northward turns his golden reins;
Night creeps not now; yet rules with gentle sway;
And drives her dusky horrors swift away;
Now less fatigued, on this ethereal plain
Boötes follows his celestial wain;

And now the radiant sentinels above,
Less num'rous, watch around the courts of Jove,
For, with the night, force, ambush, slaughter fly.
And no gigantic guilt alarms the sky.
Now haply says some shepherd, while he views,
Recumbent on a rock, the redd'ning dews,
This night, this surely, Phœbus miss'd the fair,
Who stops his chariot by her am'rous care.
Cynthia, delighted by the morning's glow,
Speeds to the woodland, and resumes her bow;
Resigns her beams, and, glad to disappear,
Blesses his aid, who shortens her career.
Come—Phœbus cries—Aurora come—too late
Thou linger'st, slumb'ring, with thy wither'd mate!
Leave him, and to Hymettus' top repair!
Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there.
The goddess, with a blush, her love betrays,
But mounts, and driving rapidly, obeys.
Earth now desires thee, Phœbus! and t' engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age;
Desires thee, and deserves; for who so sweet,
When her rich bosom courts thy genial heat?
Her breath imparts to ev'ry breeze that blows,
Arabia's harvest and the Paphian rose.
Her lofty front she diadems around
With sacred pines, like Ops on Ida crown'd;
Her dewy locks, with various flow'rs new-blown,
She interweaves, various, and all her own,
For Proserpine, in such a wreath attired,
Tænarian Dis himself with love inspired.
Fear not, lest, cold and coy, the nymph refuse!
Herself, with all her sighing Zephyrs, sues;
Each courts thee, fanning soft his scented wing,
And all her groves with warbled wishes ring.
Nor, unendow'd and indigent, aspires
The am'rous Earth to engage thy warm desires,
But, rich in balmy drugs, assists thy claim,
Divine Physician! to that glorious name.
If splendid recompense, if gifts can move
Desire in thee (gifts often purchase love),
She offers all the wealth her mountains hide,
And all that rests beneath the boundless tide.
How oft, when headlong from the heav'nly steep,
She sees thee playing in the western deep,
How oft she cries—"Ah Phœbus! why repair
Thy wasted force, why seek refreshment there?

Can Tethys win thee? wherefore shouldst thou lave
A face so fair in her unpleasant wave;
Come, seek my green retreats, and rather choose
To cool thy tresses in my crystal dews,
The grassy turf shall yield thee sweeter rest;
Come, lay thy evening glories on my breast,
And breathing fresh, through many a humid rose,
Soft whispering airs shall lull thee to repose!
No fears I feel like Semele to die,
Nor let thy burning wheels approach too nigh,
For thou canst govern them, here therefore rest,
And lay thy evening glories on my breast!"

Thus breathes the wanton Earth her am'rous flame,
And all her countless offspring feel the same;
For Cupid now through every region strays,
Bright'ning his faded fires with solar rays,
His new-strung bow sends forth a deadlier sound,
And his new-pointed shafts more deeply wound;
Nor Dian's self escapes him now untried,
Nor even Vesta at her altar-side;
His mother too repairs her beauty's wane,
And seems sprung newly from the deep again.
Exulting youths the Hymeneal sing,
With Hymen's name, roofs, rocks, and valleys ring;
He, new-attired, and by the season drest,
Proceeds, all, fragrant, in his saffron vest.
Now, many a golden-cinctured virgin roves
To taste the pleasures of the fields and groves,
All wish, and each alike, some fav'rite youth
Hers, in the bonds of Hymeneal truth.
Now pipes the shepherd through his reeds again,
Nor Phillis wants a song that suits the strain,
With songs the seaman hails the starry sphere,
And dolphins rise from the abyss to hear;
Jove feels himself the season, sports again
With his fair spouse, and banquets all his train.
Now too the Satyrs, in the dusk of eve,
Their mazy dance through flowery meadows weave,
And neither god nor goat, but both in kind,
Silvanus, wreathed with cypress, skips behind.
The Dryads leave their hollow sylvan cells
To roam the banks and solitary dells;
Pan riots now; and from his amorous chafe
Ceres and Cybele seem hardly safe,

And Faunus, all on fire to reach the prize,
In chase of some enticing Oread, flies.
She bounds before, but fears too swift a bound,
And hidden lies, but wishes to be found.
Our shades entice th' immortals from above,
And some kind pow'r presides o'er every grove;
And long, ye pow'rs, o'er every grove preside,
For all is safe and blest, where ye abide!
Return, O Jove! the age of gold restore—
Why choose to dwell where storms and thunder roar?
At least, thou, Phœbus! moderate thy speed!
Let not the vernal hours too swift proceed,
Command rough Winter back, nor yield the pole
Too soon to Night's encroaching long control?

ELEGY VI.

TO CHARLES DEODATI,

Who, while he spent his Christmas in the country, sent the Author a poetical Epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to which his friends invited him, and which would not allow him leisure to finish them as he wished.

With no rich viands overcharged, I send
Health, which perchance you want, my pamper'd friend;
But wherefore should thy Muse tempt mine away
From what she loves, from darkness into day?
Art thou desirous to be told how well
I love thee, and in verse? verse cannot tell.
For verse has bounds, and must in measure move;
But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
How pleasant, in thy lines described, appear
December's harmless sports, and rural cheer!
French spirits kindling with cærulean fires,
And all such gambols as the time inspires!

Think not that wine against good verse offends;
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends,

Nor Phœbus blushes sometimes to be found
With ivy, rather than with laurel, crown'd.
The Nine themselves oftimes have join'd the song,
And revels of the Bacchanalian throng;
Not even Ovid could in Scythian air
Sing sweetly—why? no vine would flourish there.
What in brief numbers sung Anacreon's muse?
Wine, and the rose, that sparkling wine bedews.
Pindar with Bacchus glows—his every line
Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine.
While, with loud crash o'erturn'd, the chariot lies
And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
The Roman lyrist steep'd in wine his lays
So sweet in Glycera's and Chloe's praise.
Now too the plenteous feast and mantling bowl
Nourish the vigour of thy sprightly soul;
The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
And casks not wine alone, but verse, bestow.
Thus Phœbus favours, and the arts attend,
Whom Bacchus and whom Ceres both befriend.
What wonder, then, thy verses are so sweet,
In which these triple powers so kindly meet!
The lute now also sounds, with gold inwrought,
And touch'd, with flying fingers, nicely taught,
In tap'stried halls, high-roof'd, the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers of the virgin choir.
If dull repletion fright the Muse away,
Sights, gay as these, may more invite her stay;
And, trust me, while the iv'ry keys resound,
Fair damsels sport, and perfumes steam around,
Apollo's influence, like ethereal flame,
Shall animate at once thy glowing frame,
And all the Muse shall rush into thy breast,
By love and music's blended pow'rs possest.
For num'rous pow'rs light Elegy befriend,
Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend;
Her, Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
And, with his blushing mother, gentle Love.
Hence to such bards we grant the copious use
Of banquets, and the vine's delicious juice.
But they, who demigods and heroes praise,
And feats performed in Jove's more youthful days,
Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
Now shades, that echo the Cerberean roar,
Simply let these, like him of Samos, live,
Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give:

In beechen goblets let their bev'rage shine,
Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine!
Their youth should pass in innocence, secure
From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
Pure as the priest, when rob'd in white he stands
The fresh lustration ready in his hands.
Thus Linus liv'd, and thus, as poets write,
Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight!
Thus exil'd Chalcas, thus the bard of Thrace,
Melodious tamer of the savage race!
Thus train'd by temp'rance Homer led, of yore,
His chief of Ithaca from shore to shore.
Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign,
And shoals insidious with the siren train;
And through the realms where grisly spectres dwell,
Whose tribes he fettered in a gory spell;
For these are sacred bards, and, from above,
Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove!

Wouldst thou (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear),
Wouldst thou be told my occupation here?
The promis'd King of Peace employs my pen,
Th' eternal cov'nant made for guilty men,
The new-born Deity, with infant cries
Filling the sordid hovel where he lies;
The hymning angels, and the herald star,
That led the Wise, who sought him from afar,
And idols on their own unhallow'd shore
Dash'd, at his birth, to be revered no more!

This theme on reeds of Albion I rehearse:
The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse;
Verse, that, reserv'd in secret, shall attend
Thy candid voice, my critic, and my friend!

ELEGY VII.

Composed in the Author's Nineteenth Year.

As yet a stranger to the gentle fires,
That Amathusia's smiling queen inspires,
Not seldom I derided Cupid's darts,
And scorned his claim to rule all human hearts.
"Go, child," I said, "transfix the tim'rous dove!
An easy conquest suits an infant love;

Enslave the sparrow, for such prize shall be
Sufficient triumph to a chie.' like thee!
Why aim thy idle arms at human kind?
Thy shafts prevail not 'gainst the noble mind."

The Cyprian heard, and, kindling into ire,
(None kindles sooner) burn'd with double fire.

It was the spring, and newly risen day
Peep'd o'er the hamlets on the first of May;
My eyes too tender for the blaze of light,
Still sought the shelter of retiring night,
When Love approach'd, in painted plumes array'd,
Th' insidious god his rattling darts betray'd,
Nor less his infant features, and the sly,
Sweet intimations of his threat'ning eye.

Such the Sigeian boy is seen above,
Filling the goblet for imperial Jove;
Such he, on whom the nymphs bestow'd their charms,
Hylas, who perish'd in a Naiad's arms.
Angry he seem'd, yet graceful in his ire,
And added threats, not destitute of fire.
"My power," he said, "by others' pain alone,
'Twere best to learn; now learn it by thy own!
With those who feel my power that pow'r attest!
And in thy anguish be my sway confest!
I vanquish'd Phœbus, though returning vain
From his new triumph o'er the Python slain,
And, when he thinks on Daphne, even he
Will yield the prize of archery to me.
A dart less true the Parthian horseman sped,
Behind him kill'd, and conquer'd as he fled;
Less true th' expert Cydonian, and less true
The youth whose shaft his latent Procris slew.
Vanquish'd by me, seé huge Orion bend,
By me Alcides, and Alcides' friend.
At me should Jove himself a bolt design,
His bosom first should bleed transfixt by mine.
But all thy doubts this shaft will best explain,
Nor shall it reach thee with a trivial pain,
Thy Muse, vain youth! shall not thy peace insure,
Nor Phœbus' serpent yield thy wound a cure."

He spoke, and, waving a bright shaft in air,
Sought the warm bosom of the Cyprian fair.

That thus a child should bluster in my ear,
Provok'd my laughter, more than moved my fear.
I shunn'd not, therefore, public haunts, but stray'd
Careless in city or suburban shade,
And passing, and repassing, nymphs, that mov'd
With grace divine, beheld where'er I rov'd.
Bright shone the vernal day with double blaze,
As beauty gave new force to Phœbus' rays.
By no grave scruples check'd, I freely eyed
The dang'rous show, rash youth my only guide,
And many a look of many a fair unknown
Met full, unable to control my own.
But one I mark'd (then peace forsook my breast)
One—Oh, how far superior to the rest!
What lovely features! such the Cyprian queen
Herself might wish, and Juno wish her mien.
The very nymph was she, whom when I dar'd
His arrows, Love had even then prepar'd!
Nor was himself remote, nor unsupplied
With torch well-trimm'd and quiver at his side;
Now to her lips he clung, her eye-lids now,
Then settled on her cheeks, or on her brow;
And with a thousand wounds from ev'ry part
Pierced and transpierced my undefended heart.
A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
Now seiz'd my soul, and I was all on fire;
But she, the while, whom only I adore,
Was gone, and vanish'd, to appear no more.
In silent sadness I pursue my way;
I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay,
And while I follow her in thought, bemoan,
With tears, my soul's delight so quickly flown.
When Jove had hurl'd him to the Lemnian coast,
So Vulcan sorrow'd for Olympus lost,
And so Oeclides, sinking into night,
From the deep gulph look'd up to distant light.

Wretch that I am, what hopes for me remain,
Who cannot cease to love, yet love in vain?
Oh could I once, once more behold the fair,
Speak to her, tell her, of the pangs I bear.
Perhaps she is not adamant, would show
Perhaps some pity at my tale of woe.
Oh inauspicious flame—'tis mine to prove
A matchless instance of disastrous love.

Ah spare me, gentle pow'r!—If such thou be,
Let not thy deeds and nature disagree.
Spare me, and I will worship at no shrine
With vow and sacrifice, save only thine.
Now I revere thy fires, thy bow, thy darts;
Now own thee sov'reign of all human hearts.
Remove! no—grant me still this raging woe!
Sweet is the wretchedness that lovers know:
But pierce hereafter (should I chance to see
One destin'd mine) at once both her and me.

Such were the trophies that, in earlier days,
By vanity seduced, I toil'd to raise,
Studious, yet indolent, and urged by youth,
That worst of teachers! from the ways of truth;
Till learning taught me, in his shady bow'r,
To quit love's servile yoke, and spurn his pow'r.
Then, on a sudden, the fierce flame suppress,
A frost continual settled on my breast,
Whence Cupid fears his flames extinct to see,
And Venus dreads a Diomede in me.

EPIGRAMS.

ON THE INVENTOR OF GUNS.[1]

Praise in old times the sage Prometheus won,
Who stole ethereal radiance from the sun;
But greater he whose bold invention strove
To emulate the fiery bolts of Jove

[1] The Poems on the subject of the Gunpowder Treason I have not translated, both because the matter of them is unpleasant, and because they are written with an asperity, which, however it might be warranted in Milton's day, would be extremely unseasonable now.—C.

TO LEONORA SINGING AT ROME.[1]

ANOTHER Leonora once inspired
Tasso, with fatal love to frenzy fired;
But how much happier, lived he now, were he,
Pierced with whatever pangs for love of thee!
Since could he hear that heav'nly voice of thine,
With Adriana's lute of sound divine,
Fiercer than Pentheus' though his eye might roll,
Or idiot apathy benumb his soul,
Yet still, with medicinal sounds might cheer
His senses wand'ring in a blind career;
And sweetly breathing through his wounded breast,
Charm, with soul-soothing song, his thoughts to rest.

TO THE SAME.

NAPLES, too credulous, ah! boast no more
The sweet-voiced Syren buried on thy shore,
That, when Parthenope deceas'd, she gave
Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic grave;
For still she lives, but has exchanged the hoarse
Pausilipo for Tiber's placid course,
Where, idol of all Rome, she now in chains,
Of magic song, both gods and men detains.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD.

A FABLE.

A PEASANT to his lord paid yearly court,
Presenting pippins, of so rich a sort
That he, displeased to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, wither'd, and would yield no more.

[1] I have translated only two of the three poetical compliments addressed to Leonora, as they appear to me far superior to what I have omitted.—C.

The 'squire, perceiving all his labour void,
Curs'd his own pains, so foolishly employ'd.
And "Oh," he cried, "that I had lived content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
My av'rice has expensive proved to me,
Has cost me both my pippins and my tree."

TO CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

WITH CROMWELL'S PICTURE.

CHRISTINA, maiden of heroic mien!
Star of the North! of northern stars the queen!
Behold what wrinkles I have earn'd, and how
The iron casque still chafes my vet'ran brow,
While following fate's dark footsteps I fulfil
The dictates of a hardy people's will.
But soften'd, in thy sight, my looks appear,
Not to all Queens or Kings alike severe.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ON THE DEATH OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR.

A PHYSICIAN.

LEARN, ye nations of the earth,
The condition of your birth,
Now be taught your feeble state!
Know that all must yield to fate!

If the mournful rover, Death,
Say but once—"Resign your breath!"
Vainly of escape you dream,
You must pass the Stygian stream.

Could the stoutest overcome
Death's assault, and baffle doom,
Hercules had both withstood,
Undiseas'd by Nessus' blood.

Ne'er had Hector press'd the plain
By a trick of Pallas slain,
Nor the chief to Jove allied
By Achilles' phantom died.

Could enchantments life prolong,
Circe, sav'd by magic song,
Still had liv'd, and equal skill
Had preserv'd Medea still.

Dwelt in herbs and drugs a pow'r
To avert man's destin'd hour,
Learn'd Machaon should have known
Doubtless to avert his own.

Chiron had surviv'd the smart
Of the Hydra-tainted dart,
And Jove's bolt had been, with ease,
Foil'd by Asclepiades.

Thou too, sage! of whom forlorn
Helicon and Cirrha mourn,
Still hadst fill'd thy princely place,
Regent of the gowned race.

Hadst advanced to higher fame
Still thy much-ennobled name,
Nor in Charon's skiff explor'd
The Tartarean gulf abhorr'd.

But resentful Proserpine,
Jealous of thy skill divine,
Snapping short thy vital thread,
Thee too number'd with the dead.

Wise and good! untroubled be
The green turf that covers thee!
Thence, in gay profusion, grow
All the sweetest flow'rs that blow

Pluto's consort bid thee rest!
Æacus pronounce thee blest!
To her home thy shade consign!
Make Elysium ever thine!

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF ELY.

Written in the Author's Seventeenth Year.

My lids with grief were tumid yet,
And still my sullied cheek was wet
With briny tears, profusely shed
For venerable Winton dead;
When Fame, whose tales of saddest sound,
Alas! are ever truest found,
The news through all our cities spread
Of yet another mitred head
By ruthless fate to death consign'd,
Ely, the honour of his kind!

At once, a storm of passion heav'd
My boiling bosom, much I griev'd,
But more I rag'd, at ev'ry breath
Devoting Death himself to death.
With less revenge did Naso teem,
When hated Ibis was his theme:
With less, Archilochus, denied
The lovely Greek, his promis'd bride.

But lo! while thus I execrate,
Incens'd, the minister of fate,
Wond'rous accents, soft yet clear,
Wafted on the gale I hear.

"Ah, much deluded! lay aside
Thy threats, and anger misapplied!
Art not afraid with sounds like these
T' offend, where thou canst not appease?
Death is not (wherefore dream'st thou thus?)
The son of Night and Erebus;
Nor was of fell Erynnis born
On gulfs, where Chaos rules forlorn:
But sent from God, his presence leaves
To gather home his ripen'd sheaves,
To call encumber'd souls away
From fleshy bonds to boundless day,
(As when the winged hours excite,
And summon forth the morning-light,)

And each to convoy to her place
Before th' Eternal Father's face.
But not the wicked—them, severe
Yet just, from all their pleasures here
He hurries to the realms below,
Terrific realms of penal woe!
Myself no sooner heard his call,
Than, scaping through my prison-wall,
I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
And soar'd, with angels, to the stars,
Like him of old, to whom 'twas giv'n
To mount, on fiery wheels, to heav'n.
Boötes' waggon, slow with cold,
Appall'd me not; nor to behold
The sword that vast Orion draws,
Or ev'n the Scorpion's horrid claws.
Beyond the Sun's bright orb I fly,
And, far beneath my feet, descry
Night's dread goddess, seen with awe,
Whom her winged dragons draw.
Thus, ever wond'ring at my speed,
Augmented still as I proceed,
I pass the planetary sphere,
The Milky Way—and now appear
Heav'n's crystal battlements, her door
Of massy pearl, and em'rald floor.

"But here I cease. For never can
The tongue of once a mortal man
In suitable description trace
The pleasures of that happy place;
Suffice it that those joys divine
Are all, and all for ever, mine!"

NATURE UNIMPAIRED BY TIME.

Ah, how the human mind wearies herself
With her own wand'rings, and, involv'd in gloom
Impenetrable, speculates amiss!
Measuring, in her folly, things divine
By human; laws inscrib'd on adamant
By laws of man's device, and counsels fixt
For ever, by the hours that pass and die.

How?—shall the face of Nature then be plough'd
Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
On the great Parent fix a sterile curse?
Shall even she confess old age, and halt,
And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows?
Shall foul Antiquity, with rust, and drought,
And famine, vex the radiant worlds above?
Shall Time's unsated maw crave and engulf
The very heav'ns that regulate his flight?
And was the Sire of all able to fence
His works, and to uphold the circling worlds,
But, through improvident and heedless haste,
Let slip th' occasion?—so then—all is lost—
And in some future evil hour, yon arch
Shall crumble, and come thund'ring down, the poles
Jar in collision, the Olympian king
Fall with his throne, and Pallas, holding forth
The terrors of the Gorgon shield in vain,
Shall rush to the abyss, like Vulcan hurl'd
Down into Lemnos, through the gate of heav'n.
Thou also, with precipitated wheels,
Phœbus! thy own son's fall shalt imitate,
With hideous ruin shalt impress the deep
Suddenly, and the flood shall reek and hiss,
At the extinction of the lamp of day.
Then too shall Hæmus, cloven to his base,
Be shatter'd, and the huge Ceraunian hills,
Once weapons of Tartarean Dis, immers'd
In Erebus, shall fill himself with fear.

No. The Almighty Father surer laid
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended, in just equipoise, and bade
His universal works, from age to age,
One tenor hold, perpetual, undisturb'd.

Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
Continual, day by day, and with it bears
In social measure swift the heav'ns around.
Not tardier now is Saturn than of old,
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
Phœbus, his vigour unimpair'd, still shows
Th' effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales
But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,

Sign after sign, through all the heav'nly zone.
Beautiful, as at first, ascends the star
From odorif'rous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes th' ethereal flock,
To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.
Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
Alternate, and with arms extended still
She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams.
Nor have the elements deserted yet
Their functions: thunder, with as loud a stroke
As erst, smites thro' the rocks, and scatters them.
The east still howls, still the relentless north
Invades the shudd'ring Scythian, still he breathes
The winter, and still rolls the storms along.
The king of ocean, with his wonted force,
Beats on Pelorus, o'er the deep is heard
The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell,
Nor swim the monsters of the Ægean sea
In shallows, or beneath diminish'd waves.
Thou too, thy ancient vegetative pow'r
Enjoy'st, O earth! Narcissus still is sweet,
And Phœbus still thy favourite, and still
Thy fav'rite, Cytherea! both retain
Their beauty, nor the mountains, ore-enrich'd
For punishment of man, with purer gold.
Teem'd ever, or with brighter gems the deep.

Thus, in unbroken series, all proceeds;
And shall, till wide involving either pole,
And the immensity of yonder heav'n,
The final flames of destiny absorb
The world, consum'd in one enormous pyre!

ON THE PLATONIC IDEA,

AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY ARISTOTLE.

Ye sister pow'rs, who o'er the sacred groves
Preside, and thou, fair mother of them all,
Mnemosyne! and thou, who in thy grot
Immense, reclined at leisure, hast in charge
The archives, and the ord'nances of Jove,
And dost record the festivals of heav'n.

Eternity!—Inform us who is He,
That great original by nature chosen
To be the archetype of human kind,
Unchangeable, immortal, with the poles
Themselves coeval, one, yet ev'rywhere,
An image of the God who gave him being?
Twin-brother of the goddess born from Jove,
He dwells not in his father's mind; but, though
Of common nature with ourselves, exists
Apart, and occupies a local home.
Whether, companion of the stars, he spend
Eternal ages, roaming at his will
From sphere to sphere the tenfold heav'ns, or dwell
On the moon's side that nearest neighbours earth,
Or torpid on the banks of Lethe sit
Among the multitude of souls ordain'd
To flesh and blood, or whether (as may chance)
That vast and giant model of our kind
In some far distant region of this globe
Sequester'd stalk, with lifted head on high
O'ertow'ring Atlas, on whose shoulders rest
The stars, terrific even to the gods.
Never the Theban seer, whose blindness proved
His best illumination, him beheld
In secret vision; never him the son
Of Pleione, amid the noiseless night
Descending, to the prophet-choir reveal'd;
Him never knew th' Assyrian priest, who yet
The ancestry of Ninus chronicles,
And Belus, and Osiris, far-renown'd;
Nor even thrice great Hermes, although skill'd
So deep in myst'ry, to the worshippers
Of Isis show'd a prodigy like him.
And thou, who hast immortalized the shades
Of Academus, if the schools received
This monster of the fancy first from thee,
Either recall at once the banish'd bards
To thy republic, or thyself evinced
A wilder fabulist, go also forth.

TO HIS FATHER

Oh that Pieria's spring would through my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That, for my venerable Father's sake
All meaner themes renounced, my Muse, on wings,
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my Father! howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work, nor know I aught
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude:
But, such as I possess, I send thee all.
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought;
Nought, save the riches that from airy dream
In secret grottos, and in laurel bow'rs,
I have, by golden Clio's gift, acquired.

Verse is a work divine; despise not thou
Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above.
The gods love verse; the infernal Pow'rs themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the Shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale,
Tremulous Sybil, make the future known,
And he who sacrifices, on the shrine
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threat'ning bull,
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinize the Fates enveloped there.
We, too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, and one eternal now
Shall be the only measure of our being,
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound.

And, even now, the fiery spirit pure
That wheels yon circling orbs directs, himself,
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutt'rable, immortal, hearing which,
Huge Ophiuchus holds his hiss suppress'd,
Orion soften'd, drops his ardent blade,
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
Lyæus deluged yet the temp'rate board.
Then sat the bard a customary guest
To share the banquet, and, his length of locks
With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
The characters of heroes and their deeds
To imitation, sang of Chaos old,
Of nature's birth, of gods that crept in search
Of acorns fall'n, and of the thunder-bolt
Not yet produced from Etna's fiery cave.
And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
Devoid of matter? Such may suit perhaps
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
Well touch'd, but by resistless accents more
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved: these praises to his verse he owes.

Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless, Pow'rs, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity, we sympathize
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring God.

No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,

My Father! for thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous, and ill observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My Father! who when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-toned language of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flow'rs
That Gallia boasts; those too with which the smooth
Italian his degen'rate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heav'n contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,
The rivers and the restless deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will; science herself,
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
And offers me the lip, if, dull of heart,
I shrink not, and decline her gracious boon.

Go now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds,
That covet it; what could my Father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode, the heav'n in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe,
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all dazzling wreath.
I therefore, although last and least, my place
Among the learned in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqu'ror's ivy twines
Henceforth exempt from the unletter'd throng,
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.

Away then, sleepless Care, Complaint, away,
And, Envy, with thy "jealous leer malign!"
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileg'd, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high, for your viperean wound.

But thou, my Father! since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasured in a grateful mind!
Ye too, the favourite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethean gulf,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the Fathers of a distant age!

TO SALSILLUS, A ROMAN POET,

MUCH INDISPOSED.[1]

My halting Muse, that dragg'st by choice along
Thy slow, slow step, in melancholy song,
And lik'st that pace, expressive of thy cares,
Not less than Diopeia's sprightlier airs,
When, in the dance, she beats, with measured tread,
Heav'n's floor, in front of Juno's golden bed;
Salute Salsillus, who to verse divine
Prefers, with partial love, such lays as mine.
Thus writes that Milton then, who wafted o'er
From his own nest, on Albion's stormy shore,
When Eurus, fiercest of the Æolian band,
Sweeps, with ungovern'd rage, the blasted land,

[1] The original is written in a measure called *Scazon*, which signifies *limping*, and the measure is so denominated, because, though in other respects Iambic, it terminates with a Spondee, and has consequently a more tard movement.

The reader will immediately see that this property of the Latin verse cannot be imitated in English.—C.

Of late to more serene Ausonia came
To view her cities of illustrious name,
To prove, himself a witness of the truth,
How wise her elders, and how learn'd her youth.
Much good, Salsillus! and a body free
From all disease, that Milton asks for thee,
Who now endur'st the languor and the pains,
That bile inflicts, diffused through all thy veins,
Relentless malady! not moved to spare
By thy sweet Roman voice and Lesbian air!

Health, Hebe's sister, sent us from the skies,
And thou, Apollo, whom all sickness flies,
Pythius, or Pæan, or what name divine
Soe'er thou choose, haste, heal a priest of thine!
Ye groves of Faunus, and ye hills, that melt
With vinous dews, where meek Evander dwelt!
If aught salubrious in your confines grow,
Strive which shall soonest heal your poet's woe,
That, render'd to the Muse he loves, again
He may enchant the meadows with his strain.
Numa, reclined in everlasting ease,
Amid the shade of dark embow'ring trees,
Viewing with eyes of unabated fire
His loved Ægeria, shall that strain admire:
So sooth'd, the tumid Tiber shall revere
The tombs of kings, nor desolate the year,
Shall curb his waters with a friendly rein,
And guide them harmless till they meet the main.

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO, MARQUIS OF VILLA.

MILTON'S ACCOUNT OF MANSO.

Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen, for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his "Dialogues on Friendship," for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country, in his poem entitled "Gerusalemme Conquistata," book xx.

"Fra cavalieri magnanimi, e cortesi,
Risplende il Manso."

During the Author's stay at Naples, he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities; and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city.

THESE verses also to thy praise the Nine,
Oh Manso! happy in that theme design,
For Gallus and Mæcenas gone, they see
None such besides, or whom they love as thee;
And if my verse may give the meed of fame,
Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
Already such it shines in Tasso's page,
(For thou wast Tasso's friend) from age to age,
And, next, the Muse consign'd (not unaware
How high the charge) Marino to thy care,
Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the poet would entrust
His latest vows, to thee alone his dust;
And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
In labour'd brass, thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee—but lest the grave
Should aught absorb of theirs which thou couldst save,
All future ages thou hast deign'd to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each,
Eloquent as the Carian sage, who, true
To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.

I, therefore, tho' a stranger youth, who come
Chill'd by rude blasts, that freeze my northern home,

Thee dear to Clio confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phœbus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A Muse scarce rear'd beneath our sullen sky,
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song.
We too, where Thames with his unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-hair'd Ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or, slumb'ring, seem to hear,
O'er his wide stream the swan's voice warbling clear,
And we could boast a Tityrus of yore,
Who trod, a welcome guest, your happy shore.

Yes—dreary as we own our northern clime,
E'en we to Phœbus raise the polish'd rhyme.
We too serve Phœbus; Phœbus has receiv'd
(If legends old may claim to be believ'd)
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnish'd apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train;
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes prais'd in hallow'd rhyme
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins, who arriv'd of yore,
With British off'rings, on the Delian shore;
Loxo, from giant Corineus sprung,
Upis, on whose blest lips the future hung,
And Hecaerge, with the golden hair,
All deck'd with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.

Thou, therefore, happy sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after time,
Or with Marino's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear how Phœbus, and the Nine
Were inmates once, and willing guests of thine.
Yet Phœbus, when of old constrain'd to roam
The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,
Enter'd, no willing guest, Admetus' door,
Though Hercules had ventur'd there before.
But gentle Chiron's cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, cloth'd with perpetual green,
And thither, oft as respite he required
From rustic clamours loud, the god retir'd.

There, many a time, on Peneus' bank reclin'd
At some oak's root, with ivy thick entwin'd,
Won by his hospitable friend's desire,
He sooth'd his pains of exile with the lyre.
Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
Nor Oeta felt his load of forests more;
The upland elms descended to the plain,
And softened lynxes wondered at the strain.

Well may we think, O dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove,
And that Apollo shed his kindliest pow'r,
And Maia's son, on that propitious hour,
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
Hence, on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
The ling'ring freshness of thy greener years;
Hence, in thy front, and features, we admire
Nature unwither'd and a mind entire.
Oh might so true a friend to me belong,
So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime,
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars,
With all his martial knights, to be restored,
Each to his seat around the fed'ral board,
And oh, if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plund'rers, in triumphant verse!
Then, after all, when, with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent,
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my death-bed bend,
I shall but need to say—"Be yet my friend!"
He, too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian isle,
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then also, if the fruits of Faith endure,
And Virtue's promised recompence be sure,
Born to those seats, to which the blest aspire
By purity of soul and virtuous fire,
These rites, as fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumin'd by celestial day,
And, ev'ry cloud from my pure spirit driv'n,
Joy in the bright beatitude of Heav'n!

ON THE DEATH OF DAMON.

THE ARGUMENT.

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds and neighbours, had always pursued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united in the closest friendship. Thyrsis, while travelling for improvement, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time, returning and finding it true, deplores himself, and his solitary condition, in this poem.

By Damon is to be understood Charles Deodati, connected with the Italian city of Lucca by his father's side, in other respects an Englishman—a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

Ye nymphs of Himera (for ye have shed
Erewhile for Daphnis, and for Hylas dead,
And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear)
Now through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
The woes of Thyrsis in Sicilian verse,
What sighs he heaved, and how, with groans profound,
He made the woods and hollow rocks resound
Young Damon dead; nor even ceased to pour
His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour.

The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear,
And golden harvest twice enrich'd the year,
Since Damon's lips had gasp'd for vital air
The last, last time, nor Thyrsis yet was there;
For he, enamour'd of the muse, remain'd
In Tuscan Fiorenza long detain'd,
But, stored at length with all he wished to learn,
For his flock's sake now hasted to return;
And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
At the elm's root, within his old retreat,
Then 'twas his lot, then, all his loss to know,
And, from his burthen'd heart, he vented thus his woe.

[1] "A pastoral, in my judgment, equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pl[illegible] him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously."—(Cowper to Hurdis, Dec. 10, 1791.)

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Alas! what deities shall I suppose
In heav'n or earth, concern'd for human woes,
Since, oh my Damon! their severe decree
So soon condemns me to regret of thee!
Depart'st thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
With fame and honour, like a vulgar shade!
Let him forbid it, whose bright rod controls,
And sep'rates sordid from illustrious souls,
Drive far the rabble, and to thee assign
A happier lot, with spirits worthy thine.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
Thou shalt not moulder undeplored, but long
Thy praise shall dwell on ev'ry shepherd's tongue;
To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
And, after him, to thee the votive lay,
While Pales shall the flocks and pastures love,
Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove,
At least, if ancient piety and truth,
With all the learned labours of thy youth,
May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Yes, Damon! such thy sure reward shall be;
But ah, what doom awaits unhappy me?
Who, now, my pains and perils shall divide,
As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
Both when the rugged frost annoy'd our feet,
And when the herbage all was parch'd with heat;
Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent,
Or the huge lion's, arm'd with darts, we went?
Whose converse, now, shall calm my stormy day,
With charming song, who now beguile my way?

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.

In whom shall I confide? whose counsel find
A balmy med'cine for my troubled mind?
Or whose discourse, with innocent delight,
Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
And black'ning chesnuts start and crackle there,
While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
And the wind thunders through the neighb'ring elm?

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
And Pan sleeps hidden by the shelt'ring beech,
When shepherds disappear, nymphs seek the sedge,
And the stretch'd rustic snores beneath the hedge,
Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles again?

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown
With tangled boughs, I wander now alone,
Till night descend, while blust'ring wind and show'r
Beat on my temples through the shatter'd bow'r.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Alas! what rampant weeds now shame my fields,
And what a mildew'd crop the furrow yields!
My rambling vines, unwedded to the trees,
Bear shrivell'd grapes, my myrtles fail to please,
Nor please me more my flocks; they, slighted, turn
Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Ægon invites me to the hazel grove,
Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,
And young Alphesibœus to a seat
Where branching elms exclude the mid-day heat.
'Here fountains spring—here mossy hillocks rise;
Here Zephyr whispers, and the stream replies.'

Thus each persuades, but, deaf to ev'ry call,
I gain the thickets, and escape them all.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares, than those of feeding you.
Then Mopsus said, (the same who reads so well
The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell,
For he by chance had noticed my return)
'What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern?
Ah Thyrsis! thou art either crazed with love,
Or some sinister influence from above;
Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherds rue:
His leaden shaft oblique has pierced thee through.'

"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
The nymphs amazed, my melancholy see,
And, 'Thyrsis!' cry—'what will become of thee!
What wouldst thou, Thyrsis? such should not appear
The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe;
Brisk youth should laugh, and love—ah shun the fate
Of those, twice wretched mopes! who love too late!'

"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ægle with Hyas came, to soothe my pain,
And Baucis' daughter, Dryope, the vain,
Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat
Known far and near, and for her self-conceit;
Chloris too came, whose cottage on the lands
That skirt the Idumanian current stands;
But all in vain they came, and but to see
Kind words, and comfortable, lost on me.

"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah blest indiff'rence of the playful herd,
None by his fellow chosen, or preferr'd!
No bonds of amity the flocks enthrall,
But each associates and is pleased with all;
So graze the dappled deer in num'rous droves,
And all his kind alike the zebra loves;
The same law governs, where the billows roar,
And Proteus' shoals o'erspread the desert shore;

The sparrow, meanest of the feather'd race,
His fit companion finds in ev'ry place,
With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
Flirts here and there, and late returns to rest,
And whom if chance the falcon make his prey,
Or hedger with his well-aim'd arrow slay,
For no such loss the gay survivor grieves;
New love he seeks, and new delight receives.
We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
Scorning all others in a single choice.
We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind,
And if the long-sought good at last we find,
When least we fear it Death our treasure steals.
And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.

"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
To traverse Alpine snows and rugged rocks!
What need so great had I to visit Rome,
Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb?
Or, had she flourish'd still as when, of old,
For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold,
What need so great had I t' incur a pause
Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me?
Else, had I grasp'd thy feeble hand, composed
Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eyelids closed,
And, at the last, had said—'Farewell—ascend—
Nor even in the skies forget thy friend!'

"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Although well-pleased, ye tuneful Tuscan swains!
My mind the mem'ry of your worth retains.
Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn
My Damon lost.—He too was Tuscan born,
Born in your Lucca, city of renown!
And wit possess'd, and genius, like your own.
Oh how elate was I, when stretch'd beside
The murm'ring course of Arno's breezy tide.
Beneath the poplar grove I pass'd my hours,
Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flow'rs,
And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
Your swains contending for the prize of song!

I also dared attempt (and, as it seems,
Not much displeas'd attempting) various themes,
For even I can presents boast from you,
The shepherd's pipe, and ozier basket too,
And Dati and Francini, both have made
My name familiar to the beechen shade,
And they are learn'd, and each in ev'ry place
Renown'd for song, and both of Lydian race.

"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
While bright the dewy grass with moonbeams shone,
And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
How often have I said (but thou hadst found
Ere then thy dark cold lodgment under ground)
Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
Or wicker-work for various use prepares!
How oft, indulging fancy, have I plann'd
New scenes of pleasure, that I hoped at hand,
Call'd thee abroad as I was wont, and cried—
'What hoa! my friend—come, lay thy task aside,
Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
The heat beneath yon whisp'ring shades awhile,
Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
Or where Cassibelan's grey turrets stood!
There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name and healing pow'rs of each,
From the tall blue-bell to the dwarfish weed,
What the dry land and what the marshes breed,
For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
And the whole art of Galen is thy own.'
Ah, perish Galen's art, and wither'd be
The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream
I meditating sat some statelier theme,
The reeds no sooner touch'd my lip, though new,
And unessay'd before, than wide they flew,
Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
The deep-toned music of the solemn strain;
And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
How proud a theme I choose—ye groves, farewell!

"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
How with his barks he plough'd the British sea,

First from Rutupia's tow'ring headland seen,
And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen;
Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,
And of Arviragus, and how of old
Our hardy sires th' Armorican controll'd,
And of the wife of Gorloïs, who, surpris'd
By Uther, in her husband's form disguis'd,
(Such was the force of Merlin's art) became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
These themes I now revolve—and oh—if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthen'd date,
Adieu my shepherd's reed—yon pine-tree bough
Shall be thy future home, there dangle thou
Forgotten and disus'd, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latian for a British song;
A British?—even so—the pow'rs of man
Are bounded; little is the most he can;
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame, and proud recompence enough for me,
If Usa, golden-hair'd, my verse may learn,
If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadow'd stream,
Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem,
Tamar's ore-tinctur'd flood, and, after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades.

"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
All this I kept in leaves of laurel-rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view design'd,
This—and a gift from Manso's hand beside,
(Manso not least his native city's pride)
Two cups, that radiant as their giver shone,
Adorn'd by sculpture with a double zone.
The spring was graven there; here slowly wind
The Red-sea shores with groves of spices lin'd:
Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
The sacred, solitary Phœnix shows,
And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head,
To see Aurora leave her wat'ry bed.
—In other part, th' expansive vault above,
And there too, even there, the god of love;
With quiver arm'd he mounts, his torch displays
A vivid light, his gem-tipt arrows blaze.
Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,

Nor deigns one look below, but aiming high
Sends every arrow to the lofty sky;
Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
The pow'r of Cupid, and enamour'd burn.

"Thou also, Damon, (neither need I fear
That hope delusive) thou art also there;
For whither should simplicity like thine
Retire? where else such spotless virtue shine?
Thou dwell'st not (thought profane) in shades below,
Nor tears suit thee—cease then my tears to flow;
Away with grief! on Damon ill bestow'd!
Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
Has pass'd the show'ry arch, henceforth resides
With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
Quaffs copious immortality, and joy,
With hallow'd lips!—Oh! blest without alloy,
And now enrich'd with all that faith can claim,
Look down, entreated by whatever name.
If Damon please thee most (that rural sound
Shall oft with echoes fill the groves around),
Or if Diodatus, by which alone
In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste,
The honours, therefore, by divine decree
The lot of virgin worth, are given to thee;
Thy brows encircled with a radiant band,
And the green palm-branch waving in thy hand,
Thou in immortal nuptials shalt rejoice,
And join with seraphs thy according voice,
Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire."

AN ODE

ADDRESSED TO MR. JOHN ROUSE, LIBRARIAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.[1]

ON A LOST VOLUME OF MY POEMS, WHICH HE DESIRED ME TO REPLACE, THAT HE MIGHT ADD THEM TO MY OTHER WORKS DEPOSITED IN THE LIBRARY.

STROPHE.

My two-fold book! single in show,
But double in contents,
Neat, but not curiously adorn'd,
Which, in his early youth,
A poet gave, no lofty one in truth,
Although an earnest wooer of the Muse—
Say while in cool Ausonian shades
Or British wilds he roam'd,
Striking by turns his native lyre,
By turns the Daunian lute,
And stepp'd almost in air,—

ANTISTROPHE.

Say, little book, what furtive hand
Thee from thy fellow-books convey'd,
What time at the repeated suit
Of my most learned friend,
I sent thee forth, an honour'd traveller,
From our great city to the source of Thames,
Cœrulean sire!
Where rise the fountains, and the raptures ring,
Of the Aonian choir,
Durable as yonder spheres,
And through the endless lapse of years
Secure to be admir'd?

[1] This Ode is rendered without rhyme, that it might more adequately represent the original, which, as Milton himself informs us, is of no certain measure. It may possibly for this reason disappoint the reader, though it cost the writer more labour than the translation of any other piece in the whole collection.—W. C.

STROPHE II.

Now what god, or demigod,
For Britain's ancient genius moved
(If our afflicted land
Have expiated at length the guilty sloth
Of her degenerate sons)
Shall terminate our impious feuds,
And discipline, with hallow'd voice, recall?
Recall the Muses too,
Driv'n from their ancient seats
In Albion, and well nigh from Albion's shore,
And with keen Phœbean shafts
Piercing th' unseemly birds,
Whose talons menace us,
Shall drive the harpy race from Helicon afar?

ANTISTROPHE.

But thou, my book, tho' thou hast stray'd,
Whether by treach'ry lost,
Or indolent neglect, thy bearer's fault,
From all thy kindred books,
To some dark cell, or cave forlorn,
Where thou endur'st, perhaps,
The chafing of some hard untutor'd hand,
Be comforted—
For lo! again the splendid hope appears
That thou mayst yet escape
The gulfs of Lethe, and on oary wings
Mount to the everlasting courts of Jove!

STROPHE III.

Since Rouse desires thee, and complains
That, though by promise his,
Thou yet appear'st not in thy place
Among the literary noble stores,
Giv'n to his care,
But absent, leav'st his numbers incomplete.
He, therefore, guardian vigilant
Of that unperishing wealth,
Calls thee to the interior shrine, his charge,
Where he intends a richer treasure far
Than Iön kept (Iön, Erectheus' son
Illustrious, of the fair Creüsa born)
In the resplendent temple of his god,
Tripods of gold, and Delphic gifts divine.

ANTISTROPHE.

Haste, then, to the pleasant groves,
The Muses' fav'rite haunt;
Resume thy station in Apollo's dome.
Dearer to him
Than Delos, or the fork'd Parnassian hill!
Exulting go,
Since now a splendid lot is also thine,
And thou art sought by my propitious friend;
For there thou shalt be read
With authors of exalted note,
The ancient glorious lights of Greece and Rome.

EPODE.

Ye then, my works, no longer vain,
And worthless deem'd by me!
Whate'er this sterile genius has produc'd,
Expect, at last, the rage of envy spent,
An unmolested happy home,
Gift of kind Hermes, and my watchful friend,
Where never flippant tongue profane
Shall entrance find,
And whence the coarse unletter'd multitude
Shall babble far remote.
Perhaps some future distant age,
Less ting'd with prejudice, and better taught,
Shall furnish minds of pow'r
To judge more equally.
Then, malice silenc'd in the tomb,
Cooler heads and sounder hearts,
Thanks to Rouse, if aught of praise
I merit, shall with candour weigh the claim.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN POEMS.

SONNET.

Fair Lady! whose harmonious name the Rhine,
Through all his grassy vale, delights to hear,
Base were indeed the wretch, who could forbear
To love a spirit elegant as thine,
That manifests a sweetness all divine,
Nor knows a thousand winning acts to spare,
And graces, which Love's bow and arrows are,
Temp'ring thy virtues to a softer shine.
When gracefully thou speak'st, or singest gay,
Such strains as might the senseless forest move,
Ah then—turn each his eyes and ears away,
Who feels himself unworthy of thy love!
Grace can alone preserve him, ere the dart
Of fond desire yet reach his inmost heart.

SONNET.

As on a hill-top rude, when closing day
Imbrowns the scene, some past'ral maiden fair
Waters a lovely foreign plant with care,
Borne from its native genial airs away,
That scarcely can its tender bud display,
So, on my tongue these accents, new and rare,
Are flow'rs exotic, which Love waters there,
While thus, O sweetly scornful! I essay
Thy praise, in verse to British ears unknown,
And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain:
So Love has will'd, and ofttimes Love has shown
That what he wills, he never wills in vain.
Oh that this hard and steril breast might be
To Him, who plants from Heav'n, a soil as free!

CANZONE.

THEY mock my toil — the nymphs and am'rous swains—
And whence this fond attempt to write, they cry,
Love-songs in language that thou little know'st?
How dar'st thou risk to sing these foreign strains?
Say truly,—find'st not oft thy purpose cross'd,
And that thy fairest flow'rs here fade and die?
Then with pretence of admiration high—
Thee other shores expect, and other tides;
Rivers, on whose grassy sides
Her deathless laurel leaf, with which to bind
Thy flowing locks, already Fame provides;
Why then this burthen, better far declined?

Speak, Muse! for me.—The fair one said, who guides
My willing heart and all my fancy's flights,
"This is the language in which Love delights."

SONNET TO CHARLES DEODATI.

CHARLES—and I say it wond'ring—thou must know
That I, who once assum'd a scornful air,
And scoff'd at Love, am fallen in his snare.
(Full many an upright man has fallen so)
Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
Of golden locks, or damask cheek; more rare
The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair;
A mien majestic, with dark brows, that show
The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind;
Words exquisite, of idioms more than one,
And song, whose fascinating pow'r might bind.
And from her sphere draw down the lab'ring Moon
With such fire-darting eyes, that should I fill
My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.

SONNET.

Lady! it cannot be but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display,
And strike me ev'n as Phœbus him, whose way
Through horrid Libya's sandy desert lies.
Meantime, on that side steamy vapours rise
Where most I suffer. Of what kind are they,
New as to me they are, I cannot say,
But deem them, in the lover's language—sighs.
Some, though with pain, my bosom close conceals,
Which, if in part escaping thence, they tend
To soften thine, thy coldness soon congeals,
While others to my tearful eyes ascend,
Whence my sad nights in show'rs are ever drown'd,
Till my Aurora comes, her brow with roses bound.

SONNET.

Enamour'd, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly,
To thee, dear Lady, with an humble sigh
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs, not few, intrepid, sound,
Good, and addicted to conceptions high:
When tempests shake the world, and fire the sky,
It rests in adamant self-wrapt around,
As safe from envy, and from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears, that vulgar minds abuse,
As fond of genius, and fixt fortitude,
Of the resounding lyre, and every Muse.
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierced by Love's immedicable dart.

TRANSLATION FROM VIRGIL.

ÆNEID, BOOK VIII. LINE 18.

THUS Italy was moved—nor did the chief
Æneas in his mind less tumult feel.
On every side his anxious thought he turns,
Restless, unfixt, not knowing what to choose.
And as a cistern that in brim of brass
Confines the crystal flood, if chance the sun
Smite on it, or the moon's resplendent orb,
The quiv'ring light now flashes on the walls,
Now leaps uncertain to the vaulted roof:
Such were the wav'ring motions of his mind.
'Twas night—and weary nature sunk to rest.
The birds, the bleating flocks were heard no more.
At length, on the cold ground, beneath the damp
And dewy vault, fast by the river's brink,
The father of his country sought repose.
When lo! among the spreading poplar boughs
Forth from his pleasant stream, propitious rose
The god of Tiber: clear transparent gauze
Infolds his loins, his brows with reeds are crown'd:
And these his gracious words to soothe his care:

"Heav'n-born, who bring'st our kindred home again,
Rescued, and giv'st eternity to Troy,
Long have Laurentum and the Latian plains
Expected thee; behold thy fixt abode.
Fear not the threats of war, the storm is pass'd,
The gods appeased. For proof that what thou hear'st
Is no vain forgery or delusive dream,
Beneath the grove that borders my green bank,
A milk-white swine, with thirty milk-white young,
Shall greet thy wond'ring eyes. Mark well the place;
For 'tis thy place of rest, there end thy toils:
There, twice ten years elaps'd, fair Alba's walls
Shall rise, fair Alba, by Ascanius' hand.
Thus shall it be—now listen, while I teach
The means t' accomplish these events at hand.
Th' Arcadians here, a race from Pallas sprung,

Following Evander's standard and his fate.
High on these mountains, a well-chosen spot,
Have built a city, for their grandsire's sake
Named Pallanteum. These perpetual war
Wage with the Latians: joined in faithful league
And arms confed'rate, add them to your camp.
Myself between your winding banks, will speed
Your well-oar'd barks to stem th' opposing tide.
Rise, goddess-born, arise: and with the first
Declining stars, seek Juno in thy pray'r,
And vanquish all her wrath with suppliant vows.
When conquest crowns thee, then remember *Me*.
I am the Tiber, whose cerulean stream
Heav'n favours; I with copious flood divide
These grassy banks, and cleave the fruitful meads.
My mansion, this—and lofty cities crown
My fountain-head."—He spoke, and sought the deep,
And plunged his form beneath the closing flood.
Æneas at the morning dawn awoke,
And rising, with uplifted eye beheld
The orient sun, then dipp'd his palms, and scoop'd
The brimming stream, and thus address'd the skies:
"Ye nymphs, Laurentian nymphs, who feed the source
Of many a stream, and thou, with thy blest flood,
O Tiber, hear, accept me, and afford,
At length afford, a shelter from my woes.
Where'er in secret cavern under ground
Thy waters sleep, where'er they spring to light,
Since thou hast pity for a wretch like me,
My off'rings and my vows shall wait thee still:
Great horned Father of Hesperian floods,
Be gracious now, and ratify thy word."
He said, and chose two galleys from his fleet,
Fits them with oars, and clothes the crew in arms.
When lo! astonishing and pleasing sight,
The milk-white dam, with her unspotted brood,
Lay stretch'd upon the bank, beneath the grove.
To thee, the pious prince, Juno, to thee
Devotes them all, all on thine altar bleed.
That live-long night old Tiber smooth'd his flood,
And so restrain'd it, that it seem'd to stand
Motionless as a pool or silent lake,
That not a billow might resist their oars.
With cheerful sound of exhortation soon
Their voyage they begin; the pitchy keel
Slides through the gentle deep, the quiet stream

Admires th' unwonted burden that it bears,
Well polish'd arms, and vessels painted gay.
Beneath the shade of various trees, between
Th' umbrageous branches of the spreading groves
They cut their liquid way, nor day nor night
They slack their course, unwinding as they go
The long meanders of the peaceful tide.
The glowing sun was in meridian height,
When from afar they saw the humble walls,
And the few scatter'd cottages, which now
The Roman pow'r has equall'd with the clouds;
But such was then Evander's scant domain.
They steer to shore, and hasten to the town.
It chanced th' Arcadian monarch on that day,
Before the walls, beneath a shady grove,
Was celebrating high, in solemn feast,
Alcides and his tutelary gods.
Pallas, his son, was there, and there the chief
Of all his youth; with these, a worthy tribe,
His poor but venerable senate, burnt
Sweet incense, and their altars smoked with blood.
Soon as they saw the towering masts approach,
Sliding between the trees, while the crew rest
Upon their silent oars, amazed they rose,
Not without fear, and all forsook the feast.
But Pallas undismay'd his jav'lin seiz'd,
Rush'd to the bank, and from a rising ground
Forbad them to disturb the sacred rites.
"Ye stranger youth! What prompts you to explore
This untried way? and whither do ye steer?
Whence, and who are ye? Bring ye peace or war?"
Æneas from his lofty deck holds forth
The peaceful olive branch, and thus replies:
"Trojans and enemies to the Latian state,
Whom they with unprovok'd hostilities
Have driv'n away, thou see'st. We seek Evander—
Say this—and say beside, the Trojan chiefs
Are come, and seek his friendship and his aid."
Pallas with wonder heard that awful name,
And "whosoe'er thou art," he cried, "come forth;
Bear thine own tidings to my father's ear,
And be a welcome guest beneath our roof."
He said, and press'd the stranger to his breast:
Then led him from the river to the grove,
Where, courteous, thus Æneas greets the king:
"Best of the Grecian race, to whom I bow

(So wills my fortune) suppliant, and stretch forth
In sign of amity this peaceful branch,
I fear'd thee not, altho' I knew thee well
A Grecian leader, born in Arcady,
And kinsman of th' Atridæ. Me my virtue,
That means no wrong to thee—the Oracles,
Our kindred families allied of old,
And thy renown diffused thro' ev'ry land,
Have all conspired to bind in friendship to thee,
And send me not unwilling to thy shores.
Dardanus, author of the Trojan state,
(So say the Greeks) was fair Electra's son;
Electra boasted Atlas for her sire,
Whose shoulders high sustain th' ethereal orbs.
Your sire is Mercury, whom Maia bore,
Sweet Maia, on Cyllene's hoary top.
Her, if we credit aught tradition old,
Atlas of yore, the self-same Atlas, claim'd
His daughter. Thus united close in blood,
Thy race and ours one common sire confess.
With these credentials fraught, I would not send
Ambassadors with artful phrase to sound
And win thee by degrees—but came myself—
Me therefore, me thou seest; my life the stake:
'Tis I, Æneas, who implore thine aid.
Should Daunia, that now aims the blow at thee,
Prevail to conquer *us*, nought then, they think,
Will hinder, but Hesperia must be theirs,
All theirs, from th' upper to the nether sea.
Take then our friendship, and return us thine.
We too have courage, we have noble minds,
And youth well tried, and exercis'd in arms."
Thus spoke Æneas.—He with fixt regard
Survey'd him speaking, features, form, and mien.
Then briefly thus—"Thou noblest of thy name,
How gladly do I take thee to my heart,
How gladly thus confess thee for a friend!
In thee I trace Anchises; his thy speech,
Thy voice, thy count'nance. For I well remember,
Many a day since, when Priam journeyed forth
To Salamis, to see the land where dwelt
Hesione, his sister, he push'd on
E'en to Arcadia's frozen bounds. 'Twas then
The bloom of youth was glowing on my cheek;
Much I admir'd the Trojan chiefs, and much
Their king, the son of great Laomedon,

But most Anchises, tow'ring o'er them all.
A youthful longing seized me to accost
The hero, and embrace him; I drew near,
And gladly led him to the walls of Pheneus.
Departing, he distinguish'd me with gifts,
A costly quiver stored with Lycian darts,
A robe inwove with gold, with gold imboss'd,
Two bridles, those which Pallas uses now.
The friendly league thou hast solicited
I give thee therefore, and to-morrow all
My chosen youth shall wait on your return.
Meanwhile, since thus in friendship ye are come,
Rejoice with us, and join to celebrate
These annual rites, which may not be delay'd,
And be at once familiar with our board."
He said, and bade replace the feast remov'd:
Himself upon a grassy bank dispersed
The crew, but for Æneas order'd forth
A couch, spread with a lion's tawny shag,
And bad him share the honours of his throne.
Th' appointed youth with glad alacrity
Assist the lab'ring priest to load the board,
With roasted entrails of the slaughter'd beeves,
Well-kneaded bread, and mantling bowls. Well pleas'd,
Æneas and the Trojan youth regale
On the huge length of a well-pastur'd chine.
Hunger appeas'd, and tables all dispatch'd,
Thus spake Evander: "Superstition here,
In this our solemn feasting has no part.
No, Trojan friend, from utmost danger sav'd,
In gratitude this worship we renew.
Behold that rock which nods above the vale,
Those bulks of broken stone dispers'd around,
How desolate the shatter'd cave appears,
And what a ruin spreads th' encumber'd plain.
Within this pile, but far within, was once
The den of Cacus; dire his hateful form,
That shunn'd the day, half monster and half man.
Blood newly shed stream'd ever on the ground
Smoking, and many a visage pale and wan
Nail'd at his gate, hung hideous to the sight.
Vulcan begot the brute: vast was his size,
And from his throat he belch'd his father's fires.
But the day came that brought us what we wish'd,
Th' assistance and the presence of a god.
Flush'd with his vict'ry and the spoils he won

From triple-form'd Geryon, lately slain,
The great avenger, Hercules appear'd.
Hither he drove his stately bulls, and pour'd
His herds along the vale. But the sly thief
Cacus, that nothing might escape his hand
Of villany or fraud, drove from the stalls
Four of the lordliest of his bulls, and four
The fairest of his heifers; by the tail
He dragg'd them to his den, that there conceal'd,
No footsteps might betray the dark abode.
And now his herd with provender sufficed.
Alcides would be gone: they as they went
Still bellowing loud, made the deep echoing woods
And distant hills resound: when hark! one ox,
Imprison'd close within the vast recess,
Lows in return, and frustrates all his hope.
Then fury seiz'd Alcides, and his breast
With indignation heav'd: grasping his club
Of knotted oak, swift to the mountain-top
He ran, he flew. Then first was Cacus seen
To tremble, and his eyes bespoke his fears.
Swift as an eastern blast he sought his den,
And dread increasing wing'd him as he went.
Drawn up in iron slings above the gate
A rock was hung enormous. Such his haste,
He burst the chains, and dropp'd it at the door,
Then grappled it with ironwork within
Of bolts and bars by Vulcan's art contrived.
Scarce was he fast, when panting for revenge
Came Hercules: he gnash'd his teeth with rage,
And quick as lightning glanced his eyes around
In quest of entrance. Fiery red and stung
With indignation, thrice he wheel'd his course
About the mountain; thrice, but thrice in vain,
He strove to force the quarry at the gate,
And thrice sat down o'erwearied in the vale.
There stood a pointed rock, abrupt and rude,
That high o'erlook'd the rest, close at the back
Of the fell monster's den, where birds obscene
Of ominous note resorted, choughs and daws.
This, as it lean'd obliquely to the left,
Threat'ning the streams below, he from the right
Push'd with his utmost strength, and to and fro
He shook the mass, loos'ning its lowest base;
Then shoved it from its seat; down fell the pile;
Sky thunder'd at the fall; the banks give way,

Th' affrighted stream flows upward to his source.
Behold the kennel of the brute exposed,
The gloomy vault laid open. So, if chance
Earth yawning to the centre should disclose
The mansions, the pale mansions of the dead,
Loath'd by the gods, such would the gulf appear,
And the ghosts tremble at the sight of day.
The monster braying with unusual din
Within his hollow lair, and sore amazed
To see such sudden inroads of the light,
Alcides press'd him close with what at hand
Lay readiest, stumps of trees, and fragments huge
Of mill-stone size. He, (for escape was none)
Wond'rous to tell! forth from his gorge discharg'd
A smoky cloud, that darken'd all the den;
Wreath after wreath he vomited amain
The smoth'ring vapour, mixt with fiery sparks.
No sight could penetrate the veil obscure.
The hero, more provoked, endur'd not this,
But with a headlong leap he rush'd to where
The thickest cloud envelop'd his abode.
There grasp'd he Cacus, spite of all his fires,
Till crush'd within his arms, the monster shows
His bloodless throat, now dry with panting hard,
And his press'd eyeballs start. Soon he tears down
The barricade of rock, the dark abyss
Lies open; and th' imprison'd bulls, the theft
He had with oaths denied, are brought to light:
By th' heels the miscreant carcase is dragg'd forth,
His face, his eyes, all terrible, his breast
Beset with bristles, and his sooty jaws
Are viewed with wonder never to be cloy'd.
Hence the celebrity thou seest, and hence
This festal day. Potitius first enjoin'd
Posterity these solemn rites, he first
This altar built, deem'd sacred in the highest
By us, and sacred ever to be deem'd.
Come then, my friends, and bind your youthful brows
In praise of such deliv'rance, and hold forth
The brimming cup; your deities and ours
Are now the same, then drink, and freely too.
So saying, he twisted round his rev'rend locks
A variegated poplar wreath, and fill'd
His right hand with a consecrated bowl.
At once all pour libations on the board,
All offer pray'r. And now the radiant sphere

Of day descending, eventide drew near.
When first Potitius with the priests advanc'd,
Begirt with skins, and torches in their hands.
High piled with meats of sav'ry taste, they ranged
The chargers, and renewed the grateful feast.
Then came the Salii, crown'd with poplar too,
Circling the blazing altars; here the youth
Advanced, a choir harmonious, there were heard
The rev'rend seers responsive; praise they sung,
Much praise in honour of Alcides' deeds;
How first with infant gripe, two serpents huge
He strangled, sent from Juno; next they sung,
How Troja and Oechalia he destroy'd,
Fair cities both, and many a toilsome task
Beneath Eurystheus, (so his step-dame will'd)
Achiev'd victorious. Thou, the cloud-born pair,
Hylæus fierce and Pholus, monstrous twins,
Thou slew'st, the minotaur, the plague of Crete,
And the vast lion of the Nemean rock.
Thee Hell, and Cerberus, Hell's porter, fear'd,
Stretch'd in his den upon his half-gnaw'd bones.
Thee no abhorred form, not ev'n the vast
Typhœus could appal, tho' clad in arms.
Hail, true born son of Jove, among the gods
At length enroll'd, nor least illustrious thou,
Haste thee propitious, and approve our songs.
Thus hymn'd the chorus: above all they sing
The cave of Cacus, and the flames he breath'd,
The whole grove echoes, and the hills rebound.
The rites perform'd, all hasten to the town.
The king, bending with age, held as he went
Æneas and his Pallas by the hand,
With much variety of pleasing talk
Short'ning the way. Æneas, with a smile,
Looks round him, charm'd with the delightful scene,
And many a question asks, and much he learns
Of heroes far renown'd in ancient times.
Then spake Evander: These extensive groves
Were once inhabited by fauns and nymphs
Produced beneath their shades, and a rude race
Of men, the progeny uncouth of elms
And knotted oaks. They no refinement knew
Of laws or manners civilized, to yoke
The steer, with forecast provident to store
The hoarded grain, or manage what they had,
But browsed like beasts upon the leafy boughs,

Or fed voracious on their hunted prey.
An exile from Olympus, and expell'd
His native realm by thunder-bearing Jove,
First Saturn came. He from the mountains drew
This herd of men untractable and fierce,
And gave them laws, and called his hiding-place
This growth of forests, Latium. Such the peace
His land possess'd, the golden age was then,
So famed in story; till by slow degrees
Far other times, and of far diff'rent hue
Succeeded, thirst of gold and thirst of blood.
Then came Ausonian bands, and armed hosts
From Sicily, and Latium often changed
Her master and her name. At length arose
Kings, of whom Tybris of gigantic form
Was chief; and we Italians since have call'd
The river by his name; thus Albula
(So was the country called in ancient days)
Was quite forgot. Me from my native land
An exile, thro' the dangerous ocean driv'n,
Resistless fortune and relentless fate
Placed where thou seest me. Phœbus, and
The nymph Carmentis, with maternal care
Attendant on thy wand'rings, fixt me here.

[*Ten lines omitted.*]

He said, and show'd him the Tarpeian rock,
And the rude spot where now the capitol
Stands all magnificent and bright with gold,
Then overgrown with thorns. And yet ev'n then,
The swains beheld that sacred scene with awe;
The grove, the rock, inspired religious fear.
This grove, he said, that crowns the lofty top
Of this fair hill, some deity, we know,
Inhabits, but what deity we doubt.
Th' Arcadians speak of Jupiter himself
That they have often seen him, shaking here
His gloomy ægis, while the thunder-storms
Came rolling all around him. Turn thine eyes,
Behold that ruin; those dismantled walls,
Where once two towns, Ianiculum——
By Janus this, and that by Saturn built,
Saturnia. Such discourse brought them beneath
The roof of poor Evander, thence they saw,

Where now the proud and stately forum stands,
The grazing herds wide scatter'd o'er the field.
Soon as he enter'd—Hercules, he said,
Victorious Hercules, on this threshold trod,
These walls contain'd him, humble as they are.
Dare to despise magnificence, my friend,
Prove thy divine descent by worth divine,
Nor view with haughty scorn this mean abode.
So saying he led Æneas by the hand,
And placed him on a cushion stuff'd with leaves,
Spread with the skin of a Lybistian bear.

[*The episode of Venus and Vulcan omitted.*]

While thus in Lemnos Vulcan was employ'd,
Awakened by the gentle dawn of day,
And the shrill song of birds beneath the eaves
Of his low mansion, old Evander rose.
His tunic, and the sandals on his feet,
And his good sword well-girded to his side,
A panther's skin dependent from his left
And over his right shoulder thrown aslant,
Thus was he clad. Two mastiffs follow'd him,
His whole retinue and his nightly guard.

OVID. TRIST. LIB. V. ELEG. XII.

"Scribis, ut oblectum."

You bid me write t' amuse the tedious hours,
And save from with'ring my poetic pow'rs.
Hard is the task, my friend, for verse should flow
From the free mind, not fettered down by woe;
Restless amidst unceasing tempests tost,
Whoe'er has cause for sorrow, I have most.
Would you bid Priam laugh, his sons all slain,
Or childless Niobe from tears refrain,
Join the gay dance, and lead the festive train?
Does grief or study most befit the mind,
To this remote, this barb'rous nook confin'd?
Could you impart to my unshaken breast
The fortitude by Socrates possess'd,
Soon would it sink beneath such woes as mine,
For what is human strength to wrath divine?

Wise as he was, and heaven pronounced him so,
My suff'rings would have laid that wisdom low.
Could I forget my country, thee and all,
And even th' offence to which I owe my fall.
Yet fear alone would freeze the poet's vein,
While hostile troops swarm o'er the dreary plain.
Add that the fatal rust of long disuse
Unfits me for the service of the Muse.
Thistles and weeds are all we can expect
From the best soil impov'rish'd by neglect;
Unexercis'd and to his stall confined,
The fleetest racer would be left behind;
The best built bark that cleaves the wat'ry way,
Laid useless by, would moulder and decay—
No hope remains that time shall me restore,
Mean as I was, to what I was before.
Think how a series of desponding cares
Benumbs the genius and its force impairs.
How oft, as now, on this devoted sheet,
My verse constrain'd to move with measur'd feet,
Reluctant and laborious limps along,
And proves itself a wretched exile's song.
What is it tunes the most melodious lays?
'Tis emulation and the thirst of praise,
A noble thirst, and not unknown to me,
While smoothly wafted on a calmer sea.
But can a wretch like Ovid pant for fame,
No, rather let the world forget my name.
Is it because that world approv'd my strain,
You prompt me to the same pursuit again?
No, let the Nine th' ungrateful truth excuse,
I charge my hopeless ruin on the Muse,
And, like Perillus, meet my just desert,
The victim of my own pernicious art.
Fool that I was to be so warn'd in vain,
And shipwreck'd once to tempt the deep again.
Ill fares the bard in this unletter'd land,
None to consult and none to understand.
The purest verse has no admirers here,
Their own rude language only suits their ear.
Rude as it is, at length familiar grown,
I learn it, and almost unlearn my own—
Yet to say truth, ev'n here the Muse disdains
Confinement, and attempts her former strains,
But finds the strong desire is not the pow'r,
And what her taste condemns, the flames devour.

A part, perhaps, like this, escapes the doom,
And though unworthy finds a friend at Rome;
But oh the cruel art, that could undo
It's vot'ry thus, would that could perish too!

HOR. LIB. I. ODE IX.

"Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
Soracte."

SEEST thou yon mountain laden with deep snow,
The groves beneath their fleecy burthen bow,
The streams congeal'd forget to flow;
Come, thaw the cold, and lay a cheerful pile
Of fuel on the hearth;
Broach the best cask, and make old winter smile
With seasonable mirth.

This be our part,—let Heaven dispose the rest;
If Jove command, the winds shall sleep,
That now wage war upon the foamy deep,
And gentle gales spring from the balmy West.
E'en let us shift to-morrow as we may,
When to-morrow's past away,
We at least shall have to say,
We have lived another day;
Your auburn locks will soon be silver'd o'er,
Old age is at our heels, and youth returns no more.

HOR. LIB. I. ODE XXXVIII.

"Persicos odi, puer, apparatus"

BOY, I hate their empty shows,
Persian garlands I detest;
Bring not me the late-blown rose
Ling'ring after all the rest:

Plainer myrtle pleases me
Thus outstretched beneath my vine;
Myrtle more becoming thee,
Waiting with thy master's wine.

HOR. B. I. ODE XXXVIII.[1]

Boy! I detest all Persian fopperies,
Fillet-bound garlands are to me disgusting,
Task not thyself with any search, I charge thee,
Where latest roses linger.

Bring me alone (for thou wilt find that readily)
Plain myrtle. Myrtle neither will disparage
Thee occupied to serve me, or me drinking
Beneath my vine's cool shelter.

HOR. LIB. II. ODE XVI.

"Otium Divos rogat in patenti."

Ease is the weary merchant's pray'r,
Who ploughs beneath th' Ægean flood,
When neither moon nor stars appear,
Or faintly glimmer through the cloud.

For ease the Mede with quiver graced,
For ease the Thracian hero sighs;
Delightful ease all pant to taste,
A blessing which no treasure buys.

For neither gold can lull to rest,
Nor all a Consul's guard beat off
The tumults of a troubled breast,
The cares that haunt a gilded roof.

Happy the man, whose table shows
A few clean ounces of old plate,
No fear intrudes on his repose,
No sordid wishes to be great.

Poor short-lived things, what plans we lay!
Ah, why forsake our native home!
To distant climates speed away;
For self sticks close where'er we roam.

[1] English Sapphics have been attempted, but with little success, because in our language we have no certain rules by which to determine the quantity. The following version was made merely in the way of experiment how far it might be possible to imitate a Latin Sapphic in English without any attention to that circumstance.—W. C.

Care follows hard; and soon o'ertakes
The well-rigg'd ship, the warlike steed,
Her destined quarry ne'er forsakes,
Not the wind flies with half her speed.

From anxious fears of future ill
Guard well the cheerful, happy now;
Gild e'en your sorrows with a smile,
No blessing is unmix'd below.

Thy neighing steeds and lowing herds,
Thy num'rous flocks around thee graze,
And the best purple Tyre affords
Thy robe magnificent displays.

On me indulgent Heav'n bestow'd
A rural mansion, neat and small;
This Lyre,—and as for yonder crowd,
The happiness to hate them all.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

THE THRACIAN.

[We are informed by the Poet's kinsman, Mr. Johnson, that on the same day that Cowper began and finished "The Cast-away," the Latin poems of Vincent Bourne were put before him; and he translated "The Thracian." The rendering of these verses is vigorous and musical, and casts no chill from the cloud that covered him. Indeed, during all this darkness of spirit, the poetical flame was burning bright behind it. The history of the human mind has no sadder or more wonderful page.]

Thracian parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear.
But with undissembled mirth
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome with equal scorn,
"O the savages!" exclaim,
"Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name!"

But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

RECIPROCAL KINDNESS

THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

ANDROCLES from his injured lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled.
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parch'd with heat,
He spied at length a cavern's cool retreat;
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
When, hugest of his kind, a lion came:
He roar'd approaching: but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs changed,—arrived within,
And with expressive looks, his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand,
But bolder grown, at length inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wiped the sanious blood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day,
Regales his inmate with the parted prey;
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared.
But thus to live—still lost—sequester'd still—
Scarce seem'd his lord's revenge a heavier ill.
Home! native home! O might he but repair!
He must—he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and doom'd to perish, on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands;
When lo! the self-same lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famish'd into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And soften'd by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.
Mute with astonishment th' assembly gaze:
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is nat'ral: Nature bade him rend
An enemy; she bids him spare a friend.

A MANUAL

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE.

THERE is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things num'rous it contains:
And, things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merit most regard?

Ofttimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And open'd, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

No name, nor title, stamp'd behind,
Adorns its outer part;
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit: and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implement of ev'ry size,
And form'd for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

The full-charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease
From size to size they fall,
In ev'ry leaf grow less and less;
The last are least of all.

O! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads:
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
No book is treasured there,
Nor yet in Granta's num'rous store,
That may with this compare,

No!—Rival none in either host
Of this was ever seen,
Or, that contents could justly boast,
So brilliant and so keen.

AN ENIGMA.

A NEEDLE small, as small can be,
In bulk and use, surpasses me,
Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for nought,
As many of my kind are bought
As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost,
The labour is not light;
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their sev'ral tasks,
To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
The shears another plies,
Who clips in lengths the brazen thread
For him, who, chafing every shred,
Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob, with which it must be crown'd;
His follower makes it fast:
And with his mallet and his file
To shape the point, employs awhile
The seventh and the last.

Now therefore, Œdipus! declare
What creature, wonderful, and rare,
A process, that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado,
At last produces!—tell me true,
And take me for your pains!

SPARROWS SELF-DOMESTICATED IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None ever shared the social feast,
Or as inmate, or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome,
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he view'd the novel sight)
How num'rous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell,
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeather'd brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious list'ners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.

Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
Th' expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground
With many a threat, that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest;
It was a venial stroke:
For she that will with kittens jest,
Should bear a kitten's joke.

INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat, while he reigns,
In the well-shelter'd dwellings of man,

Who never can seem to intrude,
  Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
  Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray,
  That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
  My windows shall show thee a feast.
For, taught by experience, I know,
  Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
  Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
  Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt to the woods,
  Or where it shall please thee to sing:
And shouldst thou, compell'd by a frost,
  Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
  Only pay, as thou pay'dst me before.

Thus music must needs be confest
  To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
  Unchangeable friendship and love?
And who on the globe can be found,
  Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
  Or boasts any musical powers?

STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE.

The shepherd touch'd his reed; sweet Philomel
  Essay'd, and oft essay'd to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
  The numbers, echo'd note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
  A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
  In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and rising, as he rose,
With all the force that passion gives inspired,
Return'd the sounds awhile, but in the close
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill, prevail'd. O fatal strife,
By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
And O sad victory, which cost thy life,
And he may wish that he had never won!

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1728.

ANCIENT dame, how wide and vast,
To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler pow'rs;
We, to narrow bounds confined,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,
Nourish'd but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some, that waste us by degrees,
Some, that suddenly destroy.

And if life o'erleap the bourn,
Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and doat, and drivel then!

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
Pant with anguish and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few (to few 'tis giv'n),
Ling'ring on this earthly stage,
Creep, and halt with steps unev'n,
To the period of an age,

Wherefore live they, but to see
Cunning, arrogance, and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
Holding their accustom'd course?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
All that we with wonder view,
Often shall be to the last:
Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate; content,
Should propitious Heav'n design
Life for us, as calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine.

THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbours furiously dispute;
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell, who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice
No single word but has its price:
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increas'd expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it may disclaim;
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

THE SILKWORM.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulb'rry-leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more!
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;
Though, till his growing time be past,
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins;
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins;
Till circle upon circle, wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight.
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus, self-inclosed, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task:
And, though a worm when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,
When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio-pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous; supplies
With future worms and future flies,
The next ensuing year;—and dies!
Well were it for the world, if all
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter-lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

THE INNOCENT THIEF.

Not a flow'r can be found in the fields,
Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to least, but it yields
The bee, never wearied, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplor'd,
With a diligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odour they lose,
Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
The canker-worm, indwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
The pride of the garden devours;
And birds peck the seed from the bed,
Still less to be spar'd than the flow'rs.

But she with such delicate skill,
Her pillage so fits for her use,
That the chemist in vain with his still
Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
Neither honey nor wax would be left.

DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.[1]

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
No wrinkle, or deep-furrow'd frown on the brow!
Her forehead indeed is here circled around
With locks like the ribbon with which they are bou
While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;

[1] This picture is, I believe, now in the Gallery at Dresden.

But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here.
Yet all is express'd, with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple, or freckle, conceal'd from the view.

Many fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste;
The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,
And the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
Ridiculous nothing, or hideous in thee.
The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
O wonderful woman! as placid as thine.

Strange magic of art! which the youth can engage
To peruse, half-enamour'd, the features of age;
And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
That she, when as old, shall be equally fair!
How great is the glory that Denner has gain'd,
Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtain'd!

THE TEARS OF A PAINTER.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expir'd—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seized his brush, his colours spread;
And—"Oh! my child accept,"—he said,
"('Tis all that I can now bestow,)
This tribute of a father's woe!"
Then faithful to the two-fold part,
Both of his feelings and his art,
He clos'd his eyes, with tender care,
And form'd at once a fellow pair.
His brow with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew, not livid yet;
And shaded all that he had done
To a just image of his son.

Thus far is well. But view again
The cause of thy paternal pain!
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.

o o

Again his pencil's powers he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies:
And still his cheek unfaded shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedful to the finish'd whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copied from the true.

Now, painter, cease! Thy task is done.
Long lives this image of thy son;
Nor short-liv'd shall thy glory prove,
Or of thy labour, or thy love.

THE MAZE.

From right to left and to and fro,
Caught in a labyrinth, you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the myst'ry, but in vain;
Stand still and breathe, and take from me
A clue, that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you met her,
Herself could serve you with a better.
You entered easily—find where—
And make, with ease, your exit there!

NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE SUFFERER.

The lover, in melodious verses,
His singular distress rehearses,
Still closing with a rueful cry,
"Was ever such a wretch as I?"
Yes! thousands have endured before
All thy distress; some, haply more.
Unnumber'd Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain:
And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone hast lost thy

THE SNAIL.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure,

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,
(He and his house are so combined)
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

THE CANTAB.

With two spurs or one, and no great matter which,
Boots bought, or boots borrow'd, a whip or a switch,
Five shillings or less for the hire of his beast,
Paid part into hand;—you must wait for the rest.
Thus equipt, Academicus climbs up his horse,
And out they both sally for better or worse;

His heart void of fear, and as light as a feather:
And in violent haste to go not knowing whither:
Through the fields and the towns, (see!) he scampers along,
And is look'd at, and laugh'd at, by old and by young.
Till at length overspent, and his sides smear'd with blood,
Down tumbles his horse, man and all in the mud.
In a waggon or chaise shall he finish his route?
Oh! scandalous fate! he must do it on foot.

Young gentlemen, hear!—I am older than you!
The advice that I give, I have proved to be true.
Wherever your journey may be, never doubt it,
The faster you ride, you're the longer about it.

THE SALAD.

BY VIRGIL[1].

The winter-night now well-nigh worn away,
The wakeful cock proclaim'd approaching day,
When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
Yawn'd, stretch'd his limbs, and anxious to provide
Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
By slow degrees his tatter'd bed forsook,
And poking in the dark explored the nook,
Where embers slept with ashes heap'd around,
And with burnt fingers-ends the treasure found.

It chanced that from a brand beneath his nose,
Sure proof of latent fire, some smoke arose;
When, trimming with a pin th' incrusted tow,
And stooping it towards the coals below,
He toils, with cheeks distended, to excite
The ling'ring flame, and gains at length a light:
With prudent heed he spreads his hand before
The quiv'ring lamp, and opes his gran'ry door.

[1] Translated June 8, 1799, when the sufferings of Cowper were most deep and fearful. Hayley remarks that, "To those who are used to philosophise on the powers of the human mind under affliction, this production will appear a highly interesting curiosity." The diction, in several places, is choice and happy.

Small was his stock, but taking for the day
A measured stint of twice eight pounds away,
With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
Fixt in the wall, affords his lamp a stand:
Then, baring both his arms, a sleeveless coat
He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat;
And with a rubber, for that use design'd,
Cleansing his mill within—begins to grind;
Each hand has its employ; lab'ring amain,
This turns the winch, while that supplies the grain.
The stone, revolving rapidly, now glows,
And the bruised corn a mealy current flows;
While he, to make his heavy labour light,
Tasks oft his left hand to relieve his right;
And chants with rudest accent, to beguile
His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
And now, "Dame Cybale, come forth!" he cries;
But Cybale, still slumb'ring, nought replies.

From Afric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
Whose face and form alike her birth betray'd:
With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,
Legs slender, broad and most misshapen feet,
Chapp'd into chinks, and parch'd with solar heat;—
Such, summon'd oft, she came; at his command
Fresh fuel heap'd, the sleeping embers fann'd,
And made in haste her simm'ring skillet steam,
Replenish'd newly from the neighbouring stream.

The labours of the mill perform'd, a sieve
The mingled flour and bran must next receive,
Which, shaken oft, shoots Ceres through refined,
And better dress'd, her husks all left behind.
This done, at once, his future plain repast,
Unleaven'd, on a shaven board he cast,
With tepid lymph first largely soak'd it all,
Then gather'd it with both hands to a ball,
And spreading it again with both hands wide,
With sprinkled salt the stiffen'd mass supplied;
At length, the stubborn substance, duly wrought,
Takes from his palms impress'd the shape it ought,
Becomes an orb—and quarter'd into shares,
The faithful mark of just division bears.
Last, on his hearth it finds convenient space,
For Cybale before had swept the place,

And there, with tiles and embers overspread,
She leaves it—reeking in its sultry bed.

Nor Simulus, while Vulcan thus alone
His part perform'd, proves heedless of his own.
But sedulous, not merely to subdue
His hunger, but to please his palate too,
Prepares more sav'ry food. His chimney-side
Could boast no gammon, salted well, and dried,
And hook'd behind him; but sufficient store
Of bundled anise, and a cheese it bore;
A broad round cheese, which, through its centre strung
With a tough broom-twig in the corner hung:
The prudent hero therefore with address,
And quick dispatch, now seeks another mess.

Close to his cottage lay a garden-ground,
With reeds and osiers sparely girt around,
Small was the spot, but lib'ral to produce;
Nor wanted aught that serves a peasant's use;
And sometimes ev'n the rich would borrow thence,
Although its tillage was his sole expense.
For oft, as from his toils abroad he ceased,
Home-bound by weather, or some stated feast,
His debt of culture here he duly paid,
And only left the plough to wield the spade.
He knew to give each plant the soil it needs,
To drill the ground, and cover close the seeds;
And could with ease compel the wanton rill
To turn, and wind, obedient to his will.
There flourish'd star-wort, and the branching beet,
The sorrel acid, and the mallow sweet,
The skirret, and the leek's aspiring kind,
The noxious poppy—quencher of the mind!
Salubrious sequel of a sumptuous board,
The lettuce, and the long huge-bellied gourd;
But these (for none his appetite controll'd
With stricter sway) the thrifty rustic sold;
With broom-twigs neatly bound, each kind apart,
He bore them ever to the public mart:
Whence, laden still, but with a lighter load
Of cash well-earn'd, he took his homeward road,
Expending seldom, ere he quitted Rome,
His gains in flesh-meat for a feast at home.
There, at no cost, on onions rank and red,

Or the curl'd endive's bitter leaf, he fed:
On scallions sliced, or with a sensual gust,
On rockets—foul provocatives of lust!
Nor even shunn'd, with smarting gums, to press
Nasturtium—pungent, face-distorting mess!

Some such regale now also in his thought.
With hasty steps his garden ground he sought;
There delving with his hands, he first displaced
Four plants of garlick, large, and rooted fast;
The tender tops of parsley next he culls,
Then the old rue-bush shudders as he pulls,
And coriander last to these succeeds.
That hangs on slightest threads her trembling seeds.

Placed near his sprightly fire, he now demands
The mortar at his sable servant's hands;
When stripping all his garlick first, he tore
Th' exterior coats, and cast them on the floor,
Then cast away, with like contempt the skin,
Flimsier concealment of the cloves within.
These search'd, and perfect found, he one by one
Rinsed, and disposed within the hollow stone.
Salt added, and a lump of salted cheese,
With his injected herbs he covered these,
And tucking with his left his tunic tight,
And seizing fast the pestle with his right,
The garlick bruising first he soon express'd,
And mix'd the various juices of the rest.
He grinds, and by degrees his herbs below
Lost in each other their own pow'rs forego,
And with the cheese in compound, to the sight
Nor wholly green appear, nor wholly white.
His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent,
He cursed full oft his dinner for its scent,
Or with wry faces, wiping as he spoke
The trickling tears, cried—"Vengeance on the smoke!"
The work proceeds: not roughly turns he now
The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow;
With cautious hand, that grudges what it spills,
Some drops of olive-oil he next instils;
Then vinegar with caution scarcely less,
And gathering to a ball the medley mess;
Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side:

And thus complete in figure and in kind,
Obtains at length the salad he design'd.

And now black Cybale before him stands,
The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands:
He glad receives it, chasing far away
All fears of famine for the passing day;
His legs enclosed in buskins, and his head
In its tough casque of leather, forth he led
And yoked his steers, a dull obedient pair,
Then drove afield, and plunged the pointed share.

TRANSLATIONS OF GREEK VERSES.

BEGUN AUGUST, 1799.

FROM THE GREEK OF JULIANUS.

A SPARTAN, his companions slain,
Alone from battle fled,
His mother, kindling with disdain
That she had borne him, struck him dead;

For courage, and not birth alone,
In Sparta testifies a son!

ON THE SAME, BY PALLADAS.

A SPARTAN, 'scaping from the fight,
His mother met him in his flight,
Upheld a falchion to his breast,
And thus the fugitive address'd:

"Thou canst but live to blot with shame
Indelible thy mother's name,
While ev'ry breath that thou shalt draw,
Offends against thy country's law;
But if thou perish by this hand,
Myself indeed throughout the land,

To my dishonour, shall be known
The mother, still of such a son,
But Sparta will be safe and free,
And that shall serve to comfort me."

AN EPITAPH.

My name—my country—what are they to thee?
What, whether base or proud, my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpass'd all other men—
Perhaps I fell below them all—what then?
Suffice it, Stranger! that thou seest a tomb—
Thou know'st its use—it hides no matter whom.

ANOTHER.

Take to thy bosom, gentle earth, a swain
With much hard labour in thy service worn!
He set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
And he these olives that the vale adorn.

He fill'd with grain the glebe; the rills he led
Through this green herbage, and those fruitful bow'rs;
Thou, therefore, earth! lie lightly on his head,
His hoary head, and deck his grave with flow'rs.

ANOTHER.

Painter, this likeness is too strong,
And we shall mourn the dead too long.

ANOTHER.

At threescore winters' end I died
A cheerless being, sole and sad;
The nuptial knot I never tied.
And wish my father never had.

BY CALLIMACHUS.

At morn we placed on his funereal bier
Young Melanippus; and at eventide,
Unable to sustain a loss so dear,
By her own hand his blooming sister died.

Thus Aristippus mourn'd his noble race,
Annihilated by a double blow,
Nor son could hope, nor daughter more t' embrace,
And all Cyrene sadden'd at his woe.

ON MILTIADES.

Miltiades! thy valour best
(Although in every region known)
The men of Persia can attest,
Taught by thyself at Marathon.

ON AN INFANT.

Bewail not much, my parents! me, the prey
Of ruthless Ades, and sepulchred here,
An infant, in my fifth scarce finish'd year.
He found all sportive, innocent, and gay,
Your young Callimachus; and if I knew
Not many joys, my griefs were also few.

BY HERACLIDES.

In Cnidus born, the consort I became
Of Euphron. Aretimias was my name,
His bed I shar'd, nor prov'd a barren bride,
But bore two children at a birth, and died.
One child I leave to solace and uphold
Euphron hereafter, when infirm and old;
And one, for his remembrance sake, I bear
To Pluto's realm, till he shall join me there.

ON THE REED.

I WAS of late a barren plant,
Useless, insignificant,
Nor fig, nor grape, nor apple bore,
A native of the marshy shore;
But gather'd for poetic use,
And plung'd into a sable juice,
Of which my modicum I sip,
With narrow mouth and slender lip,
At once, although by nature dumb,
All eloquent I have become,
And speak with fluency untired,
As if by Phœbus' self inspired.

TO HEALTH.

ELDEST born of pow'rs divine
Blest Hygeia! be it mine
To enjoy what thou canst give,
And henceforth with thee to live:
For in pow'r if pleasure be,
Wealth, or num'rous progeny,
Or in amorous embrace,
Where no spy infests the place:
Or in aught that Heav'n bestows,
To alleviate human woes,
When the wearied heart despairs
Of a respite from its cares;
These and ev'ry true delight
Flourish only in thy sight;
And the sister Graces Three
Owe, themselves, their youth to thee,
Without whom we may possess
Much, but never happiness.

ON THE ASTROLOGERS.

TH' Astrologers did all alike presage
My uncle's dying in extreme old age;
One only disagreed. But he was wise,
And spoke not, till he heard the fun'ral cries.

ON AN OLD WOMAN.

Mycilla dyes her locks 'tis said;
But 'tis a foul aspersion;
She buys them black; they therefore need
No subsequent immersion.

ON INVALIDS.

Far happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it ev'ry day.

ON FLATTERERS.

No mischief worthier of our fear
In nature can be found,
Than friendship, in ostent sincere,
But hollow and unsound.
For lull'd into a dangerous dream
We close enfold a foe,
Who strikes, when most secure we seem,
Th' inevitable blow.

ON THE SWALLOW.

Attic maid! with honey fed,
Bear'st thou to thy callow brood
Yonder locust from the mead,
Destin'd their delicious food!

Ye have kindred voices clear,
Ye alike unfold the wing,
Migrate hither, sojourn here,
Both attendant on the spring!

Ah, for pity drop the prize!
Let it not, with truth, be said,
That a songster gasps and dies,
That a songster may be fed.

ON LATE ACQUIRED WEALTH.

Poor in my youth, and in life's later scenes
Rich to no end, I curse my natal hour:
Who nought enjoy'd while young, denied the means;
And nought, when old, enjoy'd, denied the pow'r.

ON A TRUE FRIEND.

Hast thou a friend? Thou hast indeed
A rich and large supply,
Treasure to serve your every need,
Well manag'd till you die.

ON A BATH, BY PLATO.

Did Cytherea to the skies
From this pellucid lymph arise?
Or was it Cytherea's touch,
When bathing here, that made it such?

ON A FOWLER, BY ISIODORIUS.

With seeds and birdlime, from the desert air,
Eumelus gather'd free, though scanty, fare.
No lordly patron's hand he deign'd to kiss,
Nor lux'ry knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
Thrice thirty years he liv'd, and to his heirs
His seeds bequeath'd, his birdlime, and his snares.

ON NIOBE.

Charon! receive a family on board,
Itself sufficient for thy crazy yawl
Apollo and Diana, for a word,
By me too proudly spoken, slew us all.

ON A GOOD MAN.

TRAV'LLER, regret not me; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind,
And with one wife liv'd many a year in peace:
Three virtuous youths espous'd my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay,
Nor saw I one, of all deriv'd from me,
Touch'd with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my fun'ral rites bestow'd,
And me, by blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode,
Where shades of pious men for ever dwell.

ON A MISER.

THEY call thee rich—I deem thee poor,
Since, if thou dar'st not use thy store,
But sav'st it only for thine heirs,
The treasure is not thine, but theirs.

ANOTHER.

A MISER, traversing his house,
Espied, unusual there, a mouse,
And thus his uninvited guest,
Briskly inquisitive, address'd:
"Tell me, my dear, to what cause is it
I owe this unexpected visit?"
The mouse her host obliquely ey'd,
And smiling, pleasantly replied,
"Fear not, good fellow, for your hoard!
I come to lodge, and not to board."

ANOTHER.

Art thou some individual of a kind
Long-liv'd by nature as the rook or hind?
Heap treasure then, for if thy need be such,
Thou hast excuse, and scarce canst heap too much.
But man thou seem'st; clear therefore from thy breast
This lust of treasure—folly at the best!
For why shouldst thou go wasted to the tomb,
To fatten with thy spoils thou know'st not whom?

ON FEMALE INCONSTANCY.

Rich, thou hadst many lovers—poor, hast none,
So surely want extinguishes the flame,
And she, who call'd thee once her pretty one,
And her Adonis, now inquires thy name.

Where wast thou born, Sosicrates, and where
In what strange country can thy parents live,
Who seem'st, by thy complaints, not yet aware,
That want's a crime no woman can forgive?

ON THE GRASSHOPPER.

Happy songster, perch'd above,
On the summit of the grove,
Whom a dew-drop cheers to sing
With the freedom of a king.
From thy perch survey the fields
Where prolific nature yields
Nought that, willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.
For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of spring.
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flow'rs.

Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly—thou and he are friends;
Nor thy never-ceasing strains
Phœbus, or the Muse, disdains,
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing,
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou?

ON HERMOCRATIA.

Hermocratia nam'd—save only one—
Twice fifteen births I bore, and buried none;
For neither Phœbus pierc'd my thriving joys,
Nor Dian—she my girls, or he my boys.
But Dian rather, when my daughters lay
In parturition, chas'd their pangs away.
And all my sons, by Phœbus' bounty, shar'd
A vig'rous youth, by sickness unimpair'd.
O Niobe! far less prolific! see
Thy boast against Latona sham'd by me!

FROM MENANDER.

Fond youth! who dream'st, that hoarded gold
Is needful, not alone to pay
For all thy various items sold,
To serve the wants of every day;

Bread, vinegar, and oil, and meat,
For sav'ry viands season'd high;
But somewhat more important yet—
I tell thee what it cannot buy.

No treasure, hadst thou more amass'd
Than fame to Tantalus assign'd,
Would save thee from a tomb at last.
But thou must leave it all behind

I give thee, therefore, counsel wise;
Confide not vainly in thy store,
However large—much less despise
Others comparatively poor,

But in thy more exalted state
A just and equal temper show,
That all who see thee rich and great
May deem thee worthy to be so.

ON PALLAS BATHING.

FROM A HYMN OF CALLIMACHUS.

Nor oils of balmy scent produce,
Nor mirror for Minerva's use,
Ye nymphs who lave her; she, array'd
In genuine beauty, scorns their aid.
Not even when they left the skies
To seek on Ida's head the prize
From Paris' hand, did Juno deign,
Or Pallas in the crystal plain
Of Simois' stream her locks to trace,
Or in the mirror's polish'd face,
Though Venus oft with anxious care
Adjusted twice a single hair.

TO DEMOSTHENES.

It flatters and deceives thy view,
This mirror of ill-polish'd ore:
For were it just, and told thee true,
Thou wouldst consult it never more.

ON A SIMILAR CHARACTER.

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
With washes dye your hair,
But paint and washes both are vain
To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil,
No labour will efface 'em,
You wear a mask of smoothest oil,
Yet still with ease we trace 'em.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
Which though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make
Old Hecuba young Helen.

ON AN UGLY FELLOW.

Beware, my friend! of crystal brook,
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
Thy nose, thou chance to see,
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And self-detested thou wouldst pine,
As self-enamour'd he.

ON A BATTERED BEAUTY.

Hair, wax, rouge, honey, teeth, you buy,
A multifarious store!
A mask at once would all supply,
Nor would it cost you more.

ON A THIEF.

When Aulus, the nocturnal thief, made prize
Of Hermes, swift-wing'd envoy of the skies,
Hermes, Arcadia's king, the thief divine,
Who when an infant stole Apollo's kine,
And whom, as arbiter and overseer
Of our gymnastic sports, we planted here;
"Hermes," he cried, "you meet no new disaster;
Ofttimes the pupil goes beyond his master."

ON PEDIGREE.

FROM EPICHARMUS.

My mother! if thou love me, name no more
My noble birth! Sounding at every breath
My noble birth, thou kill'st me. Thither fly,
As to their only refuge, all from whom
Nature withholds all good besides; they boast
Their noble birth, conduct us to the tombs
Of their forefathers, and from age to age
Ascending, trumpet their illustrious race:
But whom hast thou beheld, or canst thou name,
Derived from no forefather? Such a man
Lives not; for how could such be born at all?
And if it chance, that native of a land
Far distant, or in infancy deprived
Of all his kindred, one, who *cannot* trace
His origin, exist, why deem him sprung
From baser ancestry than theirs, who *can?*
My mother! he, whom nature at his birth
Endow'd with virtuous qualities, although
An Æthiop and a slave, is nobly born.

ON ENVY.

Pity, says the Theban bard,
From my wishes I discard;
Envy, let me rather be,
Rather far, a theme for thee!
Pity to distress is shown;
Envy to the great alone—
So the Theban—But to shine
Less conspicuous be mine!
I prefer the golden mean
Pomp and penury between;
For alarm and peril wait
Ever on the loftiest state,
And the lowest, to the end,
Obloquy and scorn attend.

BY PHILEMON.

Oft we enhance our ills by discontent,
And give them bulk, beyond what nature meant.
A parent, brother, friend deceased, to cry—
"He's dead indeed, but he was born to die"—
Such temperate grief is suited to the size
And burthen of the loss; is just and wise.
But to exclaim—"Ah! wherefore was I born,
"Thus to be left, for ever thus forlorn?"
Who thus laments his loss, invites distress,
And magnifies a woe that might be less,
Through dull despondence to his lot resign'd,
And leaving reason's remedy behind.

BY MOSCHUS.

I slept, when Venus enter'd: to my bed
A Cupid in her beauteous hand she led,
A bashful-seeming boy, and thus she said:
"Shepherd, receive my little one! I bring
An untaught love, whom thou must teach to sing."
She said, and left him. I suspecting nought,
Many a sweet strain my subtle pupil taught,
How reed to reed Pan first with osier bound,
How Pallas form'd the pipe of softest sound,
How Hermes gave the lute, and how the quire
Of Phœbus owe to Phœbus' self the lyre.
Such were my themes; my themes nought heeded he,
But ditties sang of am'rous sort to me,
The pangs that mortals and immortals prove
From Venus' influence, and the darts of love.
Thus was the teacher by the pupil taught;
His lessons I retain'd, and mine forgot.

EPIGRAMS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF OWEN.

IN IGNORANTEM ARROGANTEM LINUM.

Captivum, Line, te tenet ignorantia duplex.
Scis nihil, et nescis te quoque scire nihil.

ON ONE IGNORANT AND ARROGANT.

Thou mayst of double ign'rance boast,
Who know'st not that thou nothing know'st.

PRUDENS SIMPLICITAS.

Ut nulli nocuisse velis, imitare columbam:
Serpentem, ut possit nemo nocere tibi.

PRUDENT SIMPLICITY.

That thou mayst injure no man, dove-like be,
And serpent-like, that none may injure thee!

AD AMICUM PAUPEREM.

Est male nunc? Utinam in pejus sors omnia vertat;
Succedunt summis optima sæpe malis.

TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS.

I wish thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend;
For when at worst, they say, things always mend.

Omnia me dum junior essem, scire putabam:
Quo scio plus, hoc me nunc scio scire minus.

WHEN little more than boy in age,
I deem'd myself almost a sage;
But now seem worthier to be styled,
For ignorance—almost a child.

LEX TALIONIS.

MAJORUM nunquam, Aule, legis monumenta tuorum:
Mirum est, posteritas si tua scripta legat.

RETALIATION.

THE works of ancient bards divine,
Aulus, thou scorn'st to read;
And should posterity read thine,
It would be strange indeed!

DE ORTU ET OCCASU.

SOLE oriente, tui reditûs a morte memento!
Sis memor occasûs, sole cadente, tui!

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

CONTEMPLATE, when the sun declines,
Thy death, with deep reflection!
And when again he rising shines,
Thy day of resurrection!

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FABLES OF GAY.

LEPUS MULTIS AMICIS.

[These translations were composed in January, 1800, scarcely three months before the death of the Poet. While he was engaged on the first fable — "The Hare and many Friends" — he exclaimed, "O that I could recall the days when I could repeat all this fable by heart, when I used to be called upon to do so for the amusement of company!" Hayley was led by the freedom and spirit of these translations to print not only those which were left finished, but even a fragment of two verses, being the commencement of another fable.]

Lusus amicitia est, uni nisi dedita, ceu fit,
  Simplice ni nexus fœdere, lusus amor.
Incerto genitore puer, non sæpe paternæ
  Tutamen novit, deliciasque domûs:
Quique sibi fidos fore multos sperat, amicus
  Mirum est huic misero si ferat ullus opem.

Comis erat, mitisque, et nolle et velle paratus
  Cum quovis, Gaii more modoque, Lepus.
Ille, quot in sylvis, et quot spatiantur in agris
  Quadrupedes, nôrat conciliare sibi;
Et quisque innocuo, invitoque lacessere quenquam
  Labra tenus saltem fidus amicus erat.
Ortum sub lucis dum pressa cubilia linquit,
  Rorantes herbas, pabula sueta, petens,
Venatorum audit clangores ponè sequentum,
  Fulmineumque sonum territus erro fugit.
Corda pavor pulsat, sursum sedet, erigit aures,
  Respicit, et sentit jam prope adesse necem.
Utque canes fallat latè circumvagus, illuc,
  Unde abiit, mirâ calliditate redit;
Viribus at fractis tandem se projicit ultro
  In mediâ miserum semianimemque viâ.
Vix ibi stratus, equi sonitum pedis audit, et, oh spe
  Quam lætâ adventu cor agitatur equi!
Dorsum (inquit) mihi, chare, tuum concede, tuoque
  Auxilio nares fallere, vimque canum.

Me meus, ut nosti, pes prodit—fidus amicus
Fert quodcunque lubens, nec grave sentit, onus.
Belle miselle lepuscule, (equus respondet) amara
Omnia quæ tibi sunt, sunt et amara mihi.
Verum age—sume animos—multi, me pone, bonique
Adveniunt, quorum sis citò salvus ope.
Proximus armenti dominus bos solicitatus
Auxilium his verbis se dare posse negat.
Quando quadrupedum, quot vivunt, nullus amicum
Me nescire potest usque fuisse tibi,
Libertate æquus, quam cedit amicus amico,
Utar, et absque metu ne tibi displiceam;
Hinc me mandat amor. Juxta istum messis acervum
Me mea, præ cunctis chara, juvenca manet;
Et quis non ultro quæcunque negotia linquit,
Pareat ut dominæ, cum vocat ipsa, suæ?
Neu me crudelem dicas—discedo—sed hircus,
Cujus ope effugias integer, hircus adest.
Febrem (ait hircus) habes. Huc, sicca ut lumina languent!
Utque caput, collo deficiente, jacet!
Hirsutum mihi tergum; et forsan læserit ægrum,
Vellere eris melius fultus, ovisque venit.
Me mihi fecit onus natura, ovis inquit, anhelans
Sustineo lanæ pondera tanta meæ;
Me nec velocem nec fortem jacto, solentque
Nos etiam sævi dilacerare canes.
Ultimus accedit vitulus, vitulumque precatur
Ut periturum alias ocyus eripiat.
Remne ego, respondet vitulus, suscepero tantam,
Non depulsus adhuc ubere, natus heri?
Te, quem maturi canibus validique relinquunt,
Incolumem potero reddere parvus ego?
Præterea tollens quem illi aversantur, amicis
Forte parum videar consuluisse meis.
Ignoscas oro. Fidissima dissociantur
Corda, et tale tibi sat liquet esse meum,
Ecce autem ad calces canis est! te quanta perempto
Tristitia est nobis ingruitura!—Vale!

AVARUS ET PLUTUS.

Iota fenestra Euri flatu stridebat, avarus
Ex somno trepidus surgit, opumque memor.

Lata silenter humi ponit vestigia, quemque
Respicit ad sonitum respiciensque tremit;
Angustissima quæque foramina lampade visit,
Ad vectes, obices, fertque refertque manum.
Dein reserat crebris junctam compagibus arcam
Exultansque omnes conspicit intus opes.
Sed tandem furiis ultricibus actus ob artes
Queis sua res tenuis creverat in cumulum.
Contortis manibus nunc stat, nunc pectora pulsans
Aurum execratur, perniciemque vocat;
O mihi, ait, misero mens quam tranquilla fuisset,
Hoc celasset adhuc si modo terra malum!
Nunc autem virtus ipsa est venalis; et aurum
Quid contra vitii tormina sæva valet?
O inimicum aurum! O homini infestissima pestis,
Cui datur illecebras vincere posse tuas?
Aurum homines suasit contemnere quicquid honestum
est,
Et præter nomen nil retinere boni.
Aurum cuncta mali per terras semina sparsit;
Aurum nocturnis furibus arma dedit.
Bella docet fortes, timidosque ad pessima ducit,
Fœdifragas artes, multiplicesque dolos.
Nec vitii quicquam est quod non inveneris ortum
Ex malesuadâ auri sacrilegâque fame.
Dixit, et ingemuit; Plutusque suum sibi numen
Ante oculos, irâ fervidus, ipse stetit.
Arcam clausit avarus, et ora horrentia rugis
Ostendens, tremulum sic Deus increpuit.
Questibus his raucis mihi cur, stulte, obstrepis aures?
Ista tui similis tristia quisque canit.
Commaculavi egone humanum genus, improbe? Culpa,
Dum rapis, et captas omnia, culpa tua est.
Mene execrandum censes, quia tam pretiosa
Criminibus fiunt perniciosa tuis?
Virtutis specie, pulchro ceu pallio amictus
Quisque catus nebulo sordida facta tegit.
Atque suis manibus commissa potentia, durum
Et dirum subito vergit ad imperium.
Hinc, nimium dum latro aurum detrudit in arcam,
Idem aurum latet in pectore pestis edax.
Nutrit avaritiam et fastum, suspendere adunco
Suadet naso inopes, et vitium omne docet.
Auri et larga probo si copia contigit, instar
Roris dilapsi ex æthere cuncta beat:
Tum, quasi numen inesset, alit, fovet, educat orbos,
Et viduas lacrymis ora rigare vetat.

Quo sua crimina jure auro derivet avarus,
Aurum animæ pretium qui cupit atque capit?
Lege pari gladium incuset sicarius atrox
Cæso homine, et ferrum judicet esse reum.

PAPILIO ET LIMAX.

Qui subito ex imis rerum in fastigia surgit,
Nativas sordes, quicquid agatur, olet.

VOTUM.

O matutini rores, auræque salubres,
O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,
Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ!
Fata modò dederint quas olim in rure paterno
Delicias, procul arte procul formidine novi,
Quam vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat,
Ante larem proprium placidam expectare senectam,
Tum demùm exactis non infeliciter annis,
Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi.

W. C.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUYON.

[When Mr. Newton left Olney, he prevailed on Cowper to receive Mr. Bull, of Newport Pagnell. The poet painted a glowing portrait of his new friend—"a dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; a master of a fine imagination, or rather not master of it; with a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way." But nothing is perfect, and "the Bull," as his friend delighted to call him, smoked tobacco. He had not known Cowper a long time, when he put into his hands three volumes of poetry by Madame Guyon, in the hope that it might soothe his troubled spirit. He was, Cowper told Unwin, "he passionate admirer, rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely requested his acceptance of it. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resem

blance, and were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel." Cowper was greatly pleased with this lady. Her poetry was the only French verse that he ever read with satisfaction, and the neatness of it reminded him of Prior. But he could not be insensible to one prominent defect—a familiarity of speech in spiritual things—"a wonderful fault," he said, "for such a woman to fall into, who spent her life in the contemplation of God's glory, who seems to have been always impressed with a sense of it, and sometimes qute absorbed in the views she had of it." In this point he particularly guarded his translation, either by suppressing objectionable passages, or by giving to them a more respectful tone of expression. The name of Guyon is familiar to the readers of French ecclesiastical history as the subject of a controversy between Fenelon and Bossuet, pursued on one side, at least, with singular bitterness and pride. Mr: Hallam divides the mystical writers into two classes : the first, believing in the illumination of the soul by an immediate communication of the Deity ; the second, seeking a sort of absorption into the Divine Essence through the solemnizing influences of pure contemplation. Among these Madame Guyon had her place. All the care of Cowper failed in correcting the familiarity which he acknowledged ; and the metre which he occasionally employed was most unfortunate, as recalling not only the music, but the themes of Shenstone's amatory pastorals. Southey doubted the expediency of this work in Cowper's unquiet frame of mind, and believed the passages on which he brooded most to be those that seemed applicable to his own imaginary condition. He quotes, by way of example, the following stanzas, remarking the extreme freedom of the translation, which bears a personal allusion :—

"Si vous me demandez ce je crois de moi,
Je n'en connois aucune chose ;
Jadis je vivois par la foi,
C'est dans la rien que je repose.

"Un neant malheureux, qui ne demande pas
Qu'on lui fasse changer de place ;
Etat pire que le trepas,
Et qui n'attend jamais de grace."

"My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me, or without me, shows ;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial, and my best repose.

"My soul is a forgotten thing, she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise ;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies."

THE LOVE OF GOD THE END OF LIFE.

Since life in sorrow must be spent,
So be it—I am well content,
And meekly wait my last remove,
Seeking only growth in love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
In life, in death, thy lovely will;
No succours in my woes I want,
Save what thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are number'd, let us spare
Our anxious hearts a needless care:
'Tis thine to number out our days;
Ours to give them to thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
Love, simple, constant, and sincere;
O blessed days thy servants see,
Spent, O Lord! in pleasing thee!

LOVE FAITHFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BELOVED.

In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow,
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now;
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me

In vain he leaves me, I shall love him still;
And, though I mourn, not murmur at his will;
I have no cause—an object all divine
Might well grow weary of a soul like mine;
Yet pity me, great God! forlorn, alone,
Heartless and hopeless, life and love all gone.

LOVE PURE AND FERVENT.

Jealous, and with love o'erflowing
God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal will regard!
If it cost us some dejection,
Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect love has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy,
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign Love appoints the measure
And the number of our pains;
And is pleased when we find pleasure
In the trials he ordains.

THE ENTIRE SURRENDER.

Peace has unveil'd her smiling face,
And woos thy soul to her embrace,
Enjoy'd with ease, if thou refrain
From earthly love, else sought in vain;
She dwells with all who truth prefer,
But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength but strength divine,
And peace shall be for ever thine:
Behold the path which I have trod,
My path, till I go home to God.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

I place an offering at thy shrine,
From taint and blemish clear,
Simple and pure in its design,
Of all that I hold dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
Thy gifts which most I prize;
Desirous only to retain
The notice of thine eyes.

But if, by thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied;
Resign'd, and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down;
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

GOD HIDES HIS PEOPLE.

To lay the soul that loves him low,
Becomes the Only-wise:
To hide, beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves!
He feels his soul a barren waste,
· dares affirm he loves.

Scorn'd by the thoughtless and the vain,
To God he presses near;
Superior to the world's disdain,
And happy in its sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame!
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name!

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform?
And can God work it, if he would,
By so despised a worm?

Ah, vainly anxious!—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose;
Sweet is the mandate of his word,
And gracious all he does.

He draws from human littleness
His grandeur and renown;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all his own.

Down then with self-exalting thoughts;
Thy faith and hope employ,
To welcome all that he allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On his eternal right:
And he shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee his delight.

THE SECRETS OF DIVINE LOVE ARE TO BE KEPT.

SUN! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'erflowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O night! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse;
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye stars! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul,
That darts her fires beyond the pole;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace the night,
That shine, indeed, but nothing show
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives to a sacred love.

Thou moon! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To him who calls the stars by name;
Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers:
Who blots, or brightens, all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,
Thine orb performs its rapid race;
Still whisper in his listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears:
Tell him I seek him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent hours,
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers;
Friends of the pensive, who conceal,
In darkest shades, the flames I feel;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude,
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a spouse unknown,
Who hides me here from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Imbowering shades and dens profound!
Where echo rolls the voice around;
Mountains! whose elevated heads
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads;
Disclose a solitary bride
To him I love—to none beside.

Ye rills, that, murmuring all the way,
Among the polished pebbles stay;
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,
Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamell'd meads, and hillocks green,
And streams that water all the scene,
Ye torrents, loud in distant ears,
Ye fountains that receive my tears,
Ah! still conceal with caution due,
A charge I trust with none but you!

If, when my pain and grief increase,
I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,
It is because I find so fair
The charming object of my care,
That I can sport and pleasure make
Of torment suffered for his sake.

Ye meads and groves, unconscious things!
Ye know not whence my pleasure springs;
Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
The source from which my sorrows flow:
The dear sole cause of all I feel,—
He knows, and understands them well.

Ye deserts, where the wild beasts rove,
Scenes sacred to my hours of love;
Ye forests, in whose shades I stray,
Benighted under burning day;
Ah! whisper not how blest am I,
Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye lambs, who sport beneath these shades,
And bound along the mossy glades;
Be taught a salutary fear,
And cease to bleat when I am near:
The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind!
How perfect is the peace I find!
Oh hush, be still, my every part,
My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart!
That love, aspiring to its cause,
May suffer not a moment's pause:

Ye swift-finn'd nations, that abide
In seas, as fathomless as wide;
And, unsuspicious of a snare,
Pursue at large your pleasures there;
Poor sportive fools! how soon does man
Your heedless ignorance trepan!

Away! dive deep into the brine,
Where never yet sunk plummet line;
Trust me the vast leviathan
Is merciful, compared with man;
Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
And never play within his reach.

My soul her bondage ill endures,
I pant for liberty like yours;
I long for that immense profound,
That knows no bottom and no bound;
Lost in infinity, to prove
The incomprehensible of love.

Ye birds, that lessen as ye fly,
And vanish in the distant sky;
To whom yon airy waste belongs,
Resounding with your cheerful songs;
Haste to escape from human sight;
Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest and how secure am I,
When, quitting earth I soar on high;
When lost, like you I disappear,
And float in a sublimer sphere;
Whence falling, within human view,
I am ensnared, and caught like you!

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns
To try the heart and search the veins,
Compassionate the numerous woes,
I dare not e'en to thee disclose;
Oh save me from the cruel hands
Of men, who fear not thy commands;

Love, all-subduing and divine,
Care for a creature truly thine;
Reign in a heart, disposed to own
No sovereign but thyself alone:
Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit thee for a meaner love!

THE VICISSITUDES EXPERIENCED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I SUFFER fruitless anguish day by day,
Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain;
Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive the more I am withstood;
Anxiety increasing every hour,
My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where;
My happy hours, like shadows, passed away:
Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care,
Night darker seems, succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys and impotent regret.
What profit is there in incessant tears?
Oh thou, whom, once beheld, we ne'er forget,
Reveal thy love, and banish all my fears!

Alas! he flies me—treats me as his foe,
Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead;
Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires:
And, while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
Hell seems to lose its less tremendous fires.

Has hell a pain I would not gladly bear.
So thy severe displeasure might subside?
Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
My life extinguish'd, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised—this the love,
The unchanging love, so sworn in better days?
Ah! dangerous glories! shown me but to prove
How lovely thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them? had I still remain'd
Untaught, still ignorant how fair thou art,
My humbler wishes I had soon obtain'd,
Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain?
Dubious and uninform'd, my soul inquires.
Ought she to cherish or shake off her pain.

Suffering, I suffer not—sincerely love,
Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame;
As chance inclines me, unconcern'd I move,
All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there
But burns with zeal that hated self may fall;
Such is the sad disquietude I share,
A sea of doubts, and self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die;
And, if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase with a single sigh
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release;
Am sick, and know not the distemper'd part;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me, or without me, shows;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet it is real, and no sickly dream;
'Tis love inflicts it; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is opened in the soul;
When love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control.

Then tell me why these ages of delay?
Oh love, all-excellent, once more appear;
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!

No—love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure,
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow,
He flies, he reappears, and wounds again—
Was ever heart that loved thee treated so?
Yet I adore thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt thou leave me, whom when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish and vouchsafe to choose,
Before thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views?

Now leave me, when, enamour'd of thy laws,
I make thy glory my supreme delight?
Now blot me from thy register, and cause
A faithful soul to perish from thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore!
Is it to prove me, if my heart be true?
Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
To draw, and place its picture in thy view.

'Tis thine without reserve, most simply thine;
So given to thee, that it is not my own;
A willing captive of thy grace divine;
And loves, and seeks thee, for thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare:
Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem, are dust;
It loves thee, e'en when least inclined to spare
Its tenderest feelings, and avows thee just.

'Tis all thine own; my spirit is so too,
An undivided offering at thy shrine;
It seeks thy glory with no double view,
Thy glory, with no secret bent to mine.

Love, holy love! and art thou not severe,
To slight me, thus devoted, and thus fix'd?
Mine is an everlasting ardour, clear
From all self-bias, generous and unmix'd.

But I am silent, seeing what I see—
And fear, with cause, that I am self-deceived;
Not e'en my faith is from suspicion free,
And that I love seems not to be believed.

Live thou, and reign for ever, Glorious Lord!
My last, least offering I present thee now—
Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON.

Sleep at last has fled these eyes,
Nor do I regret his flight,
More alert my spirits rise,
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,
Not a single witness near;
God as soon as sought is found;
And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
Checks the current of my joys;
Creatures press me with a throng,
And perplex me with their noise

Undisturb'd I muse all night,
On the first Eternal Fair;
Nothing there obstructs delight,
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
Proves a foe to love and me;
Fresh entanglements occur—
Comes the night and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
My enjoyments, always new:
Leave me to possess my friend;
Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake
To the taste of pure delights;
Oh the pleasures I partake—
God, the partner of my nights!

David, for the selfsame cause,
Night preferr'd to busy day;
Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws,
Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers, is for you—
Souls, that love celestial know,
Fairer scenes by night can view,
Than the sun could ever show.

ON THE SAME.

Season of my purest pleasure,
Sealer of observing eyes!
When, in larger, freer measure,
I can commune with the skies;
While, beneath thy shade extended,
Weary man forgets his woes,
I, my daily trouble ended,
Find, in watching, my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
Nature hush'd in slumber sweet,
No rude noise mine ears assailing,
Now my God and I can meet:
Universal nature slumbers,
And my soul partakes the calm,
Breathes her ardour out in numbers,
Plaintive song, or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy
Shines and burns without restraint;
Which the day's fatigue and folly
Cause to languish, dim and faint:
Charming hours of relaxation!
How I dread the ascending sun!
Surely, idle conversation
Is an evil match'd by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me;
Unintelligible prove;
Neither teach me nor divert me;
I have ears for none but love.
Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
Hearing my absurd replies;
I have neither art's fine polish,
Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls, and unpolluted,
By conversing with the great,
Have a mind and taste ill suited
To their dignity and state;
All their talking, reading, writing,
Are but talents misapplied;
Infants' prattle I delight in,
Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
Checks my tongue, or I should say,
When I see the night beginning,
I am glad of parting day.
Love this gentle admonition
Whispers soft within my breast;
"Choice befits not thy condition,
Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
Night affords me I resign;
And thy will shall be the measure,
Wisdom infinite! of mine:
Wishing is but inclination
Quarrelling with thy decrees;
Wayward nature finds the occasion—
'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments,
Now no longer will I choose;
Nor the day, with its employments,
Irksome as they seem, refuse;
Lessons of a God's inspiring
Neither time nor place impedes;
From our wishing and desiring
Our unhappiness proceeds.

ON THE SAME.

Night! how I love thy silent shades,
My spirits they compose;
The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dews
In every slumbering eye,
I watch to meditate and muse,
In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
Familiarly impart,
With every proof he can dispense,
His favour to my heart;

My native meanness I lament,
Though most divinely fill'd
With all the ineffable content,
That Deity can yield.

His purpose and his course he keeps;
Treads all my reasonings down;
Commands me out of Nature's deeps,
And hides me in his own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
Our pride of heart we lay;
'Tis then a deluge of his grace
Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
Whose influence from on high
Refines, and still refines my flame,
And makes my fetters fly;

How wretched is the creature's state
Who thwarts thy gracious power;
Crush'd under sin's enormous weight,
Increasing every hour!

The night, when pass'd entire with thee,
How luminous and clear!
Then sleep has no delights for me,
Lest thou shouldst disappear.

My Saviour! occupy me still
In this secure recess;
Let reason slumber if she will,
My joy shall not be less.

Let reason slumber out the night;
But if thou deign to make
My soul the abode of truth and light,
Ah, keep my heart awake!

THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
My soul to that dear hand of thine,
Without reserve or fear;
That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes;
Or into smiles of glad surprise
Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love;
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
I have no other store:
And though with fervent suit I pray,
And importune thee night and day,
I ask thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course
Prescribed them by love's sweetest force,
And I thy sovereign will,
Without a wish to escape my doom;
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doom'd to suffer still.

By thy command, where'er I stray
Sorrow attends me all my way,
A never-failing friend;
And, if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise, behold me well content—
Let sorrow still attend!

It cost me no regret, that she,
Who follow'd Christ, should follow me;
And though, where'er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her, and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu! ye vain delights of earth,
Insipid sports, and childish mirth,
I taste no sweets in you;
Unknown delights are in the cross,
All joy beside to me is dross;
And Jesus thought so too.

The cross! Oh ravishment and bliss—
How grateful e'en its anguish is;
Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
Tastes happiness complete.

Souls, once enabled to disdain
Base sublunary joys, maintain
Their dignity secure;
The fever of desire is pass'd,
And love has all its genuine taste,
Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
'Tis all the bliss she knows;
But nobler aims true Love employ;
In self-denial is her joy,
In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and Love go side by side;
Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
Their heaven-appointed bands;
Those dear associates still are one,
Nor till the race of life is run
Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
Thou faithful lover, above all
The cross has ever borne!
Oh tell me,—life is in thy voice—
How much afflictions were thy choice,
And sloth and ease thy scorn!

Thy choice and mine shall be the same
Inspirer of that holy flame,
Which must for ever blaze!
To take the cross and follow thee,
Where love and duty lead, shall be
My portion and my praise.

JOY IN MARTYRDOM

Sweet tenants of this grove!
Who sing without design,
A song of artless love,
In unison with mine:
These echoing shades return
Full many a note of ours,
That wise ones cannot learn
With all their boasted powers.

O thou! whose sacred charms
These hearts so seldom love,
Although thy beauty warms
And blesses all above;
How slow are human things,
To choose their happiest lot!
All-glorious King of kings,
Say why we love thee not?

This heart, that cannot rest,
Shall thine for ever prove;
Though bleeding and distress'd,
Yet joyful in thy love:

'Tis happy though it breaks
  Beneath thy chastening hand;
And speechless, yet it speaks,
  What thou canst understand.

SIMPLE TRUST.

Still, still, without ceasing,
  I feel it increasing,
This fervour of holy desire;
  And often exclaim,
  Let me die in the flame
Of a love that can never expire!

Had I words to explain
  What she must sustain
Who dies to the world and its ways;
  How joy and affright,
  Distress and delight,
Alternately chequer her days:

Thou, sweetly severe!
  I would make thee appear,
In all thou art pleased to award,
  Not more in the sweet
  Than the bitter I meet,
My tender and merciful Lord.

This faith, in the dark,
  Pursuing its mark,
Through many sharp trials of love,
  Is the sorrowful waste
  That is to be pass'd
In the way to the Canaan above.

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-ABASEMENT.

Source of love, my brighter sun,
  Thou alone my comfort art;
See, my race is almost run;
  Hast thou left this trembling heart?

In my youth thy charming eyes
Drew me from the ways of men;
Then I drank unmingled joys;
Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name;
And, devoted all to thee,
Strangely jealous I became,
Jealous of this self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling, sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
On thy radiant smiles I dwelt;
And to see the dawning light
Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert;
And thine eye, so close applied,
While it watch'd thy pupil's heart,
Seem'd to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
This, I cried, is love indeed—
'Tis the giver, not the gift,
Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But, soon humbled and laid low,
Stript of all thou hast conferr'd,
Nothing left but sin and woe,
I perceived how I had err'd.

Oh, the vain conceit of man,
Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,
Though the Lord is good alone!

He the graces thou hast wrought
Makes subservient to his pride;
Ignorant that one such thought
Passes all his sin beside.

Such his folly—proved, at last,
By the loss of that repose,
Self-complacence cannot taste,
Only love divine bestows

'Tis by this reproof severe,
And by this reproof alone,
His defects at last appear,
Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all earth! that feeble man,
Sprung from this terrestial clod,
Nothing is, and nothing can;
Life and power are all in God.

LOVE INCREASED BY SUFFERING.

"I LOVE the Lord," is still the strain
This heart delights to sing;
But I reply—your thoughts are vain,
Perhaps 'tis no such thing.

Before the power of love divine
Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
In all that we survey.

In gulfs of awful night we find
The God of our desires;
'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind,
And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis fill'd with sacred joy, yet press'd
With sacred sorrow too.

Ah, love! my heart is in the right—
Amidst a thousand woes,
To thee its ever new delight,
And all its peace, it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
Where'er I look or move;
The comforts I to all prefer
Are solitude and love.

Nor exile I nor prison fear;
Love makes my courage great;
I find a Saviour everywhere,
His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
Exclude his quickening beams;
There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for his sake, is found
A joy beyond compare;
There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
And sweetens all my pains,
His strength in my defence employs,
Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong;
Nor feel a passion move,
When malice whets her slanderous tongue;
Such patience is in love.

SCENES FAVOURABLE TO MEDITATION.

Wilds horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,
Rocks that ivy and briers infold,
Scenes nature with dread and astonishment sees,
But I with a pleasure untold;

Though awfully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
I am charm'd with the peace ye afford;
Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
The abode of my lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O fountain of day,
And here I am hid from its beams,
Here safely contemplate a brighter display
Of the noblest and holiest of themes.

Ye forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
Where stillness and solitude reign,
To you I securely and boldly disclose
The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here, sweetly forgetting and wholly forgot
By the world and its turbulent throng,
The birds and the streams lend me many a note,
That aids meditation nd song.

Here, wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
Love wears me and wastes me away,
And often the sun has spent much of its light,
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelops the sphere,
My sorrows are sadly rehearsed,
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the deserts agree,
Mankind are the wolves that I fear,
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
And appetite wholly resign'd.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,
My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,
Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There's nothing I seem to have skill to discer
I feel out my way in the dark,
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,
Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead,
Such a riddle is not to be found,
I am nourish'd without knowing how I am fed,
I have nothing, and yet I abound.

Oh love! who in darkness art pleased to abide,
Though dimly, yet surely I see,
That these contrarieties only reside
In the soul that is chosen of thee.

Ah send me not back to the race of mankind,
Perversely by folly beguiled,
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
The spirit and heart of a child?

Here let me, though fix'd in a desert, be free;
A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with thee,
Shall be holy, and happy, and wise.

THE NATIVITY.

'Tis folly all—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of nature, dress'd by art,
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart;
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.
Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes and plains, whose plenty never fails;
Deep-rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earthborn and yet ambitious to the skies;
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades,
Vainly the sun in all its power invades;
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while Winter scowls around;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep;
Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer;
Meads crown'd with flowers; streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters, and whose murmurs, join
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrow'd plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain:
All, all have lost the charms they once possess'd;
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.
Ye mightier rivers, that, with sounding force,
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course!
Winds, clouds, and lightnings! and, ye waves, whose heads,
Curl'd into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads!
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,
Spread with the wreck of planks and shatter'd sails;
On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides.
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin strew'd around
With vessels bulged, and bodies of the drown'd!
Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves;

Swift-darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes!
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you:
The world, a more disturb'd and boisterous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.
Thou azure vault, where, through the gloom of night,
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light!
Thou moon, whose car encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes;
Again retiring, when the brighter sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run!
Behold him where he shines! his rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet.
Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid gold to fill its vast desires;
In vain they represent his matchless might,
Who call'd them out of deep primeval night;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe;
I seek the Giver of those charms they show:
Nor, him beside, throughout the world he made,
Lives there in whom I trust for cure to aid.
Infinite God, thou great unrivall'd One!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;
Compared with thine, how dim his beauty seems!
How quench'd the radiance of his golden beams!
Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move:
In thee alone dwells all that I can love.
All darkness flies when thou art pleased t' appear;
A sudden spring renews the fading year;
Where'er I turn I see thy power and grace,
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of thee;
E'en I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt thy praise, and join the general song.

Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in thine image, man—
Holy and just—the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns, eluding our most active powers;
Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown;
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart!
Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires;
He at whose voice heaven trembles, even he
Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me—
Lo! there he lies—that smiling infant said,
"Heaven, earth, and sea, exist!"—and they obey'd.
E'en he, whose being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;
Eternal and immortal, seems to cast
That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink and vanish at the thought!
Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose!
This rustic sight assuages all my woes—
That crib contains the Lord, whom I adore;
And earth's a shade that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
I dwell secure beneath his sheltering power,
And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight, is here.
I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
Tied helpless down the thunder-bearer's hands!
And, in this shed, that mystery discern,
Which faith and love, and they alone, can learn.
Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord!
Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford!
Confess the God, that guides the rolling year;
Heaven, do him homage; and thou, earth, revere!
Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King!
Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love;
Join, in his praise, the harmonious world above;
To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in his repose,
And praise him there for all that he bestows!

Man, busy man, alas! can ill afford
To obey the summons, and attend the Lord;
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled;
And, blind to genuine excellence and grace,
Finds not her author in so mean a place.
Ye unbelieving! learn a wiser part,
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart;
There soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
Glow for that infant God, from whom it came;
Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire!
Not so will I requite thee, gentle love!
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove;
And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
But I am poor, oblation I have none,
None for a Saviour, but himself alone:
Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came:
And, if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine.
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.
Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of thy glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be the unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,
Must be my state, and my description still.
And do I grieve at such a humbling lot?
Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought—
Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!
I have no wish, no memory for you;
The more I feel my misery, I adore
The sacred inmate of my soul the more;
Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
Spring from the sense of having nought beside.
In Thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;
My wanderings prove thy wisdom infinite;
All that I have I give thee; and then see
All contrarieties unite in thee;
For thou hast join'd them, taking up our woe,
And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,
By filling with thy grace and love divine
A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.

This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink—'tis matching earth and skies;
I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore
An aching heart, that throbs to thank thee more;
The more I love thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;
Till, on a deluge of thy mercy toss'd,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD.

Ye linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!
In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,
For all the world is blind, and wanders from his ways.

That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against his empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of love, yet little feel its sway,
While in their bosoms many an idol lurks;
Their base desires, well satisfied, obey,
Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon his works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;
Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:
Pure love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who form'd you for his praise alone,
Beholds his purpose well fulfill'd in you;
Come, let us join the choir before his throne,
Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true.

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,
Tune to the praise of love my ceaseless voice;
Preferring love too vast for human thought,
In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
Lord of my soul! that they might all be thine?
If thou approve—the zeal thy smile imparts,
How should it ever fail! can such a fire decline?

Love pure and holy is a deathless fire;
Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal love a God must needs inspire,
When once he wins the heart, and fits it for his praise.

Self-love dismiss'd—'tis then we live indeed—
In her embrace, death, only death is found:
Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
Cast off the chain of self with which thy soul is bound!

Oh! I could cry, that all the world might hear,
Ye self-tormenters, love your God alone;
Let his unequall'd excellence be dear,
Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your own!

They hear me not—alas! how fond to rove
In endless chase of folly's specious lure!
'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
I taste the sweets of truth—here only am secure.

THE SWALLOW.

I AM fond of the swallow—I learn from her flight,
Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love:
How seldom on earth do we see her alight!
She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
Suspended and poised in the regions of air,
'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
It is wing'd like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
And dreading the cold still follows the sun—
So, true to our love we should covet his rays,
And the place where he shines not immediately shun.

Our light should be love, and our nourishment prayer;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth;
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely if ever she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young;
Were it not for her brood she would never bestow
A thought upon anything filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves, ('tis a mortal abode,)
To bask every moment in infinite love;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the dayspring appearing above.

THE TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED.

Ah! reign wherever man is found,
My Spouse, beloved and divine!
Then I am rich, and I abound,
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new!

A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF DIVINE LOVE,

IN BRINGING A SOUL TO THE POINT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION AND ABSOLUTE ACQUIESCENCE.

'Twas my purpose, on a day,
To embark, and sail away.
As I climb'd the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide,
"Come," he said—"ascend—make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care
They that row'd us held their eyes
Fix'd upon the starry skies;
Others steer'd, or turn'd the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more?
No—"My soul," I cried, "be still;
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hasten'd to convey
Both my frail supports away:
Seized my rushes; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves:
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe;
And I saw him turn and laugh:
"Friend," he cried, "adieu! lie low,
While the wintry storms shall blow;
When the spring has calm'd the main,
You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes and soar away;
Now I mark his rapid flight;
Now he leaves my aching sight;
He is gone whom I adore,
'Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and fear'd,
When my love had disappear'd!
"Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
"Whelm'd beneath the rolling tide?"
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone, and would not hear.

Ah! return, and love me still;
See me subject to thy will;
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear,
All is good if thou art near.

Yet he leaves me—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate—
Have I sinn'd? Oh, say wherein.
Tell me, and forgive my sin!
King, and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth all my will to thine:
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go then, and for ever too;
All is right that thou wilt do.

This was just what love intended,
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
Love return'd to me and smiled:
Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the Bridegroom and his bride.

A CHILD OF GOD LONGING TO SEE HIM BELOVED.

THERE'S not an echo round me,
But I am glad should learn,
How pure a fire has found me.—
The love with which I burn.
For none attends with pleasure
To what I would reveal;
They slight me out of measure,
And laugh at what I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
The story of my flame;
When I approach, they loudly
Reverberate his name.
I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound;
Big with the consolation
That I have often found.

I said, "My lot is sorrow,
My grief has no alloy;"
The rocks replied—"To-morrow,
To-morrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and sacred tidings,
What bliss it is to hear!
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness and my fear,
No sooner I receive them,
Than I forget my pain,
And, happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic,
Where never men resort;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport.
For riot and confusion
They barter things above,
Condemning, as delusion,
The joy of perfect love.

In this sequester'd corner,
None hears what I express;
Deliver'd from the scorner,
What peace do I possess!
Beneath the boughs reclining,
Or roving o'er the wild,
I live as undesigning
And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me,
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me,
And guards me all the day:
My dear and kind defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendour,
Who fill a child with fear.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD.

My Spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,
And canst easily double its fires!
How pleasant is all that I meet!
From fear of adversity free,
I find even sorrow made sweet;
Because 'tis assign'd me by thee.

Transported, I see thee display
Thy riches and glory divine;
I have only my life to repay.
Take what I would gladly resign.
Thy will is the treasure I seek,
For thou art as faithful as strong;
There let me, obedient and meek,
Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail;
Oh finish what love has begun!
Destroy what is sinful and frail,
And dwell in the soul thou hast won!
Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
I cry, who is worthy as thou!
I can only be silent and gaze!
'Tis all that is left to me now.

Oh glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought;
On an ocean of Deity toss'd,
I am swallow'd, I sink into nought.
Yet, lost and absorb'd as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my King;
And though overwhelm'd by the theme,
Am happy whenever I sing.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD.

All are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall;
Overwhelm me, from above,
Daily with thy boundless love.

What bonds of gratitude I feel
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove,
To return thee love for love?

Spirit of charity, dispense
Thy grace to every heart;
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive self from every part;
Charity divine, draw nigh,
Break the chains in which we lie!

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty in vain,
Of love, and feel it not:
He whose bosom glows with thee,
He, and he alone is free.

O blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy pure fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is love;
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers:
Experience only makes it ours.

TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE REJECTED BY THE WORLD.

O love, of pure and heavenly birth!
O simple truth, scarce known on earth!
Whom men resist with stubborn will;
And, more perverse and daring still,
Smother and quench with reasoning vain,
While error and deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
As his on high from whence you came,
Ye rarely find a listening ear,
Or heart that makes you welcome here?—
Because ye bring reproach and pain,
Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
The scorn and calumny ye share;
The praise of men the mark they mean,
They fly the place where ye are seen;
Pure love, with scandal in the rear,
Suits not the vain; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
Though poor I am prepared to pay;
Come shame, come sorrow; spite of tears,
Weakness and heart-oppressing fears,
One soul, at least, shall not repine,
To give you room; come, reign in mine!

HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN.

My heart is easy, and my burden light,
I smile, though sad, when thou art in my sight:
The more my woes in secret I deplore,
I taste thy goodness, and I love thee more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
Faith, love, and hope within my soul abound;
And, while the world suppose me lost in care,
The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honour are adored;
While thee they scorn, and trifle with thy word;
Pass, unconcerned, a Saviour's sorrows by;
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

LIVING WATER.

THE fountain in its source
No drought of summer fears;
The farther it pursues its course,
The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
A scanty short supply;
The morning sees them amply fill'd,
At evening they are dry.

DIVINE JUSTICE AMIABLE.

THOU hast no lightnings, O thou Just!
Or I their force should know;
And if thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

The heart, that values less its ease
Than it adores thy ways,
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of its praise.

Pleased I could lie, conceal'd and lost,
In shades of central night;
Not to avoid thy wrath, thou know'st,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

Smite me, O thou, whom I provoke!
And I will love thee still:
The well deserved and righteous stroke
Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
The worst thou canst devise?
And dare I seek thy throne again,
And meet thy sacred eyes?

Far from afflicting, thou art kind;
And, in my saddest hours,
An unction of thy grace I find,
Pervading all my powers.

Alas! thou spar'st me yet again;
And, when thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
Thou sooth'st me with thy love.

I have no punishment to fear;
But, ah! that smile from thee
Imparts a pang far more severe,
Than woe itself would be.

THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD FINDS HIM EVERYWHERE.

Oh thou, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide,
My love! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment!

All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impress'd with sacred love!
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in thee;
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But, with a God to guide our way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art thou alone;
Nor other can I claim or own;
The point where all my wishes meet;
My law, my love, life's only sweet!

I hold by nothing here below;
Appoint my journey, and I go;
Though pierc'd by scorn, oppress'd by pride,
I feel thee good—feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them.

Ah then! to his embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION.

How happy are the new-born race,
Partakers of adopting grace;
How pure the bliss they share!
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours;
And if we love with all our powers
The God from whom it came;
And if we serve with hearts sincere,
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonour us within,
Farewell the joy we knew;
Again the slaves of nature's sway,
In labyrinths of our own we stray,
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve
The gracious spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace:
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts his dwelling-place.

Oh messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove!
With thee at hand, to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of love.

'Tis love unites what sin divides;
The centre, where all bliss resides;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,
Divested of its woes;
There sovereign goodness soothes the breast,
Till then incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose.

DIVINE LOVE ENDURES NO RIVAL.

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
Whose will transported I perform;
The centre of my rest, my stay,
Love's all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
Oppress'd by slavish fear no more;
For one in whom I may discern,
E'en when he frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves him who complains,
And finds him rigorous and severe;
His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
And stimulate the slumbering mind;
And he has never tasted love,
Who shuns a pang so graciously design'd.

Sweet is the cross, above all sweets,
To souls enamoured with thy smiles;
The keenest woe life ever meets,
Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear
Where self engrosses all the thought,
And groans and murmurs make it clear,
Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The love of thee flows just as much
As that of ebbing self subsides;
Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul:
Then let self-love be dispossess'd;
The love of God deserves the whole,
And will not dwell with so despised a guest

SELF-DIFFIDENCE.

Source of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of thine;
Teach, O teach this faithless heart
A consistent, constant part;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now!

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite?
Every trace of every boon
Cancell'd and erased so soon!
Can I grieve thee, whom I love;
Thee, in whom I live and move?
If my sorrow touch thee still,
Save me from so great an ill!

Oh! the oppressive irksome weight
Felt in an uncertain state;
Comfort, peace, and rest, adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue!

Still I choose thee, follow still
Every notice of thy will;
But, unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the love thou canst reveal;
Trusting self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed:
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross.

Self is earthly—faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own;
Faith relinquish'd, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home!
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price;
And, preferring servant's pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE.

Love! if thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires;
Plunged in thy depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languish'd here;
Yet all my thoughts thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.

One good she covets, and that good alone,
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.

That we should bear the cross is thy command,
Die to the world, and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwreck'd as when safe on shore

REPOSE IN GOD.

Blest! who, far from all mankind,
This world's shadows left behind,
Hears from heaven a gentle strain
Whispering love, and loves again.

Blest! who free from self-esteem,
Dives into the Great Supreme,
All desire beside discards,
Joys inferior none regards.

Blest! who in thy bosom seeks
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
Dead to self and worldly things,
Lost in thee, thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire;
Favour my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

Oh loved! but not enough—though dearer far
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are;
None duly love thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in thee.

Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
Our faith and reason are both shock'd to find
Man in the post of honour—Thee behind.

Reason exclaims—"Let every creature fall,
Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all;"
And faith, o'erwhelm'd with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the Only Wise.

Oh lost in vanity, till once self-known!
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone;
When thou shalt stand before his awful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know his place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end!
When wilt thou melt the mountains and descend?
When wilt thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms thou hast made, thy praise?

Thy glory is the sweetest heaven I feel;
And if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite,
To make thy glory their supreme delight;
Forbid it, fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise!

My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteem'd or great;
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess him righteous in his just decrees,
Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast crown'd him, and he reigns indeed.

SELF-LOVE AND TRUTH INCOMPATIBLE.

From thorny wilds a monster came,
That fill'd my soul with fear and shame;
The birds, forgetful of their mirth,
Droop'd at the sight, and fell to earth;
When thus a Sage address'd mine ear,
Himself unconscious of a fear.
"Whence all this terror and surprise,
Distracted looks, and streaming eyes?

Far from the world and its affairs,
The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
Surrender, without guile or art,
To God an undivided heart;
The savage form, so fear'd before,
Shall scare your trembling soul no more;
For, loathsome as the sight may be,
'Tis but the love of self you see.
Fix all your love on God alone,
Choose but his will, and hate your own:
No fear shall in your path be found,
The dreary waste shall bloom around,
And you, through all your happy days,
Shall bless his name, and sing his praise."
  Oh lovely solitude, how sweet
The silence of this calm retreat!
Here Truth, the fair whom I pursue,
Gives all her beauty to my view;
The simple, unadorn'd display
Charms every pain and fear away.
O Truth, whom millions proudly slight;
O Truth, my treasure and delight;
Accept this tribute to thy name,
And this poor heart from which it came!

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

(Page 15.)—*Ode to Miss Macartney.*

I AM now convinced that, in following Southey and the other Editors of Cowper, I have given a wrong inscription to this Ode; the title should be—"*To Miss* ——, *on reading the Prayer for Indifference.*" The letter of Hayley to Mr. Johnson (*Life of Hayley, by Johnson*, ii. 80) is quite conclusive:—"The aim of the poem is most evident—viz., to persuade a tender virgin not to be induced, by elegant verse, to form a prayer so unsuitable to her nature. I am most firmly convinced our dear graceful Cowper could never intend to address his exquisite stanzas to the *Authoress of the Ode*. In that point of view, they are not only ungraceful, but rude. Witness the following two lines:—

'Far be the thought, and far the strain,
Which breathes *the low desire!*'

Could the delicate Cowper so insult the poetess? For, if addressed to *her*, his expression is *insult*; and would discover such a want of delicacy as in *him* we may fairly pronounce *impossible*." But Hayley gives a reason better than all induction, in telling us that Miss Macartney *was married to Mr. Greville when the Ode appeared*. Theodora Cowper had said, "the stanzas were not addressed to *her*."

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