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THE TASK;

A POEM,

IN SIX BOOKS.

BY WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

STEREOTYPED BY T. H. CARTER & CO. BOSTON.

Boston:

PUBLISHED BY T. BEDLINGTON,
No. 31 Washington Street.

.....
1826.



TO THE HONORABLE

MEMBER

OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE, JANUARY 18, 1882

REPORT

OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION

PASSED MARCH 18, 1881

ADVERTISEMENT.



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!

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 suscepti-

ble 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.

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THE TASK.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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

I SING the *Sofa*. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity,* and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and, with a trembling hand,
Escap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme ; 5
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, 10
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :
The hardy chief, upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank

* See Poems, VOL. I.

Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
 Fearless of wrong, repos'd his weary strength. 15
 Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next
 The birthday of Invention ; weak at first,
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
 Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs
 Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm 20
 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, 25
 And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,
 By worms voracious eating through and through.
 At length a generation more refin'd
 Improv'd the simple plan ; made three legs four,
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular, 30
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,
 Induc'd a splendid cover, green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
 And woven close, or needlework sublime.
 There might ye see the piony spread wide, 35
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
 Lapdog 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, 40
 That interlac'd each other, these supplied
 Of texture firm a lattice-work, that brac'd
 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 ; 45
 The slipp'ry seat betrayed 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 plac'd
 In modest mediocrity, content 50
 With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,

THE SOFA.

Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,
 If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd 65
 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 fix'd by its own massy weight.
 But elbows still were wanting; these, some say, 60
 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, 65
 And bruis'd the side; and, elevated high,
 Taught the rais'd shoulders to invade the ears.
 Long time elaps'd or e'er our rugged sires
 Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first 70
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleas'd
 Than when employ'd t' accommodate the fair,
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devis'd
 The soft settee; one elbow at each end, 75
 And in the midst an elbow it receiv'd,
 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. 80
 But relaxation of the languid frame,
 By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
 Was bliss reserv'd for happier days. So slow
 The growth of what is excellent; so hard
 T' attain perfection in this nether world. 85
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
 And Luxury th' accomplish'd *Sofa* last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hir'd to watch the sick,
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he, 90
 Who quits the coach-box at a 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 ; 95
 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 ; 100
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
 Compar'd with the repose the *Sofa* yields.
 O may I live exempted (while I live
 Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
 From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe 105
 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 lov'd the rural walk through lanes
 Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep, 110
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm
 Of thorny boughs ; have lov'd the rural walk
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
 E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
 T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames ; 115
 And still remember, not without regret,
 Of hours, that sorrow since has much endear'd,
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consum'd,
 Still hung'ring, pennyless, and far from home,
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws, 120
 Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite
 Disdains not ; nor the palate, undeprav'd
 By culinary arts, unsav'ry deems. 125

No *Sofa* then awaited my return ;
 Nor *Sofa* then I needed. Youth repairs
 His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
 Incurring short fatigue ; and, though our years,
 As life declines, speed rapidly away, 130
 And not a year but pilfers as he goes
 Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep ;
 A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
 Their length and colour from the locks they spare ;
 The elastick spring of an unwearied foot, 135
 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 140
 My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that sooth'd
 Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
 Still soothing, and of pow'r to charm me still.
 And witness, dear companion of my walks,
 Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive 145
 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, 150
 And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
 To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
 But genuine, and art partner of them all.
 How oft upon yon eminence our pace
 Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne 155
 The rustling 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 160
 His lab'ring team, that swerv'd 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 165
 Delighted. There, fast rooted in their 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, 170
 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, 175
 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. 180

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 185
 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 190
 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 195
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated nature sweeter still,
 To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
 Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one 200
 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 e'en the boding owl, 205
 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 210
 Devis'd the weatherhouse, that useful toy !
 Fearless of humid air and gath'ring rains,
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself !
 More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet, 215
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
 The task of new discov'ries falls on me.
 At such a season, and with such a charge,
 Once went I forth ; and found, till then unknown, 220
 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 225
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
 And, hidden as it is, and far remote
 From such displeasing sounds as haunt the ear
 In village or in town, the bay of curs 230
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
 And infants clam'rous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful coveret mine.
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess
 The poet's treasure, Silence, and indulgo 235
 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 ; 240
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
 And, heavy laden, brings his bev'rage home,
 Far fetch'd and little worth ; nor seldom waits,
 Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door, 245
 Angry, and sad, and his last crust consum'd.
 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 ; 250
 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 255
 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-depriv'd
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread, 260
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus*—he spares me yet
 These chestnuts rang'd in corresponding lines ;
 And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade. 265

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep upon a rustic bridge,
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence, ankle deep in moss and flow'ry thyme, 270
 We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Rais'd by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures Earth : and, plotting in the dark, 275

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Under-wood.

Toils much to earn a monumental pile
 That may record the mischief he has done.
 The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
 That crowns it ! yet not all its pride secures
 The grand retreat from injuries impress'd 280
 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 e'en a few, 285
 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 290
 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 hayfield homeward creeps
 The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge, 296
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by ;
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene, 300
 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 305
 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, 310
 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 leav'd, and shining in the sun,
 The maple and the beech of oily nuts 315
 Prolifick, 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 chong'd the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
 O'er these, but, far beyond (a spacious map 321
 Of hill and valley interpos'd between)
 The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen. 325
 Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the reascent; between them weeps
 A little naiad her improv'ish'd urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.
 The folded gates would bar my progress now, 330
 But that the lord* of this enclos'd demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share; the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
 Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun? 335
 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. 340
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
 The checker'd earth seems restless as a flood
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light 345
 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 brac'd and spirits cheer'd,

* See the foregoing note.

We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks, 351
 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 355
 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 destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff,
 The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist 360
 Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
 Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
 And sleep not ; see him sweating o'er his bread
 Before he eats it.— 'Tis the primal curse,
 But soften'd into mercy ; made the pledge 365
 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 370
 An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves :
 Its own revolency upholds the World,
 Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
 And fit the limpid element for use,
 Else noxious ; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams, 375
 All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleans'd
 By restless undulation : e'en 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, 380
 Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
 He held the thunder : but the monarch owes
 His firm stability to what he scorns,
 More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.
 The law, by which all creatures else are bound, 385
 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, 390
 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 e'en the rest he loves. 395
 Not such the alert and active. Measure life
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
 And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
 Good health, and its associate in the most,
 Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake, 400
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
 The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
 E'en age itself seems privileg'd in them
 With clear exemption from its own defects.
 A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front 405
 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,
 Furthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine 410
 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 415
 For the unscented fictions of the loom;
 Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,
 Prefer to the performance of a God
 Th' inferiour wonders of an artist's hand!
 Lovely indeed the mimick works of Art; 420
 But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
 None more admires the painter's magick skill;
 Who shows me that which I shall never see,
 Conveys a distant country into mine,
 And throws Italian light on English walls: 425
 But imitative strokes can do no more

Than please the eye—sweet Nature's ev'ry sense.
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
 And musick of her woods—no works of man 430
 May rival these, these all bespeak a pow'r
 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. 435
 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 : 440
 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 endur'd 445
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd
 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 450
 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 ; 455
 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 wo appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460
 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. 735
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb, the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famish'd—finds no musick in the song,
 No smartness in the jest ; and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on, 470
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
 The paralytick, 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, 475
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
 Others are dragg'd into a crowded room
 Between supporters ; and, once seated, sit,
 Through downright inability to rise, 480
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
 These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en 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, 485
 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. 490
 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 495
 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 gayety of those,
 Whose headachs nail them to a noonday bed ; 500
 And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs

For property stripp'd off by cruel chance ;
 From gayety, that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with wo. 505

The earth was made so various, that the mind
 Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleas'd with novelty, might be indulg'd.
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade : the weary sight 510
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off,
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.

Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us ; happy to renounce awhile, 515
 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, 520
 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. 525

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
 And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no displeasing ramble ; there the turf 530
 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
 Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd 535
 With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound,
 A serving maid was she, and fell in love
 With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
 Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
 To distant shores ; and she would sit and weep 540

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— 545
 And never smil'd 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 550
 More tatter'd still ; and both but ill conceal
 A bosom heav'd with never-ceasing sighs.
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
 And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food, 554
 Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
 Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is craz'd.
 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 560
 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, 565
 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 570
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
 Conveying worthless dross into its place ;
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
 Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast
 In human mould, should brutalize by choice 575
 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 580
 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 musick of the bladder and the bag, 585
 Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
 Such health and gayety of heart enjoy
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;
 And, breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
 Need other physick none to heal th' effects 590
 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. 596
 His wants indeed are many ; but supply
 Is obvious, plac'd within the easy reach
 Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.
 Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil ; 600
 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, 605
 By culture tam'd, by liberty refresh'd,
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.
 War and the chase engross the savage whole ;
 War follow'd for revenge or to supplant
 The envied tenants of some happier spot : 610
 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, 615
 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,
 Tow'rds the antarctick. E'en the favour'd isles 620
 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. 625
 These therefore I can pity, plac'd remote
 From all that science traces, art invents,
 Or inspiration teaches; and enclos'd
 In boundless oceans never to be pass'd
 By navigators uninform'd as they, 630
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
 Thee, gentle savage! * whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
 Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw 635
 Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here
 With what superiour 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, 640
 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 musick; are thy simple friends, 645
 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,) 650
 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, 655
 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 pow'r of thine can raise her up. 660
 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
 Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
 Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste 665
 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 prepar'd 670
 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; 675
 And must be brib'd to compass Earth again
 By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
 But though true worth and virtue in the mild
 And genial soil of cultivated life
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there, 680
 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 sculence of every land.
 In cities, foul example on most minds 685
 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 690

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
 Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
 I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
 In which they flourish most ; where in the beams
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye 695
 Of publick note, they reach their perfect size.
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
 The fairest capital of all the world,
 By riot and incontinence the worst.
 There touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes 700
 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
 All her reflected features. Bacon there
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone 705
 The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as much ;
 Each province of her art her equal care.
 With nice incision of her guided steel
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
 So sterile with what charms soe'er she will, 710
 The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?
 In London. Where her implements exact, 715
 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, 720
 As London—opulent, enlarg'd, 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, 725
 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 730
 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 oftentimes honour too,
 To peculators of the public gold : 735
 That thieves at home must hang ; but he that puts
 Into his overgorg'd 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 740
 Of holy writ, she has presum'd t' annul
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
 The total ordinance and will of God ;
 Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
 And centring all authority in modes 745
 And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
 And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorc'd.
 God made the country, and man made the town.
 What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts 750
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?
 Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755
 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element, there only can ye shine ;
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
 Our groves were planted to console at noon 760
 The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
 The moon-beam, sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
 Birds warbling all the musick. We can spare
 The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse 765
 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound

Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a publick mischief in your mirth ;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours, 770
Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure soon to fall.



THE TASK.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

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

O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more ! My ear is pain'd, 5
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 natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd, as the flax, 10

That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 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 a lawful prey. 15
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd
 Make enemies of nations, who had else
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys; 20
 And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd,
 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. 25
 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, 30
 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 priz'd above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave, 35
 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 loos'd.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs 40
 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 45
 Of all your empire: that, where Britain's pow'r
 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 50
 To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
 And by the voice of all its elements
 To preach the gen'ral doom.* When were the winds
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap 55
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
 Fires from beneath, and meteors† from above,
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
 Have kindled beacons in the skies; and th' old
 And crazy Earth has had her shaking fits 60
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
 And Nature with a dim and sickly eye‡
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end 65
 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. 70
 And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
 And stand expos'd by common peccaney
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
 And brethren in calamity should love.
 Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now 75
 Lie scatter'd, where the shapely columns stood.
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
 Her voice of singing and the sprightly chord
 The voice of revelry, and dance, and show,
 Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause; 80
 While God performs upon the trembling stage
 Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
 How does the earth receive him? with what signs

* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

† August, 18, 1783.

‡ Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Of gratulation and delight her king?
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad, 85
 Her sweetest flow'rs, her aromattick 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. 90
 The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
 For he has touch'd them. From th' extremest point
 Of elevation down into the abyss
 His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
 The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise, 95
 The rivers die into offensive pools,
 And, charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
 And mortal nuisance into all the air.
 What solid was, by transformation strange,
 Grows fluid; and the fix'd and rooted earth, 100
 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 105
 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. 110
 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, 115
 Upridg'd so high, and sent on such a charge,
 Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
 That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
 Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
 Gone with the reflux wave into the deep— 120
 A prince with half his people! Ancient tow'rs,

And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
 Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
 Life in the unproductive shades of death,
 Fall prone : the pale inhabitants come forth, 125
 And, happy in their unforeseen release
 From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
 The terrors of the day that sets them free.
 Who, then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
 Freedom ! whom they that lose thee so regret, 130
 That e'en 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 Heav'n, that it burns down to Earth,
 And in the furious inquest that it makes 135
 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 140
 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. 145
 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, 150
 And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle
 Mov'd not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff,
 The sport of every wave ? No ; none are clear,
 And none than we more guilty. But, where all
 Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts 155
 Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark :
 May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
 The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,

- Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee ! 160
- Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd
 In all the good and ill that checker life !
 Resolving all events, with their effects
 And manifold results, into the will
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme. 165
- 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 ; 170
- Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen
 Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
 This truth Philosophy, though eagle-ey'd
 In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks ; 175
- And, having found his instrument, forgets,
 Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
 Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
 His hot displeasure against foolish men,
 That live an atheist life ; involves the Heavens 180
- In tempests ; quits his grasp upon the winds,
 And gives them all their fury ; bids a plague
 Kindle a fiery bile upon the skin,
 And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.
 He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend 185
- Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
 And desolates a nation at a blast.
 Forth steps the spruce Philosopher, and tells
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs, 190
- 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. 195

Thou fool? will thy discovery 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, 200
 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. 205
 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 210
 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. 215
 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 220
 As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
 Thy follies too; and with a just disdain
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks
 Reflect dishonour on the land I love. 225
 How in the name of soldiership and sense,
 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
 And tender as a girl, all essenc'd 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 231
 Of her magnificent and awful cause?
 Time was when it was praise and boast enough

In every clime, and travel where we might,
 That we were born her children. Praise enough 235
 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 240
 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 245
 Consulting England's happiness at home,
 Secur'd 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, 250
 And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.
 Those suns are set. O 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 255
 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 ; 260
 That winds and waters, lull'd by magick 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, 265
 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. 270
 And sham'd as we have been, to th' very beard

O'brav'd and defied, and in our own sea prov'd
 Too weak for those decisive blows that once
 Ensur'd us mast'ry there, we yet retain
 Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast 275
 At least superiour jockeyship, and claim
 The honours of the turf as all our own!
 Go, then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
 And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
 In foreign eyes!—be grooms and win the plate, 280
 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 poetick pains, 285
 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 290
 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, 295
 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, 300
 That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
 He feels the anxieties of life denied
 Their wonted entertainment; all retire.
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song. 305
 Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task
 They never undertook, they little note
 His dangers or escapes, and haply find

Their least amusement where he found the most. 316
 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? 315
 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 320
 By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
 Alas! Leviathan is not so tam'd:
 Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,
 Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
 That fear no discipline of human hands. 325
 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, 330
 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, 335
 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 340
 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 345
 Of heav'nly temper, furnishes with arms
 Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule

- Of holy discipline, to glorious war
 The sacramental host of God's elect : 349
 Are all such teachers?—would to Heav'n all were !
 But hark—the doctor's voice !—fast wedg'd between
 Two empiricks he stands, and with swoln cheeks
 Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
 Than all invective is his bold harangue,
 While through that publick organ of report 355
 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 360
 Th' *edagio* 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. 365
 Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware ?
 O, 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— 370
 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. 375
 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 ; 380
 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 385

Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor,
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
 And well prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love of world,
 To make God's work a *sinecure* ; a slave 390
 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, 395
 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, 400
 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, 405
 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 ; 410
 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 415
 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, 420
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,
 And pretty face, in presence of his God ?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,

As with the diamond on his lily hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes, 425
 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, 430
 And start theatrick, practis'd at the glass!
 I seek divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things divine; and all besides,
 Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
 By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd, 435
 To me is odious as the nasal twang
 Heard at conventicle where worthy men,
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
 Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestr'd.
 Some, decent in demeanour while they preach, 440
 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 edify'd, themselves were not!
 Forth comes the pocket-mirror. First we stroke 445
 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; 450
 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 455
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
 And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly 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, 460

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 465
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
Pathetick exhortation ; and t' address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales, 470

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. 475

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. 480

O 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 ! 485

With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy pow'r ?
Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
And craving Poverty, and in the bow 490

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 ? 495

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, 500
 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 defil'd
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
 Illusive of philosophy, so call'd, 505
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
 The thirst than slak'd it, and not seldom bred
 Intoxication and delirium wild. 510
 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? 515
 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 wo?
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520
 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, prov'd too weak
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead 525
 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. 530
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
 My man of morals, nurtur'd 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 535
 To Athens, or to Rome, for wisdom shore

Of man's occasions, when in him reside
 Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store?
 How oft, when Paul has serv'd us with a text,
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd! 540
 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 545
 By nature, or by flatt'ry 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; 550
 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. 555
 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 560
 And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
 As move derision, or by foppish airs
 And histrionick mumm'ry that let down
 The pulpit to the level of the stage;
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing. 565
 The weak perhaps are mov'd, 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 570
 Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd
 The laity run wild. But do they now?
 Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.
 As nations, ignorant of God, contrive

THE TIME-PIECE.

45

A wooden one : so we, no longer taught
 By monitors, that mother church supplies,
 Now make our own. Posterity will ask,
 (If e'er posterity see verse of mine,)

Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
 What was a monitor in George's days? 580
 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 ours,
 A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin. 585
 We wear it at our backs. There, closely brac'd
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,
 And binds the shoulder flat. We prove its use
 Sov'reign and most effectual to secure 590
 A form, not now gymnastick as of yore,
 From rickets, and distortion, else our lot.
 But thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—
 One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge. 595
 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,
 Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date ; 600
 Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye ;
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd ;
 And, making prize of all that he condemns,
 With our expenditure defrays his own. 605
 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 610
 A real elegance, a little us'd,
 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; 615
 And introduces hunger, frost, and wo,
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
 Would fail t' exhibit at the publick shows
 A form as splendid as the proudest there, 620
 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, 625
 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 magick wand. So potent is the spell, 630
 That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
 Unless by Heav'n's peculiar grace, escape.
 There we grow early gray, but never wise;
 There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
 Solicit pleasure hopeless of success; 635
 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 640
 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, 645
 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 650

May feed excesses she can ill afford,
 Hackney'd home unlackey'd ; who, in haste
 Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
 And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left. 655

Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
 On Fortune's velvet altar off'ring up
 Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
 Than all that held their routs in Juno's Heav'n.— 660

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, 665
 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, 670
 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 the sire.
 Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base 675

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 680
 That gives society its beauty, strength,
 Convenience, security, and use :

Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
 And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
 Can seize the slippery prey : unties the knot 685
 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, 60
 And warps, the consciences of publick 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— 695
 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, 700
 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. 705
 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 710
 The head of modest and ingenious worth,
 That blush'd at his own praise : and press the youth
 Close to his side that pleas'd him. Learning grew
 Beneath his care, a thriving vig'rous plant ;
 The mind was well informed, the passions held 715
 Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
 If e'er it chanc'd, 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 ; 720
 His frown was full of terrour, and his voice
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,
 As left him not, till penitence had won
 Lost favour back again, and clos'd the breach.
 But Discipline, a faithful servant long, 725
 Declin'd at length into the vale of years .

A palsy struck his arm ; his sparkling eye
 Was quenched in rheums of age ; his voice, unstrung,
 Grew tremulous, and mov'd derision more
 Than rev'ence, in perverse rebellious youth. 730
 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 languished, Emulation slept,
 And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene 735
 Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
 His cap well lin'd with logick not his own,
 With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny 740
 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 745
 Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates
 Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch ;
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
 The tassel'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
 A mock'ry of the world ! What need of these 750
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothelers 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 : 755
 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, 760
 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, 76
 Where science and where virtue are professed?
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task
 That bids defiance to th' united powers
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews. 770
 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 mars the brood?
 The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge, 775
 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— 780
 Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
 A man of letters, and of manners too!
 Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
 When gay good-natured dresses her in smiles.
 He grac'd a college,* in which order yet 785
 Was sacred; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
 Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
 With such ingredients of good sense, and taste
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst 790
 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 795
 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 800
 Expos'd 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, 805
 What wonder, if discharg'd into the world,
 They shame their shooters with a random flight,
 Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine !
 Well may the church wage unsuccessful war
 With such artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide 810
 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 815
 Society, and that saps and worms the base
 Of th' edifice that policy has rais'd,
 Swarms in all quarters : meets the eye, the ear,
 And suffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.

Profusion breeds them ; and the cause itself 820
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found :
 Found, too, where most offensive, in the skirts
 Of the rob'd pedagogue ! Else let th' arraign'd
 Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.

So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm, 825
 And wav'd 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 ; 830
 Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scap'd ;
 And the land stank—so num'rous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection, and reproof—Address to domestick 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—Domestick 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 5
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease! 10
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 academick fame, (howe'er deserv'd,) 15
 Long held, and scarcely disengag'd 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. 20

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 25
 Crack the satirick 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 ; 30
 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 appriz'd
 How great the danger of disturbing her, 35
 To muse in silence, or at least confine
 Remarks, that gall so many, to the few
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
 Is oftentimes proof of wisdom, when the fault
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach. 40

Domestick happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise, that has surviv'd 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 45
 Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup ;
 Thou art the nurse of Virtue—in thine arms
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
 Heav'n-born, and destin'd to the skies again. 50

Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador'd,
 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, 55
 And finding in the calm of truth-tried love,
 Joys that her stormy faptures never yield.
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown !
 Till prostitution elbows us aside 60
 In all our crowded streets ; and senates seem -
 Conven'd for purposes of empire less
 Than to release the adult'ress from her bond.
 Th' adult'ress ! what a theme for angry verse !
 What provocation to th' indignant heart, 65
 That feels for injur'd 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 publick ways ; 70
 The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,
 And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
 Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd
 And chaste themselves, are not asham'd to own.
 Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time, 75
 Not to be pass'd : and she that had renounced
 Her sex's honour, was renounc'd herself
 By all that priz'd it ; not for prud'ry's sake
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
 'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waiif, 80
 Desirous to return and not receiv'd :
 But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
 And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
 Men too were nice in honour in those days, 85
 And judg'd offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,
 Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold

- His country, or was slack when she requir'd
 His ev'ry nerve in action and at stretch, 90
 Paid with the blood that he had basely spar'd
 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 natur'd age !) 95
 That they are safe ; sinners of either sex
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well
 bred,
 Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough,
 To pass as readily through ev'ry door.
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may, 100
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,
 May claim this merit still—that she admits
 The worth of what she mimicks, with such care,
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause ;
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here, 105
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
 And specious semblances have lost their use.
 I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
 My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew 110
 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,
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts, 115
 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. 120
 Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come.
 I see that all are wand'rers, gone astray
 Each in his own delusions ; they are lost 125

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 130
 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, 135
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.
 The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
 And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
 Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
 Of heroes little known ; and call the rant 140
 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, 145
 In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
 The threads of politick 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 150
 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, 155
 Contrive creation ; travel nature up
 To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
 And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd,
 And planetary some ; what gave them first
 Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light. 160
 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
 Playing tricks with nature, giving laws 165
 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 170
 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 frantick, who thus spend it? all for smoke—
 Eternity for bubbles, proves at last 175
 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 liv'd in vain;
 And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well, 180
 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 deceiv'd.
 Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps, 185
 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! 190
 '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? 195
 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 200
 Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,

Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,
 And catechise it well : apply thy glass,
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
 Congenial with thine own : and, if it be, 205
 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, 210
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
 And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
 And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath ;
 I cannot analyze the air, nor catch
 The parallax of yonder luminous point, 215
 That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss :
 Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
 A silent witness of the headlong rage,
 Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,
 Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine. 220

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, 225
 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 philosophick tube,
 That brings the planets home into the eye 230
 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, 235
 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 240
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light ;
 Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptiz'd
 In the pure fountain of eternal love,
 Has eyes indeed ; and viewing all she sees 245
 As meant to indicate a God to man,
 Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days
 On all her branches : piety has found
 Friends in the friends of science, and true pray'r 250
 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 angelick wings, 255
 And fed on manna ! And such thine, in whom
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
 Immortal Hale ! for deep discernment prais'd,
 And sound integrity, not more than fam'd
 For sanctity of manners undefil'd. 260
- All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
 Like the fair flow'r dishevell'd in the wind ;
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream ;
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
 And we that worship him, ignoble graves. 265
 Nothing is proof against the gen'ral curse
 Of vanity that seizes all below.
 The only amaranthine flow'r on earth
 Is virtue ; th' only lasting treasure, truth.
 But what is truth ? 'Twas Pilate's question put 270
 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, 275
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book,

And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
 The method clear, and argument exact :
 That makes a minister in holy things 280
 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, 285
 That learning is too proud to gather up ;
 But which the poor, and the despis'd of all,
 Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ;
 Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.
 O friendly to the best pursuits of man, 290
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace !
 Domestick 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. 295
 But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
 E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,
 Though plac'd in Paradise, (for earth has still,
 Some traces of her youthful beauty left)
 Substantial happiness for transient joy : 300
 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 ; 305
 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, 310
 Fearless and wrapt 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 ; 315

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, 320
 For their own sake, its silence and its shade.
 Delights which who would leave that has a heart
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind
 Cultur'd and capable of sober thought
 For all the savage din of the swift pack 325
 And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain;
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
 With eloquence, that agonies inspire, 330
 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 335
 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, 340
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
 Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
 That feeds thee; thou mayst frolick on the floor
 At ev'ning, and at night retire secure
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd; 345
 For I have gained thy confidence, have pledg'd
 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, 350
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.*

* See the note at the end.

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, 355
 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 ? 360
 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, 365
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds
 E'en 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 370
 By causes not to be divulg'd 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 375
 A social, not a dissipated life,
 Has business ; feels himself engag'd 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 prais'd ; 380
 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. 385

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, 390
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,
 Which neatly she prepares : then to his book
 Well chosen, and not sullenly perus'd
 In selfish silence, but imparted, oft
 As aught occurs that she may smile to hear, 395
 Or turn to nourishment, digested well.
 Or if the garden with its many cares,
 All well repaid, demand him, he attends
 The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
 Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye, 400
 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, 405
 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 e'en their fruits afford ; 410
 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 prolifick pow'rs, 415
 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 420
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
 Large expectation, he disposes neat
 At measur'd distances, that air and sun,
 Admitted freely may afford their aid, 425
 And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
 Hence summer has her riches, Autumn hence,

And hence e'en Winter fills his wither'd hand
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
 Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd, 430
 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 435
 Maternal nature had revers'd 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 440
 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. 445
 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 matur'd, 450
 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, Philips, shines for aye 455
 The solitary shilling. Pardon, then,
 Ye sage dispensers of poetick 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 460
 Of critick appetite, no sordid fare,
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.
 The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,

* *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma. Virg.*

Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
 And potent to resist the freezing blast : 465
 For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
 Deciduous, when now November dark
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
 Expos'd to his cold breath, the task begins.
 Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed, 470
 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 475
 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 480
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
 By just degrees, an overhanging breath,
 Shelt'ring the base with its projected eaves ;
 Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass, 485
 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 490
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
 Slow gath'ring in the midst, through the square mass
 Diffus'd, attain the surface ; when, behold !
 A pestilent and most corrosive stream,
 Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast, 495
 And fast condens'd upon the dewy sash,
 Asks egress ? which obtain'd, the overcharg'd
 And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,
 In volumes wheeling slow the vapour dank ;
 And, purified, rejoices to have lost 500
 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 505
 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 fomentation, and invite the seed. 510
 The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
 And glossy, he commits to pots of size
 Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd
 And fruitful soil, that has been treasur'd long,
 And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds. 515
 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 immers'd. 520
 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. 525
 Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented loaves,
 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 ; 530
 Prolifick all, and harbingers of more.
 The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
 And transplantation in an ampler space.
 Indulg'd in what they wish, they soon supply
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flow'rs, 535
 Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
 These have their sexes ; and when summer shines,
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal
 From flow'r to flow'r, and e'en the breathing air

Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540

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 545

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 exercis'd, and hang

Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550

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, 555

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 560

Devises while he guards his tender trust;

And oft at last in vain. The learn'd and wise

Sarcastick would exclaim, and judge the song

Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit

Of too much labour, worthless when produc'd. 565

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too

Unconscious of a less propitious clime,

There blooms exotick beauty, warm and snug,

While the winds whistle and the snows descend,

The spiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf 570

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. 575

The 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 580
 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, 585
 They form one social shade, as if conven'd
 By magick 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, 590
 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 retir'd, but still
 Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand. 595
 So once were rang'd 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 musick from his lips, 600
 And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
 In ev'ry flash of his far-beaming eye,
 Nor taste alone and well-contriv'd display
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains 605
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
 And more laborious ; cares on which depend
 Their vigour, injur'd soon, not soon restor'd.
 The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts, 610
 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 615
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 repay the toil. The sight is pleased, 620
The scent regal'd, 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. 625
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 gayly dress'd appears
A flow'ry island, from the dark green lawn 630

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,) 635

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. 640

Without it all is Gothick as the scene
To which th' insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath ; where industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,
Has made a Heav'n on Earth ; with suns and moons
Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd th' encumber'd
soil, 646

And fairly laid the zodiack in the dust.
He, therefore, who would see his flow'rs dispos'd
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds, 650
Forecasts the future whole ; that, when the scene

Shall break into its preconceiv'd display,
 Each for itself, and all as with one voice
 Conspiring, may attest his bright design,
 Nor even then dismissing as perform'd, 655
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
 Few self-supported flow'rs endure the wind
 Uninjur'd, but expect the upholding aid
 Of the smooth shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
 Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age, 660
 For int'rest sake, the living to the dead.
 Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffus'd
 And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
 Like virtue, thriving most where little seen :
 Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub 665
 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, 670
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
 Th' improv'rish'd earth ; an overbearing race,
 That, like the multitude made faction mad,
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
 O blest seclusion from a jarring world, 675
 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 680
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
 By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd
 Abroad, and desolating publick life,
 When fierce Temptation, seconded within
 By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts 685
 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? 690
 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, 695
 And profligate abusers of a world
 Created fair so much in vain for them,
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
 Allur'd by my report: but sure no less
 That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize, 700
 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
 Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.
 I therefore recommend, though at the risk 705
 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 710
 Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
 Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her smiles,
 And chaste, though unconfi'd, whom I extol.
 Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
 Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth, 715
 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, 720
 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 725
 Admirers, and be destin'd to divide
 With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!

Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,
 She loses all her influence. Cities then
 Attract us, and neglected Nature pines 730
 Abandon'd as unworthy of our love.
 But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd
 By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
 And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
 From clamour, and whose very silence charms; 735
 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, 741
 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, 745
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
 Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
 Who had surviv'd the father, serv'd the son.
 Now, the legitimate and rightful lord
 Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd, 750
 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, gaz'd upon a while, 755
 Then advertis'd, and auctioneer'd away.
 The country starves, and they that feed th' o'ercharg'd
 And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
 The wings that waft our riches out of sight, 760
 Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
 And nimble motion of those restless joints,
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.
 Improvement, too, the idol of the age,
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes! 765

Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, 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 expos'd 770
 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: 775
 And streams, as if created for his use,
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
 Now murm'ring soft, now roaring in cascades—
 E'en as he bids! Th' enraptur'd owner smiles. 780
 'Tis finish'd, and yet, finish'd as it seems,
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
 A mine to satisfy th' enormous cost.
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
 He sighs, departs, and leaves th' accomplish'd plan 785
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
 Labour'd, and many a night pursu'd in dreams,
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the Heav'n
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy! 790
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
 When, having no stake left, no pledge t' endear,
 Her int'rests, 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 795
 Deals him out money from the publick chest;
 Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse
 Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
 To be refunded duly, when his vote
 Well-manag'd shall have earn'd its worthy price. 800
 O innocent, compar'd with arts like these,
 Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
 Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds

One drop of Heav'n's sweet mercy in his cup,
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content, 800
 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. 810

Ambition, avarice, 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, 816
 And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech
 That sucks him there the sycophant, and he
 Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,
 Begg a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail 820
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.

The lovee 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 825
 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 amus'd,
 That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing 830
 Unpeople all our countries 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.

O thou resort and mart of all the earth, 835
 Checker'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 pleasest and yet shock'st me ! I can laugh, 840
 And I can weep, can hope and can despond

Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else, 845
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had pow'r to be,
For whom God heard his Abr'ham plead in vain.



THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The World contemplated at a distance—Address to Winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The wagoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Publick 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 the 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, 5
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
'True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn ; 10
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. 15
 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 charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains, 20
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
 But O, th' important budget! usher'd in
 With such heart-shaking musick, who can say
 What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd? 25
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
 Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantick wave
 Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
 And jewel'd turban with a smile of peace,
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate, 30
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
 The logick, 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. 35
 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, 40
 So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
 Not such his ev'ning, who with shining face
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd
 And bor'd with elbow points through both his sides,
 Outcolds the ranting actor on the stage: 45
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
 Of patriots, bursting with heroick rage,
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
 This folio of four pages happy work! 50

- Which not e'en criticks 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, 5
 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 60
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
 And with a dext'rous 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 ; 65
 The modest speaker is asham'd and griev'd,
 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 : 70
 The dearth of information and good sense
 That it foretells us always comes to pass.
 Cataracts of declamation thunder here ;
 There forests of no meaning spread the page,
 In which all comprehension wanders, lost ; 75
 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, 80
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
 Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
 Sermons, and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,
 Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits, 85
 And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
 At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.
 'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,

To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ; 90
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound
 Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanc'd 95
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round
 With all its generations ; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war 100
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me ;
 Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
 And av'rice that make man a wolf to man ;
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
 By which he speaks the language of his heart, 105
 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 ; 110
 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 115
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
 O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year, 120
 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fring'd with a beard made white with other snaws
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne 125
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,

But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
 And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
 A pris'n'ner in the yet undawning east, 130
 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, 135
 And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group
 The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
 I crown thee king of intimate delights,
 Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness, 140
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours
 Of long, uninterrupted ev'ning know.
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
 No powder'd pert proficient in the art 145
 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, 150
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
 Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
 And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair; 155
 A wreath, that cannot fade, or flow'rs that blow
 With most success when all besides decay.
 The poet's or historian's page by one
 Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest: 159
 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

THE WINTER EVENING. 81

On female industry : the threaded steel 165

Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.

The volume clos'd, 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, 170

Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,

And under an old oak's domestick 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 175

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 180

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, 185

The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found

Unlook'd for, life preserv'd, and peace restor'd—

Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.

O ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd

The Sabine bard. O ev'nings, I reply, 190

More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,

As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,

That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is Winter hideous in a garb like this ?

Needs he the tragick fur, the smoke of lamps, 195

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 200

(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 a universal grin,
 Sees not a count'nance there, that speaks of joy 205
 Half so refin'd or so sincere as ours.
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
 That idleness has ever yet contriv'd
 To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
 To palliate dulness, and give time a shove. 210
 Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
 Unsoil'd, and swift, and of a silken sound ;
 But the world's Time is Time in masquerade !
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd,
 With motley plumes ; and where the peacock shows
 His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red 216
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
 Ensanguin'd hearts, clubs typical of strife,
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
 What should be, and what was an hourglass once, 220
 Becomes a dicebox, and a billiard mace
 Well does the work of his destructive sithe.
 Thus deck'd, he charms a World whom Fashion blinds
 To his true worth, most pleas'd when idle most :
 Whose only happy, are their idle hours. 225
 E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore
 The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
 Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
 Of card devoted Time, and, night by night,
 Plac'd at some vacant corner of the board, 230
 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, 235
 Which seen, delights him not ; then coming home,
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know .
 How far he went for what was nothing worth :
 So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
 With colours mix'd for a far different use, 240

Paint cards, and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing,
That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Ev'ning, once again, season of peace,
Return, sweet Ev'ning, and continue long !
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245

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 charg'd for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day : 250

Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
Like homely-featur'd 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 255

With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift ; 260

And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to musick, or the poet's toil ;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to please ;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still. 266

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 270

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 shadows to the ceiling, there by fits 275

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 280
 Pregnant, or indispos'd 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. 285
 Me oft has Fancy, ludicrous and wild,
 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 gaz'd, myself creating what I saw. 290
 Nor less amus'd 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 deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.
 'Tis thus the understanding takes repose 296
 In indolent vacuity of thought,
 And sleeps, and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
 Conceals the mood lethargick with a mask
 Of deep deliberation, as the man 300
 Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost
 Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
 At ev'ning, till at length the freezing blast
 That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
 The recollected pow'rs ; and snapping short 305
 The glassy threads, with which the Fancy weaves
 Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
 How calm is my recess ; and how the frost,
 Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
 The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within ! 310
 I saw the woods and fields at close of day,
 A variegated show ; the meadows green,
 Though faded ; and the lands, where lately wav'd
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
 Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share. 315
 I saw far off the weedy fallows smile

With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
 By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
 His fav'rite herb : while all the leafless groves
 That skirt th' horizon wore a sable hue, 320
 Scarce notic'd 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. 325
 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 330
 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 ; 335
 It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
 Against the law of love, to measure lots
 With less distinguish'd than ourselves ; that thus
 We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
 And sympathize with others suff'ring more. 340
 Ill fares the trav'ler now, and he that stalks
 In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team
 The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
 By congregated loads adhering close
 To the clogg'd wheels ; and in its sluggish paco 345
 Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
 The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
 While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong
 Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon
 Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear 350
 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, 355
 Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
 O happy ; and in my account denied
 That sensibility of pain with which
 Refinement is endu'd, thrice happy thou !
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed 360
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
 The learn'd finger never need explore
 Thy vig'rous pulse ; and the unheathful east,
 That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone
 Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee. 365
 Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;
 Thy wagon 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 ; Yude as thou appear'st, 370
 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, 375
 And have a friend in ev'ry 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 sparsely, time to cool.
 The frugal housewife trembles when she lights 380
 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, 385
 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 mov'd by his severer toil ;
 Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs. 390
 The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
 Dangled along at the cold finger's end

Just when the day declin'd : and the brown loaf
 Lodg'd on the shelf half eaten without sauce
 Of sav'ry cheese, or butter, costlier still ; 395
 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 400
 Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
 Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from publick 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, 405
 Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
 I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
 For ye are worthy ; choosing rather far
 A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
 And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410
 The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
 Of knaves in office, partial in the work
 Of distribution ; lib'ral of their aid
 To clam'rous Importunity in rags,
 But ofttimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush 415
 To wear a tatter'd garb, however coarse,
 Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth :
 These ask with painful shyness, and, refus'd
 Because deserving, silently retire !
 But be ye of good courage ! Time itself 420
 Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase ;
 And all your numerous progeny, well train'd,
 But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
 And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
 What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare, 425
 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 wo ; 430

The effect of laziness or sottish waste,
 Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
 For plunder ; much solicitous how best
 He may compensate for a day of sloth
 By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong. 435
 Wo to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
 Plash'd neatly, and secur'd 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, 440
 An ass's burden, and, when laden most
 And heaviest, light of foot, steals fast away
 Nor does the bordered hovel better guard
 The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
 From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave 445
 Unwrench'd the door, however well secur'd,
 Where Chanticleer amidst his haram 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, 450
 And loudly wond'ring at the sudden change.
 Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse
 Did pity of their suff'rings warp aside
 His principle, and tempt him into sin
 For their support, so destitute. But they 455
 Neglected, pine at home ; themselves, as more
 Expos'd 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 460
 His ev'ry action, and imbrates the man.
 O 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 ! 465
 Pass where we may, through city or through town,
 Village or hamlet, of this merry land,
 Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace

Conducts th' unguarded nose to such a whiff
 Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the sties 470
 That law has licens'd, as makes Temp'rance reel.
 There sit, involv'd 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; 475
 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, 480
 Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,
 Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
 Perch'd on the signpost, holds with even hand
 Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
 A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride; 485
 And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
 Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
 The cheek distending oath, not to be prais'd
 As ornamental, musical, polite,
 Like those which modern senators employ, 490
 Whose oath is rhet'rick, 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 496
 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 500
 To advertise in verse a publick 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, 505
 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 ! 510
 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, 515
 And Sidney, warbler of poetick 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 520

Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing.)
 Then were not all effac'd ; then speech profane,
 And manners profligate, were rarely found,
 Observ'd as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
 Vain wish ! those days were never ; airy dreams 525
 Sat for the picture : and the poet's hand,
 Imparting substance to an empty shade,
 Impos'd 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 530
 Impossible when Virtue is so scarce,
 That to suppose a scene where she presides
 Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.

No : we are polish'd now. The rural lass,
 Whom once her virgin modesty and grace, 535
 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, 540
 And ribands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
 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 545
 Ill propp'd upon French heels ; she might be deem'd
 (But that the basket dangling on her arm
 Interprets her more truly) of a rank
 Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs—
 Expect her soon with footboy at her heels, 550
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,
 Her train and her umbrella all her care !

The town has ting'd the country ; and the stain
 Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
 The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs 555
 Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas,
 Scenes rarely grac'd 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. 560
 Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd
 By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale
 Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
 With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
 But farewell now to unsuspecting nights, 565
 And slumbers unalarm'd ! Now, ere you sleep,
 See that your polish'd arms be prim'd 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 570
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
 E'en 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. 575
 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 ; 580
 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 585
 Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
 The rich, and they that have an arm to check
 The license of the lowest in degree,
 Desert their office ; and themselves, intent
 On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590
 To all the violence of lawless hands
 Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
 Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
 The plump convivial parson often bears 595
 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, 600
 Himself enslav'd by terrour 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 605
 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 610
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
 Wild fowl or venison : and his errand speeds.
 But faster far, and more than all the rest,
 A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark
 Of publick virtue, ever wish'd remov'd, 615
 Works the deplor'd 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, 620

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 625
 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 630
 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, 635
 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, 640
 His form and movement ; is as smart above
 As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears
 His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace ;
 And, his three years of heroship expir'd,
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough. 645
 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 650
 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 ; 655
 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 660
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
 Shine out ; there only reach their proper use.
 But man, associated and leagued with man
 By regal warrant or self-join'd by bond
 For int'rest sake, or swarming into clans 665
 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 endur'd. 670
 Hence charter'd boroughs are such publick plagues
 And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
 In all their private functions, once combin'd,
 Become a loathsome body, only fit
 For dissolution, hurtful to the main. 675
 Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
 Against the charities of domestick life,
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose
 Their nature ; and, disclaiming all regard
 For mercy and the common rights of man, 680
 Build factories with blood, conducting trade
 At the sword's point, and dying the white robe
 Of innocent commercial Justice red.
 Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
 Mideems it, dazzied by its bright array, 685
 With all its majesty of thund'ring pomp,
 Enchanting musick, and immortal wreaths,
 Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught
 On principle, where foppery atones
 For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice. 690
 But slighted as it is, and by the great
 Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
 Infected with the manners and the modes
 It knew not once, the country wins me still.
 I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan, 695
 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 700
 The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
 Sportive and jingling her poetick bells,
 Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.
 No bard could please me but whose lyre was tun'd
 To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats 705
 Fatigu'd me, never weary of the pipe
 Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
 The rustick throng beneath his fav'rite beech.
 Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
 New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd 710
 The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
 To speak its excellence. I danc'd for joy.
 I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age
 As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
 Engag'd my wonder; and admiring still, 715
 And still admiring, with regret suppos'd
 The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
 There, too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
 Pathetick in its praise, in its pursuit
 Determin'd and possessing it at last, 720
 With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,
 I studied, priz'd, 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 725
 Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.
 I still revere thee, courtly though retir'd;
 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. 730
 'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
 Is an ingredient in the compound man,
 Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
 And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout

Discriminated each from each, by strokes 735
 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, 741
 But none without some relish, none unmov'd.
 It is a flame that dies not even there,
 Where nothing feeds it : neither business, crowds,
 Nor habits of luxurious city life, 745
 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 750
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame !
 E'en in the stifling bosom of the town
 A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
 That sooth the rich possessor ; much consol'd, 755
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the woe
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
 That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green
 Is still the liv'ry she delights to wear, 760
 Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.
 What are the casements lin'd with creeping herbs,
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
 The Frenchman's darling ?* are they not all proofs,
 That man, immur'd in cites, still retains 766
 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, 770
 And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds,

* Mignonette.

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 775
 A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there ;
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
 The country, with what ardour he contrives
 A peep at Nature, when he can no more.
 Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease, 780
 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 ; 785
 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, 790
 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 injur'd land
 He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, a heart
 To feel, and courage to redress, her wrongs ; 795
 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 800
 Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

THE TASK.

BOOK V

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of a 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 Bastile, 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, 5
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. 10
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 15
 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. 20
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
 Beneath the dazzling deluge ; and the bents,
 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad, 25
 And, fledg'd 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, 30
 Fretful if unsupplied ; but silent, meek,
 And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
 He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,
 Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass ; 35
 Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
 With such undeviating and even force
 He severs it away ; no needless care,
 Lest storm should overset the leaning pile
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight. 40
 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 45
 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 ; 50

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, 55
 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, 60
 Come trooping at the housewife's well known call
 The feather'd tribes domestick. 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, 65
 To seize the fair occasion ; well they eye
 The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolv'd
 T' escape th' impending famine, often scar'd
 As oft return—a pert voracious kind.
 Clean riddance quickly made, one only care 70
 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 75
 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 naught ; th' imprison'd worm is
 safe 80
 Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs
 Lie cover'd close ; and berry-bearing thorns,
 That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
 Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
 The long-protracted rigour of the year 85
 Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,

THE WINTER MORNING WALK. 101

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 90
 Repays their labour more ; and perch'd aloft
 By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
 Lean pensioners upon the trav'ler's track,
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain. 95
 The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
 Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
 Lies undissolv'd ; while silently beneath,
 And unperceiv'd, the current steals away. 100
 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, 105
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
 And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks
 With forms so various, that no pow'rs of art,
 The pencil, or the pen, may trace the scene !
 Here glitt'ring turrets rise, upbearing high, 110
 (Fantastick misarrangement !) on the roof
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
 And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
 That trickled down the branches, fast congeal'd,
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length, 115
 And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
 Here grotto within grotto safe defies
 The sunbeam ; there, emboss'd and fretted wild,
 The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
 Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain 120
 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, 125

As she with all her rules can never reach.
 Less worthy of applause, though more admir'd,
 Because a novelty, the work of man,
 Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130
 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 found 135
 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 140
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
 And snow, that often blinds the trav'ler's course,
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
 Silently as a dream the fabrick rose ;
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there : 145
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
 Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd
 Than water interfus'd, to make them one.
 Lamps gracefully dispos'd, and of all hues,
 Illumin'd ev'ry side : a wat'ry light 150
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
 Another moon new ris'n, 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 155
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within
 That royal residence might well besit,
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
 Of flow'rs that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
 Blush'd on the pannels. Mirror needed none 160
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due
 Convivial table and commodious seat
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there ;

THE WINTER MORNING WALK. 103

Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all, 165
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 glanc'd, 170

(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 175
Treach'rous and false ; it smil'd, and it was cold.

Great princes have great play-things. Some have
play'd

At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amus'd the dull, sad years of life, 180
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,)

With schemes of monumental fame ; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short liv'd themselves, t' immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field, 185

And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well,
T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds 190

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, 195

Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drove asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair 200

And equal ; and he bade them dwell in peace.
 Peace was awhile their care ; they plough'd, and sow'd,
 And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
 But violence can never longer sleep
 Than human passions please. In every heart 205
 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. 210
 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 forc'd the blunt and yet unbloodied steel 215
 To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
 Him, Tubal nam'd, 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 surviv'd the waters ; and ere long, 220
 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, 225
 T' improve and cultivate their just demesne,
 Made others covet what they saw so fair.
 Thus war began on Earth : these fought for spoil,
 And those in self-defence. Savage at first
 The onset, and irregular. At length 230
 One eminent above the rest for strength,
 For stratagem, for courage, or for all,
 Was chosen leader ; him they serv'd in war,
 And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds,
 Rev'renc'd no less. Who could with him compare ?
 Or who so worthy to control themselves, 236
 As he, whose prowess had subdu'd their foes ?
 Thus war, affording field for the display

THE WINTER MORNING WALK. 105

Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
 Which have their exigencies too, and call 240
 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 245
 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 250
 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 255
 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, 260
 Then most deserving in their own account
 When most extravagant in his applause,
 As if, exalting him, they rais'd themselves.
 Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
 And sober judgment, that he is but man, 265
 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 270
 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. 275
 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 280
 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, 285
 E'en 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 290
 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, 295
 Can even now, when they are grown mature
 In wisdom, and with philosophick deeds
 Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest!
 Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
 To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead 300
 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 305
 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, 310
 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, 315
 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? 320
- Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
 Jotham ascrib'd to his assembled trees
 In politick convention) put your trust
 I' th' shadow of a bramble, and, reclin'd
 In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch, 325
 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? 330
- 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, 335
 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! 340
- 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. 345
- 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: 350
- 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, 355
 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 belov'd
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise, 360
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by suffrance, and at will
 Of a superiour, he is never free.
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life 365
 Expos'd to manacles, deserves them well.
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
 And forc'd to abandon what she bravely sought,
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause 370
 Not often unsuccessful : pow'r usurp'd
 Is weakness when oppos'd ; conscious of wrong,
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess 375
 All that the contest calls for ; spirit, strength,
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts ;
 The surest presage of the good they seek.*

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
 To France than all her losses and defeats, 380
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,
 Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
 Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Bastile
 Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts :
 Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair, 385
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age

* 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.

With musick, 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 390
 That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
 For he who values Liberty, confines
 His zeal for her predominance within
 No narrow bounds ; her cause engages him 395
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
 There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
 Immur'd though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
 Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape.
 There, like the visionary emblem seen 400
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
 And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
 Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.
 To count the hour-bell and expect no change ;
 And ever as the sullen sound is heard, 405
 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 musick ; that it summons some
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball ; 410
 The wearied hireling finds it a release
 From labour ; and the lover, who has chid
 Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke
 Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought 415
 To such amusements as ingenious wo
 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— 420
 To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—

To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro 425
 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 430
 In all directions, he begins again—
 O 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, 435
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon th' endearments of domestick life
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word 440
 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,
 Ador'd through fear, strong only to destroy. 445
 '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 450
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds
 The eyesight of Discovery ; and begets,
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind,
 Bestial, a meager intellect, unfit
 To be the tenant of man's noble form. 455
 Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd
 By publick exigence, till annual food
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free ;
 My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,

- Replete with vapours, and disposes much
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine :
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft 465
 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 470
 In converse, either starv'd by cold reserve,
 Or flush'd by fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.
 Yet, being free, I love thee : for the sake
 Of that one feature can be well content,
 Disgrac'd as thou hast been, poor as thou art, 475
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.
 But once enslav'd, farewell ! I could endure
 Chains no where patiently ; and chains at home,
 Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
 Then what were left of roughness in the grain 480
 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, 485
 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. 490
 Do I forebode impossible events,
 And tremble at vain dreams ? Heav'n grant I may !
 But th' age of virtuous politicks is past,
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
 Patriots are grown too sbrowd to be sincere, 495
 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 500

And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :
 For when was publick 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 ? 505
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
 Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake
 That country, if at all, must be belov'd ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510
 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 they not of old, whose temper'd blades 515
 Dispers'd 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 domestick sphere, 520
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to publick 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, 525
 That promis'd 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. 530
 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 fabrick stood ; 535
 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 unprais'd,
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs 540
 Of Earth and Hell confed'rate take away :
 A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
 Oppression, prisons, have no pow'r to bind
 Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
 'Tis liberty of heart deriv'd from Heav'n, 545
 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 550
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
 And are august ! but this transcends them all.
 His other works, the visible display
 Of all-creating energy and might,
 Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word 555
 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, 560
 Might well suppose th' artificer divine
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself
 Pronounc'd it transient, glorious as it is,
 And, still designing a more glorious far,
 Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise. 565
 These therefore are occasional, and pass ;
 Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God ;
 That office serv'd, they must be swept away.
 Not so the labours of his love : they shine 570
 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, 575
 And confident assurance of the rest,

Is liberty ; a flight into his arms,
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
 A clear escape from tyrannising lust,
 And full immunity from penal wo. 580

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
 Stripes, and a dungeon ; and his body serves
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.
 Propense his heart to idols, he is held 585

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, 590

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. 595

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 oppos'd in vain,
 And self-reproaching conscience ? He foresees 600

The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
 Fortune, and dignity ; the loss of all
 That can ennoble man and make frail life,
 Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
 Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins

Infect his happiest moments, he forbodes 605
 Ages of hopeless mis'ry. Future death,
 And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave :
 But unrepealable, enduring, death. 610

Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears :
 What none can prove a forgery, may be true ,
 What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
 That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud

Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst 615
 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 dethron'd and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
 But spurious and short liv'd : the puny child 621
 Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
 On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
 And fights again ; but finds, his best essay
 A presage ominous, portending still 625
 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 630
 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 giv'n appetites to man, 635
 And stor'd 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 640
 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 645
 Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
 Attend to their own musick ? 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 651
 May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,

The unequivocal, authentick 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) 656

Serve to compose a spirit well inclin'd
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urg'd,
(As often as, libidinous discourse 660

Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserv'd assent ;
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair, 665

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. 670

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*. 675

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 poetick trappings grace thy prose,
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.— 680

Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high sounding brass,
Smitten in vain ! such musick cannot charm
The 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, 685

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 690

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 695
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
 Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
 And he by means in philosophick eyes
 Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
 The wonder ; humanizing what is brute 700
 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, 705
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
 Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historick 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 710
 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, 715
 And, for a time, ensure to his lov'd 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— 720
 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 liv'd unknown,
 Till persecution dragg'd them into fame, 725
 And chas'd 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 730
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confed'rate for his harm, 735
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, compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight, 740
Calls the delightful scenery 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 inspir'd, 745

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, 750

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 cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap 755
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, 760

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

* See Hume.

Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea, 765
 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 : 770
 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 775
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain ;
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
 Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.
 Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780
 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, 785
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main. 790
 Man views it, and admires ; but rests content
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
 But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,
 And such well pleas'd to find it, asks no more. 795
 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.
 Nor for its own sake merely, but for his 800
 Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;
 Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,

To earth's acknowledg'd sov'reign, finds at once
 Its only just proprietor in Him.
 The soul that sees him, or receives sublim'd 805
 New faculties, or learns at least t' employ
 More worthily the powers she own'd before,
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
 Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,
 A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms 810
 Terrestrial in the vast and the minute ;
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God,
 Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
 Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds 815
 With those fair ministers of light to man,
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
 Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they
 With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste
 To gratulate the new-created earth, 820
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts,
 That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
 Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
 If from your elevation, whence ye view 825
 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, 830
 And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours ?
 As one, who, long detain'd on foreign shores,
 Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
 From the green wave emerging, darts an eye 835
 Radiant with joy toward 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 840

From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
 Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
 That give assurance of their own success,
 And that, infus'd from Heaven, must thither tend."
 So reads he Nature, whom the lamp of truth 845
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
 Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,
 With intellects bemaz'd in endless doubt,
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built
 With means that were not, till by thee employ'd, 850
 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. 855
 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. 860
 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 866
 Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
 Challenging human scrutiny, and prov'd
 Then skilful most when most severely judg'd.
 But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st: 870
 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 875
 Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
 Or disregard our follies, or that sit
 Amus'd spectators of this bustling stage.

Thee we reject, unable to abide
 Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure, 880
 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. 885
 A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not,
 Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,
 A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works ;
 Which he that hears it, with a shout repeats,
 And adds his rapture to the general praise ! 890
 In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide
 Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
 The author of her beauties, who, retir'd
 Behind his own creation, works unseen
 By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied : 895
 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, 900
 His high endeavour, and his glad success,
 His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
 But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,
 Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !
 Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ; 905
 And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK

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

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs or martial, brisk, or grave;
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies, . 5
How soft the musick 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! 10

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, 15
 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, 20
 And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
 Mov'd 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 revok'd, 25
 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 30
 When most severe, and must'ring all its force,
 Was but the graver countenance of love;
 Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might low'r,
 And utter now and then an awful voice,
 But had a blessing in its darkest frown, 35
 Threat'ning at once and nourishing the plant.
 We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand
 That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allur'd
 By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounc'd
 His shelt'ring side, and wilfully forewent 40
 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. 45
 Sorrow has, since they went, subdu'd and tam'd
 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, 50
 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, 55
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.
 The night was winter in its roughest mood ;
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast, 60
 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 ; 65
 And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r,
 Whence all the musick. 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, 70
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
 The roof, though moveable through all its length
 As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,
 And, intercepting in their silent fall
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me. 75
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought
 The red-breast warbles still, but is content
 With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd :
 Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes 80
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart 85
 May give a useful lesson to the head,

And Learning wiser grow without his books.
 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
 Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men ; 90
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
 Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place,
 Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich. 95
 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 magick art of shrewder wits
 Hold an unthinking multitude enthral'd. 100
 Some to the fascination of a name,
 Surrender judgment hood-wink'd. Some the styie
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranc'd.
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear 105
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,
 And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
 But tree and rivulets, whose rapid course
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
 And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
 Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn
 root,
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
 Not shy, as in the world, and to be won 115
 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 ? 120
 Familiar with th' effect, we slight the cause,
 And in the constancy of Nature's course,
 The regular return of genial months,

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And renovation of a faded world,
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again, 125
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
 Of th' 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, 130
 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 mov'd
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph 135
 Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins
 Of leaf and flow'r ? It sleeps ; and th' icy touch
 Of unprolifick winter has impress'd
 A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.
 But let the months go round, a few short months, 140
 And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,
 Barren as lances, among which the wind
 Makes wintry musick, sighing as it goes,
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
 And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread, 145
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
 Then each in its peculiar honours clad,
 Shall publish even to the distant eye
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich 150
 In streaming gold ; syringa, iv'ry pure :
 The scentless and the scented rose ; this red
 And of a humbler growth, the other* tall,
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom
 Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf, 155
 That the wind severs from the broken wave ;
 The lilack, various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd 160

* The Guelder Rose.

Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all ;
 Copious of flowers, the woodbine, pale and wan,
 But well compensating her sickly looks
 With never cloying odours, early and late ;
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm 165
 Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,
 That scarce a leaf appears ; mezereon, too,
 Though leafless, well-attir'd and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths, investing every spray ;
 Althæa with the purple eye ; the broom 170
 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 175
 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. 180
 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 their lives and works
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God. 185
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,
 That makes 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, 190
 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,
 Uninjur'd, with inimitable art ; 195
 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 receiv'd a law 200
 From which they swerv'd not since. That under force
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,
 And need not His immediate hand who first
 Prescrib'd their course, to regulate it now.
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God 205
 Th' encumbrance 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. 210
 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. 215
 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? 220
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,
 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, 225
 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. 230
 Him blind antiquity profan'd, not serv'd,
 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, 235
 That were not; and commending as they would

To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
 But all are under one. One spirit—His
 Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower 240
 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 seaside sands, 245
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
 Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
 Of what he views of beautiful or grand
 In nature, from the broad majestick oak 250
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
 Makes all still fairer As with him no scene
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please. 255
 Though winter had been gone, 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 260
 Recov'ring fast its liquid musick, prove.

Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd
 To contemplation, and within his reach
 A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,
 Would waste attention at the checker'd board. 265
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro
 Marching and countermarching, with an eye
 As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung 270
 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

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- Across a velvet level, feel a joy 275
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
 Its destin'd 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 280
 The polish'd counter, and approving none,
 Or promising with smiles to call again.
 Nor him, who by his vanity seduc'd,
 And sooth'd into a dream, that he discerns
 The difference of a Guido from a daub, 285
 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 : 290
 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 295
 The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
 Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
 E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad 300
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,
 To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
 And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
 A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook—
 These shades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,
 Grown so familiar with her frequent guest, 306
 Scarce shuns me ; and the stock-dove, unalarm'd,
 Sits cooing in the pinetree, nor suspends
 His long love ditty for my near approach.
 Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm, 310
 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 ; 315
 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 cries aloud,
 With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
 And anger insignificantly fierce. 320

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 pleas'd
 With sight of animals enjoying life, 325
 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, 330
 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, 335
 That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
 Their efforts, yet resolv'd, with one consent,
 To give such act and utt'rance as they may
 To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd— 340

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 pleas'd, 345
 A far superiour happiness to theirs,
 The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had ris'n, obedient to his call
 Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
 When he was crown'd as never king was since. 350

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. 356
 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. 360
 He rul'd 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 rul'd the whole, 365
 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. 370
 Garden of God, how terrible the change
 Thy groves and lawns then witness'd ! Ev'ry heart,
 Each animal, of ev'ry name, conceiv'd
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
 And, conscious of some danger, either fled 375
 Precipitate the loath'd 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 380
 The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
 To such gigantick and enormous growth,
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
 Hence date the persecution and the pain,
 That man inflicts on all inferiour kinds, 385
 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 died 390
 With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
 Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
 Wag'd with defenceless innocence, while he,
 Not satisfied to prey on all around,
 Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs 395
 Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
 Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
 The most remote from his abhor'd resort,
 Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
 They fear'd, and as his perfect image, lov'd. 400
 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. 405
 Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
 Within the confines of their wild domain :
 The lion tells him—I am monarch here—
 And if he spare him, spares him on the terms
 Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn 410
 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. 415
 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 420
 Driv'n to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
 To madness ; while the savage at his heels
 Laughs at the frantick sufferer's fury, spent
 Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
 He too is witness, noblest of the train 425
 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. 430
 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,) 435
 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, 440
 Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
 But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew
 T' assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise ;
 And when the bush-exploring boy, that seiz'd 445
 The young, to let the parent bird go free ;
 Prov'd he not plainly, that his meaner works
 Are yet his care, and have an int'rest all,
 All, in the universal Father's love ?
 On Noah, and in him on all mankind, 450
 The charter was conferr'd by which we hold
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
 O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.
 But read the instrument, and mark it well :
 Th' oppression of a tyrannous control 455
 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 460
 The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
 Of hunger unassuag'd, has interpos'd,
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite

Th' injurious trampler upon Nature's law, 465
 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 470
 Sav'd him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
 He sees that human equity is slack
 To interfere, though in so just a cause :
 And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
 And helpless victims with a sense so keen 475
 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 rehears'd, 480
 (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 485
 Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
 Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
 He journey'd : and his chance was, as he went,
 To join a traveller, of far different note,
 Evander, fam'd for piety, for years 490
 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, 495
 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 mov'd
 At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
 Gentle and affable, and full of grace, 500
 As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
 Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths

Not hardly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,
 But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet
 "And dost thou dream," th' impenetrable man 505
 Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,
 And fantasies of dotards, such as thou,
 Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
 Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
 Need no such aids as superstition lends 510
 "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. 515
 But though the felon on his back could dare
 The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed
 Declin'd the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
 Or ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
 Baffled his rider, sav'd against his will. 520
 The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
 By med'cine well applied, but without grace
 The heart's insanity admits no cure.
 Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'd
 His horrible intent, again he sought 525
 Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
 With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood,
 But still in vain. The Providence that meant
 A longer date to the far nobler beast,
 Spar'd yet again th' ignobler for his sake. 530
 And now, his prowess prov'd, and his sincere
 Incurable obduracy evinc'd,
 His rage grew cool, and, pleas'd perhaps t' have earn'd
 So cheaply, the renown of that attempt,
 With looks of some complacence he resum'd 535
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze
 Of good Evander, still where he was left
 Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.
 So on they far'd. Discourse on other themes
 Ensuing seem'd t' obliterate the past; 540

And tamer far for so much fury shown,
 (As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
 The rude companion smil'd, as if transform'd—
 But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near
 An unsuspected storm. His hour was come. 545
 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, 550
 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 immers'd
 Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not, 555
 The death he had deserv'd, 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, 560
 'Though grac'd 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 ev'ning in the publick path; 565
 But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
 And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570
 Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,
 The chamber, or refectory, may die:
 A necessary act incurs no blame.
 Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
 And guiltless of offence, they range the air, 575
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
 There they are privileg'd; and he that hunts
 Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,

Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode. 580
 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, 585
 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 defil'd in most 590
 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 595
 And righteous limitation of its act,
 By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man;
 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. 600
 Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
 By our capacity of grace divine,
 From creatures, that exist but for our sake,
 Which having serv'd us, perish, we are held
 Accountable; and God some future day 605
 Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuse
 Of what he deems no mean nor trivial trust.
 Superiour as we are, they yet depend
 Not more on human help than we on theirs.
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv'n 610
 In aid of our defects. In some are found
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,
 Match'd with th' expertness of the brutes in theirs,
 Are oftentimes vanquish'd and thrown far behind. 615
 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. 620
 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 chang'd 625
 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, 630
 And glist'ning even in the dying eye.
 Man praises man.—Desert in arts or arms
 Wins publick honour ; and ten thousand sit
 Patiently present at a sacred song,
 Commemoration mad ; content to hear 635
 (O wonderful effect of musick's power !)
 Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake !
 But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
 (For, was it less, what heathen would have dar'd
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath, 640
 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 645
 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, 650
 Was never meant, was never us'd before,
 To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.
 But hush !—the Muse perhaps is too severe
 And with a gravity bevond the size

And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed 655
 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, 660
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
 And eke did roar right merrily, two staves,
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George!
 —Man praises man: and Garrick's mem'ry next,
 When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made 665
 The idol of our worship while he liv'd
 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 670
 Its squeez'd 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, 675
 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 fram'd the rites
 And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680
 And call'd the world to worship on the banks
 Of Avon, fam'd in song. Ah, pleasant proof
 That piety has still in human hearts
 Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
 The mulb'rry tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
 The mulb'rry tree stood centre of the dance; 686
 The mulb'rry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
 And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'rry tree
 Supplied such relicks as devotion holds
 Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690
 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 tipping benches, cellars, stalls, and styes, 695
 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 's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
 Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy : 700
 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. 705
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
 That finds out ev'ry 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. 710
 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 lodg'd already there.
 Encomium in old time was poet's work ; 715
 But poets, having lavishly long since
 Exhausted all materials of the art,
 The task now falls into the publick hand ;
 And I contented with an humbler theme,
 Have pour'd my stream of panegyrick down 720
 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 725
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
 May stand between an animal and wo,
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
 The groans of Nature in this nether world,

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON. 143

Which heav'n has heard for ages, have an end. 730
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp;
 The time of rest, the promis'd sabbath, comes
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course 735
 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 740
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
 When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
 Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
 Propitious in his chariot pav'd with love;
 And what his storms have blasted and defac'd 745
 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 musick, and not suffer loss. 750
 But when a poet, or when one like me,
 Happy to rove among poetick 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, 755
 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.
 O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see, 760
 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 765
 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, 770
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,
 Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade 775
 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, 780
 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. Errour has no place ;
 That creeping pestilence is driv'n away ; 785
 The breath of Heav'n has chas'd it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not : the pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790
 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, 795
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd ;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God !
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ; 800
 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, and the flocks of Kedar there ;* 805
 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 810
 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 ev'ry clime they come
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy, 815
 O Sion ! an assembly such as Earth
 Saw never, such as Heav'n stoops down to see.
 Thus heav'nward all things tend. For all were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.
 So God has greatly purpos'd ; who would else 820
 In his dishonour'd works himself endure
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
 Haste, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
 Yo slow-revolving seasons ! we would see
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet) 825
 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 : 830
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs
 And e'en 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. 835
 O for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs in the prophetick Scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, should'ring aside
 The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her 840
 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 : 845
 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 850
 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, 855
 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 o'erpaid its value with thy blood. 860
 Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts
 Thy title is engraven with a pen
 Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
 Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see 865
 The dawn of thy last advent, long desir'd,
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
 The very spirit of the world is tir'd
 Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long, 870
 " Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?"
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,
 Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
 He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoil'd,
 And aims them at the shield of Truth again. 875

The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;
 And all the mysteries to faith propos'd,
 Insulted and traduc'd are cast aside,
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats. 880

They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd,
 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 e'en these 885

Worthy, compar'd 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 890

To wand'ring sheep, resolv'd 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 894

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, 900
 Exhibit every lineament of these.

Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
 Due to thy last and-most effectual work,
 Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world ! 905

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come ;
 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
 Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
 Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit

Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith, 911
 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 915
 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 prov'd them vain. 920
 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, 926
 And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
 Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
 And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams
 Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird 930
 That flutters least is longest on the wing.
 Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
 Or what achievements of immortal fame
 He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
 His warfare is within. There, unfatigu'd, 935
 His fervent spirit labours. There he fights
 And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
 And never-with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which,
 The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
 Perhaps the self-approving, haughty world, 940
 That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
 Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see,
 Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
 Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
 Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes 945
 Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
 And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,
 When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
 And think on her who thinks not for herself. 950
 Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns

Of little worth, an idler in the best,
 If, author of no mischief and some good,
 He seeks his proper happiness by means
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine. 955
 Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,
 Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.
 His sphere, though humble, if that humble sphere
 Shine with his fair example; and though small 961
 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 965
 Some taste of comfort in a world of wo;
 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 970
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.
 The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,
 Must drop indeed the hope of publick praise;
 But he may boast, what few that win it can,
 That if his country stand not by his skill, 975
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
 Polite Refinement offers him in vain
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual World
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
 The neat conveyance hiding all the offence. 980
 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 985
 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
 Not soon deceiv'd; aware, that what is base

No polish can make sterling ; and that vice, 990
 Though well perfum'd and elegantly dress'd,
 Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flow'rs,
 Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
 For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away, 995
 More golden than that age of fabled gold
 Renown'd in ancient song ; not vex'd with care
 Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
 So glide my life away ! and so at last, 1000
 My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
 May some disease, not tardy to perform
 Its destin'd office, yet with gentle stroke,
 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
 Beneath the turf that I have often trod. 1005
 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 flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010
 Let fall th' unfinish'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit ;
 Rov'd far, and gather'd much ; some harsh, 'tis true,
 Pick'd from the thorns and briars of reproof,
 But wholesome, well digested ; grateful some
 To palates that can taste immortal truth ; 1015
 Insipid else, and sure to be despis'd.
 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 1020
 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.

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
 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, where I call'd to prove th' assertion true,
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it, then, that in the vane of life,
 Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,
 We find the friends we fancied we had won,
 Though num'rous once, reduc'd 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 overaw'd
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
 Go, fellow,—whither ?—turning short about—
 Nay—Stay at home—you're always going out.
 'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—
 For what ?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.—
 A friend ! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
 Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—

And fetch my cloak ; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child ;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made.
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to 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

O 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,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

TIROCINIUM:

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δε 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.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM.



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 5
Vast in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind
That form, the labour of almighty skill,
Fram'd for the service of a freeborn will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul. 10
Here 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, 15
The wisdom of great nations, now no more ;
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil ;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil ;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarg'd,
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharg'd. 20
For her the Fancy, roving unconfi'd,
The present muse of ev'ry pensive mind,
Works magick wonders, adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise, and waters roar, 25
Again she lays them slumbering 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, 30
 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 35
 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? 40
 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 45
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Die them at last in all their glowing hues—
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 Pow'r misemployed, munificence misplac'd, 50
 Had not its author dignified the plan,
 And crown'd it with the majesty of man.
 Thus form'd, thus plac'd, intelligent, and taught,
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws 55
 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; 60
 Endu'd with reason only to descry
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
 With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
 The force he spends against their fury vain;

And if, soon after having burn'd, by turns, 65
 With ev'ry lust with which frail Nature burns,
 His being end where death desolves 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, 70
 And uscless 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, 75
 A childish waste of philosophick pains ;
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,
 That 'tis our shame and mis'ry not to learn,
 Shine by the side of ev'ry path we tread
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read. 80
 '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 requir'd of human kind, 85
 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 perus'd,
 At once the dreaming mind is disabus'd. 90
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
 Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,
 'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose t' invest 95
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
 Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was Made
 Fit for the pow'r in which he stands array'd ;
 That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,
 He too might make his author's wisdom clear, 100
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.

This once believ'd, 'twere logick misapplied,
 To prove a consequence by none denied, 105
 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: 110
 Preserv'd 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, 115
 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 acquir'd with ease.

Neatly secur'd from being soil'd or torn
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn, 120
 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 125
 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. 130

O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet

Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale 135
 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; 140

I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;
 Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
 Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road, 145
 And guides the *progress* of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books, that could engag'
 Their childhood, pleas'd them at a riper age ;
 The man approving what had charm'd the boy,
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy ; 160
 And not with curses on his heart, 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 155
 Regards with scorn, though once receiv'd with awe ;
 And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man. 160
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
 Assert the native evil of his heart,
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof
 Rise in his forehead,* and seem rank enough ;
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross 165
 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,
 Oppos'd against the pleasures Nature loves ! 170
 While self-betray'd and wildly undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.
 Try now the merits of this bless'd exchange,
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
 Time was, he clos'd as he began the day 175
 With decent duty, not asham'd to pray :

* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 19.

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. 180
 But now farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;
 Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves ;
 Religion makes thee free by nature slaves !
 Priests have invented, and the world admir'd 185
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspir'd ;
 Till Reason, now no longer overaw'd,
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;
 And, common sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away 190
 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 195
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;
 And taught at schools much mythologick stuff,*
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;
 Our early notices of truth, disgrac'd,
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effac'd. 200
 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 ; 205
 Train him in publick 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.

* 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 school boy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture, which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old, 210
 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 ; 215
 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 tyroes of eighteen 220
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
 The stout tall captain, whose superiour size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks. 225
 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, 229
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
 Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
 In little bosoms such achievements strike
 A kindred spark : they burn to do the like :
 Thus half accomplish'd ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin ; 235
 And, as maturity of years comes 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 tam'd, 240
 Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
 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 strumpets' charms nor drinking bout,
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out. 246
 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 publick schools 'tis publick folly feeds. 250
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
 With packhorse 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 255
 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. 260
 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, 265
 A ubiquitous presence and control—
 Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,
 Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd ?
 Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves
 Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves, 270
 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, 275
 And evils, not to be endur'd, endure,
 Lest pow'r exerted, but without success,
 Should make the little ye retain still less.
 Ye once were justly fam'd for bringing forth
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ; 280
 And in the firmament of fame still shines
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
 Of poets rais'd by you, and statesmen, and divines.
 Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead. 285

- Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays,
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;
 And seem, if judg'd by their expressive looks,
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
- Say, Muse, (for education made the song, 290
 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 ? 295
- 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, 300
 The very name we carv'd subsisting still ;
 The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
 Tho' mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd ;
 The little ones, unbotton'd, glowing hot,
 Playing our games, and on the very spot ; 305
- 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 310
 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, 315
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
 We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
- Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share
 Of classick food begins to be his care,
 With his own likeness plac'd on either knee, 320
 Indulges all a father's heart-felt 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 the adventures of his early life ; 325
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
 In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;
 What shifts he us'd, 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 330
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
 Retracing thus his *frolicks*, ('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, 335
 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, 340
 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. 345
 The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
 Excus'd th' encumbrance of more solid worth,
 Are best dispos'd of where with most success
 They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense, 350
 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, 355
 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 grac'd 360
 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 ; 365
 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 lin'd, and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these, 370
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A publick 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, 375
 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 381
 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, 385
 Is more than adequate to ail 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. 390
 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 395
 Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
Your Lordship and Your Grace! what school can teach
 A rhet'rick equal to those parts of speech !
 What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,

Sweet interjections ! if he learn but those ? 400
 Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,
 Who starv'd upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
 The parson knows enough, who knows a duke."
 Egregious purpose ! worthily begun
 In barb'rous prestitution of your son ; 405
 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 profan'd !
 It may succeed ; and, if his sins should call 410
 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. 415
 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, 420
 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 ; 425
 To live estrang'd 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 430
 The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;
 And therefore 'tis that though the sight be rare,
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there. 435
 Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;

- The most disint'rested and virtuous minds,
 In early years connected, time unbinds,
 New situations give a diff'rent cast 440
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;
 And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,
 Soon shows the strong similitude revers'd.
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform. 445
 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, 450
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world :
 If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
 'Twere wiser sure t' inspire a little heart 455
 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 publick hives of puerile resort,
 That are of chief and most approv'd report, 460
 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 ; 465
 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, 470
 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 ; 475

Each vainly magnifies his own success,
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail, 480
 And labours to surpass him day and night,
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
 The spur is pow'ful, 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 : 485
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
 Against a heart deprav'd and temper hurt ;
 Hurt, too, perhaps, for life ; for early wrong, 490
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;
 And you are stanch indeed in learning's cause,
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws
 Such mischiefs after it with much applause.

Connexion form'd for int'rest, and endear'd 495
 By selfish views, thus censur'd 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. 500
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
 Beyond a size that can be manag'd well,
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
 And small academies win all the praise ?
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent, 505
 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 ; 510
 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 despis'd concern,
 The great and small deserve one common blame, 515
 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; 520
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
 Traps to catch youth are more abundant too.
 If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
 Keen in pursuit, and vig'rous to retain,
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill; 525
 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, 530
 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 535
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
 O 'tis a sight to be with joy perus'd,
 By all whom sentiment has not abus'd;
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace 540
 Of those who never feel in the right place;
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one;
 How!—turn again to tales long since forgot, 545
 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; 550

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 555
 For one, whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round
 your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,
 How does it lac'rate both your heart and his!
 Th' indented stick, that loses day by day
 Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away, 560
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,
 With what intense desire he wants his home.
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof;
 Harmless, and safe, and nat'ral, as they are 565
 A disappointment waits him even there:
 Arriv'd, 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, 570
 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 575
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
 Say, what accomplishments, at school acquir'd,
 Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesir'd?
 Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none; 580
 None that, in thy domestick 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 estrang'd, thou canst obtain 585
 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. 590

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 595

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, 600

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, 605

At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;
 E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend
 To warn, and teach him safely to unbend
 O'er all his pleasures gently to pæside,
 Watch his emotions, and control their tide ; 610

And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
 A tax of profit from his very play,
 T' impress a value not to be eras'd,
 On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste
 And seems it nothing in a father's eye, 615

That unimprov'd 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 declin'd ?
 For such is all the mental food purvey'd 620

By publick hacknies 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. 625
 Perhaps a father, bless'd 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, 630
 To some not steep, though philosophick 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 ; 635
 To show him in an insect or a flow'r
 Such microscopick proof of skill and pow'r,
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays,
 To combat atheists with in-modern days ;
 To spread the earth before him, and commend, 640
 With designation of the fingers' 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 ; 645
 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, 651
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
 When health demands it, of athletick sort,
 Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
 And more than one, perhaps, that I have seen— 655
 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, 660
 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 ; 665
 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, 670
 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 ;
 Unpatronis'd, and therefore little known ;
 Wise for himself and his few friends alone— 675
 In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
 Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee ;
 Prepar'd by taste, by learning, and true worth,
 To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;
 Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove 680
 The force of discipline when back'd by love ;
 To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
 His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.
 Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
 No spots contracted among grooms below, 685
 Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd
 By footman Tom for witty and refin'd.
 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 690
 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,) 695
 Great cause occurs, to save him from a band
 So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;
 A point secur'd, if once he be supply'd
 With some such Mentor always at his side.

Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound, 700
 Were occupation easier to be found,
 Were education, else so sure to fail,
 Conducted on a manageable scale,
 And schools, that have outliv'd all just esteem,
 Exchang'd for the secure domestick scheme.— 705
 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, 710
 A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
 Despis'd 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; 715
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
 And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend
 Are a stream chok'd, or trickling to no end.
 Doom him not then to solitary meals;
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels; 720
 And that, possessor of a soul refin'd,
 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, 725
 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. 730
 And, trust me, his utility may reach
 To more than he is hir'd 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, 735
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,

And thou a wretch, whom, foll'wing her own plan
 The world accounts an honourable man,
 Because forsooth thy courage has been tried
 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side ; 740
 Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
 That any thing 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, 745
 Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;
 And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
 With half the chariots and sedans in town,
 Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst ;
 Not very sober though, nor very chaste ; 750
 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, 755
 Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
 Sav'd from his home, where every day brings forth
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
 Find him a better in a distant spot,
 Within some pious pastor's humble cot, 760
 Where vile example, (yours I chiefly mean,
 The most seducing, and the oft'nest seen,)
 May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
 Nor yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
 Where early rest makes early rising sure, 765
 Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure
 Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;
 Or, if it enter, soon starv'd out again :
 Where all th' attention of his faithful host,
 Discreetly limited to two at most, 770
 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 inclin'd,

Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home, 775
 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, 780
 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, 785
 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, 790
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
 And, while on publick nurs'ries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer 795
 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, 800
 (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; 805
 But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.
 To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely plac'd between the small and great,
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
 Two thirds of all the virtue that remains, 810

Who, wise yourselves, desire your son 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 abus'd, and dignities misplac'd, 815
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgrac'd,
 Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold ;
 See Bedlam's closeted and hand-cuff'd charge 820
 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 best employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy ;
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves 825
 With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;
 See womanhood despis'd, and manhood sham'd
 With infamy too nauseous to be nam'd ;
 Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen, 830
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
 Now flush'd with drunk'nness, now with whoredom
 pale,
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts 835
 Man 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 ; 840
 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 845
 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, 850
 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 ; 856
 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 ; 860
 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, 865
 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 ; 870
 Then, only govern'd by the self-same 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 ev'ry father's hope,) 875
 That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
 And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
 Health's last farewell, a staff in thine old age,
 That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
 Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs, 880
 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; 885
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
 Nor heed what guest there enter and abide,
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place 890
 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 895
 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.
 O barb'rous! wouldst thou with a Gothick hand
 Pull down the schools—what!—all th' schools i' th'
 land; 900
 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, 905
 (Appris'd 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. 910
 From education, as the leading cause,
 The publick 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, 915
 Nor write on each—*This building to be let*,
 Unless the world were all prepar'd 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, 920
 (Forgive the crime,) I wish them, I confess,
 Or better manag'd, or encourag'd less.

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.

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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.

VI.

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

On the receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, the gift of my cousin Ann Bodham.



O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same, that oft in childhood solac'd 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,
 (Bless'd be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannick claim
 To quench it,) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
 Who bidd'st 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 learn'd that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou 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 toll'd on thy burial day,

I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such?—It was—where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
 And disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.
 By expectation ev'ry day beguil'd,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
 But though I less deplor'd flée, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;
 And where the gard'ner, Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the publick way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
 'Tis now become a hist'ry little known,
 That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.
 Short-liv'd possession! but the record fair,
 That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effac'd
 A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum,
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,

Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks
 That humour interpos'd too often makes ;
 All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may :
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorn'd in Heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissu'd flow'rs,
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile,)
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
 I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might—
 But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast,
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd,)
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods that 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 reach'd the shore,
 " Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
 And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide
 Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distress'd

Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous 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 enthron'd, and rulers of the Earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now farewell—Time unrevok'd has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done,
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine ;
And while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimick show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself remov'd, thy pow'r to sooth me left.

FRIENDSHIP.



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

If ev'ry polish'd gem we find
Illuminating heart or mind,
Prevoke to imitation;
No wonder friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
Or rather constellation

No knave but boldly will pretend
The requisites that form a friend,
A real and a sound one;
Nor any fool, he would deceive,
But proves as ready to believe,
And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
An error soon corrected—
For who but learns in riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
 Is yet no subject of despair ;
 Nor is it wise complaining,
 If either on forbidden ground,
 Or where it was not to be found,
 We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,
 That stands on sordid interest,
 Or mean self-love erected :
 Nor such as may awhile subsist,
 Between the sot and sensualist,
 For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come dispos'd
 T' exhibit in full bloom disclos'd
 The graces and the beauties,
 That form the character he seeks,
 For 'tis a union that bespeaks
 Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
 And equal truth on either side,
 And constantly supported ;
 'Tis senseless arrogance t' accuse
 Another of sinister views,
 Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice ?
 It is indeed above all price,
 And must be made the basis ;
 But ev'ry virtue of the soul
 Must constitute the charming whole,
 All shining in their places.

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

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

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in ;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a 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
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

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

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers, will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention ;
Aspersions is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into dissension.

A friendship, that in frequent fits
 Of controversial rage emits
 The sparks of disputation,
 Like hand in hand insurance plates,
 Most unavoidably creates
 The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
 True as a needle to the pole,
 Their humour yet so various,
 They manifest their whole life through
 The needle's deviations too,
 Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
 On terms of amity complete,
 Plebeians must surrender
 And yield so much to noble folk,
 It is combining fire with smoke,
 Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene
 (As Irish bogs are always green,)
 They sleep secure from waking :
 And are indeed a bog that bears
 Your unparticipated cares
 Unmov'd and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
 Their het'rogenous politicks,
 Without an effervescence,
 Like that of salts with lemon juice,
 Which does not, yet like that produce
 A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
 And make a calm of human life ;
 . But friends that chance to differ
 On points which God has left at large,
 How freely will they meet and charge !
 No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend we seem
T' adopt the chemist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
By trespass or omission ;
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case,
That savour much of common-place,
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone,
To finish a fine building—
The palace were but half complete,
If he could possibly forget
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,
 Or something not to be defin'd.
 First fixes our attention :
 So manners decent and polite,
 The same we practis'd at first sight,
 Must save it from declension.

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

The man I trust, if shy to me,
 Shall find me as reserv'd as he,
 No subterfuge or pleading
 Shall win my confidence again—
 I will by no means entertain
 A spy on my proceeding.

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

Pursue the search, and you will find
 Good sense and knowledge of mankind
 To be at least expedient,
 And, after summing all the rest,
 Religion ruling in the breast
 A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shown
 The Saviour's history makes known,
 Though some have turn'd and turn'd it ;
 And whether being craz'd or blind,
 Or seeing with a biass'd mind,
 Have not, it seems, discern'd it.

O Friendship ! if my soul forego
 Thy dear delights while here below
 To mortify and grieve me,
 May I myself at last appear
 Unworthy, base, and insincere,
 Or may my friend deceive me !



THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold
 That title now too trite and old,)
 A man, once young, who liv'd retir'd
 As hermit could have well desir'd,
 His hours of study clos'd at last,
 And finsh'd his concise repast,
 Stopp'd his cruise, replac'd his book
 Within his customary nook,
 And, staff in hand, set forth to share
 The sober cordial of sweet air,
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied
 To serious thought at ev'ning tide.
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,
 And from the trees that fring'd his hill,
 Shades slanting at the close of day
 Chill'd more his else delightful way,
 Distant a little mile he spied
 A western bank's still sunny side,
 And right toward the favour'd place
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
 In hope to bask a little yet,
 Just reach'd it when the sun was set

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
 Learns something from whate'er occurs—
 And hence, he said, my mind computes
 The real worth of man's pursuits.
 His object chosen, wealth, or fame,
 Or other sublunary game,
 Imagination to his view
 Presents it deck'd with ev'ry hue
 That can seduce him not to spare
 His pow'rs of best exertion there,
 But youth, health, vigour, to expend
 On so desirable an end.
 Ere long approach life's ev'ning shades,
 The glow that fancy gave it fades;
 And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
 That first engag'd him in the chase.

True, answer'd an angelick guide,
 Attendant at the senior's side—
 But whether all the time it cost,
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
 Must be decided by the worth
 Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
 Trifles pursu'd, whate'er th' event,
 Must cause him shame or discontent:
 A vicious object still is worse,
 Successful there he wins a curse.
 But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
 Endeavours laudable engage,
 Is paid, at least in peace of mind,
 And sense of having well design'd;
 And if, ere he attain his end,
 His sun precipitate descend,
 A brighter prize than that he meant
 Shall recompense his mere intent.
 No virtuous wish can bear a date
 Either too early or too late.

CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON,

(NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)



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 ev'ning ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paus'd under many a tree,
And much she was charm'd with a tone
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'er to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here ;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endu'd
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then whether embellish'd or rude
'Tis nature alone that we love ;
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and vallies, diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since, then, in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice !
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre
To wing all her moments at home ;
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam ;
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.



THE green house is my summer seat ;
My shrubs displac'd from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air ;
Two Goldfinches, whose sprightly song,
Had been their mutual solace long,
Liv'd happy pris'ners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolick where they list ;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew
And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppress'd ;
And Dick felt some desires,
That after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd t' invite
The freeman to a farewell flight :
But Tom was still confin'd :
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too gen'rous and sincere,
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss he seem'd to say,
You must not live alone—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand,
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Return'd him to his own.

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 preferr'd
 To liberty without.



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,
 Reserv'd to solace many a neigh'ring squire,
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,
 Contusion, hazarding of neck, or spine,
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;
 And where the land slopes to its wat'ry 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 scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
 Nor autumn yet had brush'd from ev'ry spray,
 With her chill hand the mellow leaves away ;

But corn was hous'd, and beans were in the stack ;
 Now therefore issu'd forth the spotted pack,
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats,
 With a whole gamut fill'd of heav'nly 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 Heav'n'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-rais'd horn's melodious clang
 All Kilwick* and all Dingleberry* rang.

Sheep graz'd the field ; some with soft bosom press'd
 The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest ;
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
 Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
 All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
 To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman with distended cheek,
 'Gan make his instrument of musick 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 graz'd,
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gaz'd,
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
 Then cours'd the field around, and cours'd it round
 again ;

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

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

The man to solitude accustom'd long
 Perceives in every thing 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 flow'rs rejoicing all;
 Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
 How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
 But, with precision niceer still, the mind
 He scans of ev'ry locomotive kind;
 Birds of all feather, beasts of ev'ry 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 premis'd was needful as a text,
 To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mus'd; surveying ev'ry face,
 Thou hadst suppos'd them of superiour race;
 Their periwigs of wool, and fears combin'd
 Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
 That sage they seem'd as lawyers o'er a doubt,
 Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
 Or academick tutors, teaching youths,
 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematick truths;
 When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,
 A ram, the ewes and wethers sad, address'd.

Friends! we have liv'd too long. I never heard
 Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
 Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
 In Earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
 And from their prison-house below arise,
 With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
 I could be much compos'd, nor should appear,
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.

Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold,
 Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone ;
 Should deem it by our old companion made,
 The ass ; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
 And being lost, perhaps, and wand'ring wide,
 Might be suppos'd to clamour for a guide.
 But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear
 That owns a carcass and not quake for fear ?
 Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,
 And fang'd with brass, the demons are abroad ;
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

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

How ! leap into the pit our life to save ?
 To save our life leap all into the grave ?
 For can we find it less ? Contemplate first
 The depth how awful ! falling there we burst ;
 Or should the brambles, interpos'd, 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 tones
 Of demons utter'd from whatever lungs,
 Sounds are but sounds, and till the cause appear,
 We have at least commodious standing here.
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
 From Earth or Hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels
 By panting dog, tir'd man, and spatter'd horse,
 Through mere good fortune, took a diff'rent course

The flock grew calm again, and I tae road
 Foll'wing, that led me to my own abode.
 Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
 Such cause of terrour in an empty sound,
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desp'rate steps. The darkest day,
 Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.



BOADICEA

AN ODE.

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

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

V.

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 !

VI.

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

VII.

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

VIII.

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

IX.

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

X.

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 unperceiv'd, the mountain yet entire ;
 When, conscious of no danger from below,
 She tower'd a cloudcapt pyramid of snow.
 No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
 The blooming groves that girdled her around.
 Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines,)
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assur'd,
 In peace upon her sloping sides matur'd.
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,
 A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,
 She teem'd and heav'd 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 O! 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.
 O bliss precarious and unsafe retreats,
 O charming Paradise of short-liv'd sweets !
 The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round,
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :
 Again the mountain feels the imprison'd fœc,
 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, thên plead your own defence,
 Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;
 Behold in Ætna's emblematick 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 destin'd 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 gen'ral spoil,
 Rebuilds the tow'rs, that smok'd 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, laurell'd heroes, say,
 But Ætnas of the suff'ring world ye sway ?
 Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,
 Deplores the wasted regions of her globe ;
 And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
 To prove you there destroyers as ye are.

O 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 ?

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL, WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM
SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE



GO—thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides
Aware of wintry storms,
And wood-peckers 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 thee exil'd
From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styl'd
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.

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S
HAPPY RECOVERY.



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

To modern times, with Truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied ;
Here cities won, and fleets dispers'd,
Urg'd loud a claim to be rehears'd,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.

Thus, as the bee, from bank to bow'r,
Assiduous sips at ev'ry flow'r,
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 historick 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 t' ennoble even mine,
In memorable eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be
An era cherish'd long by me,
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board ;
For then the clouds of eighty-eight
That threaten'd England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of Heaven, that cried—Restore !
Chas'd, never to assemble more ;
And far 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 valu'd most,
For that dear sorrows' 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 chang'd to smiles,
The eyes that never saw thee shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illumine the land's remotest part,

And strangers to the air of courts,
 Both in their toils and at their sports,
 The happiness of answer'd pray'rs,
 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 belov'd where never seen.



HYMN,

For the use of the Sunday School at Olney.

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r
 In heav'n thy dwelling place,
 From infants made the publick 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 O impart
 To each desires sincere,
 That we may listen with our heart,
 And learn as well as hear.

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

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

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
 A sun that ne'er declines,
 And be thy mercies shower'd on those,
 Who plac'd us where it shines.

 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?

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

No ; these were vig'rous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came ;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waves his claim.

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

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

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

No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come ;
No med'cine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

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

So prays your clerk with all his heart,
And ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen !

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

• FOR THE YEAR 1788.



*Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu ferunter.* Horace.

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



COULD I, from Heav'n inspir'd, 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, heav'nward turn his eye !

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

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

Ah self-deceiv'd ! Could I prophetick say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileg'd to play ;
But naming *none*, the voice now speaks to ALL.

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

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
Die self-accus'd of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for-which no after-thrift atones,
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin ;
Dew-drops 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 these sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
And the next op'ning grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

...*Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.* *VIRG.*
 There calm at length he breath'd his soul away.

“ O MOST delightful hour by man
 Experienc'd here below,
 The hour that terminates his span,
 His folly, and his wo !

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 Heav'n unfolded to my eyes,
 I have no sight for you.”

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
 Of faith's supporting rod,
 Then breath'd 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 priz'd, by that he fear'd,
 He hated, hop'd, and lov'd ;
 Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd
 But when his heart had rov'd.

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

Such liv'd Aspasio ; and at last
 Call'd up from Earth to Heav'n,
 The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
 By gales of blessing driv'n.

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



ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1790.



Ne commonentem recta sperne.

Buchanan.

Despise not my good counsel.



HE who sits from day to day,
 Where the prison'd lark is hung,
 Headless of his loudest lay,
 Hardly knows that he has sung.

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

So your verseman I and clerk,
Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
And the foes unerring aim.

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

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

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

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

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell—
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell,
When some stranger is interr'd.

O 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 ei inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!*
Virg.

Happy the mortal, who has trac'd 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 best concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might.

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

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamour'd of its harm !
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has pow'r to charm.

Whence has the world her magick pow'r?
Why deem we death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer wo?

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 spar'd,
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compar'd
With the approach of Death.

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

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

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1793.



De sacris autem hoc sic 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 compris'd,
 Is falsely nam'd, and no such thing,
 But rather death disguis'd.

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 diseas'd, yet nothing feel ;
 Much menac'd, nothing dread ;
 Have wounds, which only God can heal,
 Yet never ask his aid ?

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

Who trample order ; and the day,
Which God asserts his own,
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,
And worship chance alone ?

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


Such want it, and that want uncur'd
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assur'd
Of everlasting death.

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

STUART (220) TO J. H. H.


INSRIPTION,

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.




PAUSE here, and think : a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;
Seems it to say—" Health here has long to reign ?"
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye
That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?
Yet fear. Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees ;
And many a tomb, like *Hamilton's*, aloud
Exclaims, " Prepare thee for an early shroud."



EPITAPH ON A HARE.



HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter grayhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo.

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nurs'd with tender care,
And to domestick bounds confin'd,
Was still a wild Jack-hare

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance ev'ry 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 regal'd,
On pippen's russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
Slic'd carrot pleas'd him well.

A turkey carpet was his lawn.
Whereon he lov'd to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at ev'ning hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching show'r
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moon
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And ev'ry 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 this 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 præteriturus es,
 Et tecum sic reputa—
 Hunc neque canis venaticus,
 Nec plumbum missile,
 Nec laqueus,
 Nec imbres nimii,
 Confecere :
 Tamen mortuus est—
 Et moriar ego.

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE TREATMENT OF HIS HARES WAS INSERTED BY MR. COWPER IN THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, WHENCE IT IS TRANSCRIBED.

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 any thing 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 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 re-

tired, 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 rhetorick did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at 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 superiour 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, too, 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 these 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 bird cage while the hares were with me : I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which, being at once directed to 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 aromattick 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 is 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.

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 a more old age, and apparently without pain.

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