



P O E M S.

B Y

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.





T H E
T A S K.

A
P O E M.

I N S I X B O O K S.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

T I R O C I N I U M:

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R E V I E W O F S C H O O L S.

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W I L L I A M C O W P E R,
O F T H E I N N E R T E M P L E E s q .

A N E W E D I T I O N .



P H I L A D E L P H I A :

Printed for THOMAS DOBSON, Bookfeller, in *Second-street*, second Door above *Chestnut-street*.

M. D C C . L X X X . V I I .

Handwritten marks and characters in the top left corner, possibly including the number '10'.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THÈ 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.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

*Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa.—
A school-boy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The
scene described.—Rural sounds, as well as sights, de-
lightful.—Another walk.—Mistake concerning the
charms of Solitude, corrected.—Colonnades commend-
ed.—Alcove, and the view from it.—The Wilderness.
—The Grove.—The Thresher.—The necessity, and
the benefits of exercise.—The works of nature superior
to, and, in some instances, inimitable by art.—The
wearisomness of what is commonly called, a life of
pleasure.—Change of scene sometimes expedient.—A
common described, and the character of crazy Kate
introduced upon it.—Gipsies.—The blessings of civil-
ized life.—That state most favourable to virtue.—
The South Sea Islanders compassionate, but chiefly
Omni.—His present state of mind supposed.—Civil-
ized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—
Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their
due praise, but censured.—Fete Champetre.—The
book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of
dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.*

THE

T H E

T A S K.



B O O K I.



T H E S O F A.

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 ;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
Th' occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when cloathing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our fires had none.
As yet black breeches were not ; fatten smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock

B

Wash'd

Wash'd by the sea, or on the grav'ly bank
 Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
 Fearless of wrong, repos'd his weary strength,
 Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next
 The birth-day of invention, weak at first,
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
 Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs
 Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
 A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
 On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
 And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms ;
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
 May still be seen, but perforated fore
 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,
 And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuff'd
 Induced a splendid cover green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
 And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
 There might ye see the piony spread wide,
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
 Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
 With Nature's varnish ; sever'd into stripes

That

That interlac'd each other, these supply'd
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;
The slipp'ry seat betray'd the sliding part
That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had plac'd
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel in the cushion fix'd:
If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The umber flood
Pond'rous, and fixt by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
An Alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
And some ascribe the invention to a priest
Burly and big and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
And bruised the side, and elevated high
Taught the rais'd shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged fires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The Ladies first

'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious fancy, never better pleas'd
 Than when employ'd t' accommodate the fair,
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
 The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow, it 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.
 But relaxation of the languid frame
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow
 The growth of what is excellent, so hard
 T' attain perfection in this nether world.
 Thus first necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
 And luxury th' accomplished Sofa last.

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

Nor

Nor sleep enjoy'd by Curate in his desk,
Nor yet the dozings of the Clerk are sweet,
Compared with the repose the SOFA yields.

Oh, may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walks through lanes
Of grassy swarth close cropt by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs: have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through vallies, and by rivers brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames.
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hung'ring pennyless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
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 undepraved
By culinary arts unfav'ry deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return,
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil

Incurring

Incurring short fatigue ; and though our years
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and color from the locks they spare ;
Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet ; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that sooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence, our pace
Has staken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The passing wind scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unfated, dwelt upon the scene !

Thence

Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow-moving, and beside
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
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond and overthwart the stream
That as with molten glass inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side, the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
Tall spire, from which the sound of chearful bells
Just undulates upon the list'ning ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd
Pleate daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise jully due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And hush the spirit while they fill the mind,
Unnumber'd

Unnumber'd! branches waving in the blast,
 And all their leaves fast flutt'ring, all at once.
 Nor less composure waits upon the roar
 Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
 Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip
 Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall!
 Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
 In matted grass, that with a livelier green
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated Nature sweeter still
 To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
 Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
 The live-long night : nor these alone whose notes
 Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
 In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
 The jay, the pie, and ev'n the boding owl
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
 Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
 Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself,
 More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,

Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discov'ries falls on me.
At such a season and with such a charge
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair ;
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Inviron'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen,
Peeps at the vale below ; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
And hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clam'rous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought ! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated scite forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the chrystal well ;
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,
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad and his last crust consumed,

So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*.
 If solitude make scant the means of life,
 Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
 Be still a pleasing object in my view,
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

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

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
 We pass a gulph in which the willows dip
 Their pendant boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence angle deep in moss and flow'ry thyme
 We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step

Our

* *The Court and Manners, Esq; of History*
 1710.

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
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs 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
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The pannels, leaving an obscure rude name
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal t' immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that ev'n a few
Few transient years won from th' abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye.
And posted on this speculative height
Exults in its command. The sheep-fold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There, from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps
The loaded wain, while lighten'd of its charge
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vocif'rous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene

Diversified with trees of every growth
 Alike yet various. Here the grey smooth trunks
 Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
 Within the twilight of their distant shades ;
 There lost behind a rising ground, the wood
 Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
 No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
 Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,
 And of a wannish grey ; the willow such
 And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
 And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm.
 Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
 Some glossy-leav'd and shining in the sun,
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
 Diffusing odours : nor unnoted pass
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,
 Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
 Have changed the woods, in scarlet honors bright.
 O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
 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.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps
 A little Naiad her improv'rish'd urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.

The folded gates would bar my progress now,
 But that the * Lord of this inclosed 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?
 By short transition we have lost his glare
 And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
 Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
 That yet a remnant of your race survives.
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
 'The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
 Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
 And darkning and enlightning, as the leaves
 Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now with nerves new-brac'd and spirits cheer'd
 We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks
 With curvature of flow and easy sweep,
 Deception innocent—give ample space
 To narrow bounds. 'The grove receives us next;
 Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
 We may discern the thresher at his task.
 Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That

* See the foregoing note.

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
 Of atoms sparkling in the noon-day 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
 Of chearful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action, all that is, subsists.
 Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
 That nature rides upon, maintains her health,
 Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
 An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
 Its own revolvency upholds the world.
 Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
 And fit the limpid element for use,
 Else noxious; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams
 All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleansed
 By restless undulation; ev'n the oak
 Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm;
 He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
 Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
 Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
 He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
 His firm stability to what he scorns,
 More fixt below, the more disturb'd above.
 The law by which all creatures else are bound,
 Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives

No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
 From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
 The sedentary stretch their lazy length
 When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
 For none they need : the languid eye, the cheek
 Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
 And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
 Reproach their owner with that love of rest
 To which he forfeits ev'n the rest he loves.
 Not such th' alert and active. Measure life
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
 And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
 Good health, and its associate in the most,
 Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake,
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;
 The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;
 Ev'n age itself seems privileged in them
 With clear exemption from its own defects.
 A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
 The vet'ran shows, and gracing a grey beard
 With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
 Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
 Who oft'nest sacrifice are favor'd least.
 The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws
 Is Nature's dictate. Strange it then should be found
 Who self-imprison'd in their own soft loons,
 Renounce the odors of the woods and hills.

For the unscented fictions of the loom.
Who satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art,
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires the painter's magic skill,
Who shews me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye, sweet Nature ev'ry sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills.
The chearing fragrance of her dewy vales
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd,
Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To fallow sickness, which the vapors dank
And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light.
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endur'd
A fever's

A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
 To gaze at Nature in her green array.
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
 With visions prompted by intense desire;
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
 The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
 And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
 Sweet smiles and bloom less transient than her own.
 It is the constant revolution, stale
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That palls and fatiates, and makes languid life
 A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
 Though halt and weary of the path they tread.
 The paralytic who can hold her cards
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort

Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters; and once seated, sit
Through downright inability to rise,
'Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet ev'n these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
'Then, wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
'The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honor has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay
That dries his feathers saturate with dew
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-achs nail them to a noon-day bed;
And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;

From

From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

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

And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of fatten trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea and died.
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers: fancy too
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never 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
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,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier cloaths,
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

Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscence of dog,
Or vermin, or at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place.
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature, and though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honorable toil.
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers, and with dance
And music of the bladder and the bag
Beguile their woes and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless revellers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
Need

Need other phyfic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

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

Where

Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards th' Antarctic. Ev'n the favor'd isles
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals, what they gain
In manners, victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and inclosed
In boundless oceans never to be pass'd
By navigators uninformed as they,
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
Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past. And thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestead thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys

Left

* *Omai.*

Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart.
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets talled here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up;
Thus fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus,
She tells me too that duly ev'ry morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste
For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry speck
Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well-prepar'd
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be brib'd to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

But

But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
 And genial soil of cultivated life
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
 Yet not in cities oft. In proud and gay
 And gain-devoted cities; thither flow,
 As to a common and most noisome sewer,
 The dregs and fæculence of ev'ry land.
 In cities foul example on most minds
 Begets its likenefs. Rank abundance breeds
 In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
 And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
 In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue taught
 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
 Beyond th' atchievement of successful flight.
 I do confess them nurs'ries of the arts,
 In which they flourish most. Where in the beams
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
 Of public note they reach their perfect size.
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
 The fairest capital of all the world,
 By riot and incontinence the worst.
 There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
 A lucid mirror, in which nature sees,
 All her reflected features. Bacon there
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
 And Chatham's eloquence with marble lips,
 Nor does the chissel occupy alone
 The pow'rs of sculpture, but the styic 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 foe'er she will,
 The richest scen'ry and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds philosophy her eagle eye
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
 In London. Where her implements exact
 With which she calculates, computes and scans
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
 In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
 So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied
 As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
 Increasing London? Babylon of old
 Not more the glory of the earth, than she
 A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
 That so much beauty would do well to purge;
 And show this queen of cities, that so fair
 May yet be foul, so witty, yet not wise.
 It is not seemly, nor of good report
 That she is slack in discipline. More prompt
 To avenge than to prevent the breach of law.
 That she is rigid in denouncing death
 On petty robbers, and indulges life
 And liberty, and oft-times honor too
 To speculators of the public gold.
 That thieves at home must hang; but he that puts
 Into his overgorged and bleated purse
 The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.

Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
 That through profane and infidel contempt
 Of holy writ, she has presum'd t' annul
 And abrogate as roundly as she may,
 The total ordonnance and will of God ;
 Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
 And cent'ring all authority in modes
 And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
 And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.
 What wonder then, that health and virtue, gifts
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threatened in the fields and groves ?
 Possess ye therefore, ye who borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element ; there only ye can shine,
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
 Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wand'rer in the shades. At eve
 The moon-beam sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
 Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
 The splendor of your lamps, they but eclipse
 Our softer satillite. Your songs confound
 Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs
 Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute

There is a public mischief in your mirth,
 It plagues your country. Folly such as your's
 Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
 Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done
 Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
 A mutilated structure soon to fall.



ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Which opens with reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former.—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.—Satyrical notice taken of our trips to Fontainebleau.—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit maitre parson.—The good preacher.—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reprov'd.—Apostrophé 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.

THE

T H E
T A S K.

B O O K II.

T H E T I M E - P I E C E.

OH 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
My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd,
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls afunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r
T' inforce

To inforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,
 Make enemies of nations who had else
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
 And worse than all, and most to be deplored
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
 With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
 Then what is man? And what man seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush
 And hang his head, to think himself a man?
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
 No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation priz'd above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
 We have no slaves at home---Then why abroad?
 And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
 Receive our air, that moment they are free,
 They touch our country and their shackles fall.
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud

And

And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
 And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
 Of all your empire. That where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,
 Benevolence and peace and mutual aid
 Between the nations, in a world that seems
 To toll the death-bell 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
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
 Fires from beneath, and meteors † from above
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
 Have kindled beacons in the skies, and th' old
 And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
 And Nature ‡ with a dim and sickly eye
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end
 More distant, and that prophecy demands
 A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;

Still

* Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica.

† August 18, 1783.

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

Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
 Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
 And 'tis but seemly, that where all deserve
 And stand expos'd by common peccancy
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
 And brethren in calamity should love.

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

And

And charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid, and the fixt and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry side
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted, and with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep,
A prince with half his people. Ancient tow'rs,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And happy in their unforeseen release

From all the rigors of restraint, enjoy
 The terrors of the day that sets them free.
 Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast
 Freedom! whom they that lose thee, so regret,
 That ev'n a judgment making way for thee,
 Seems in their eyes, a mercy, for thy sake.

Such evil sin hath wrought ; and such a flame
 Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
 And in the furious inquest that it makes
 On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
 The very elements, though each be meant
 The minister of man, to serve his wants,
 Conspire against him. With his breath, he draws
 A plague into his blood. And cannot use
 Life's necessary means, but he must die.
 Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him : or if stormy winds
 Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
 And needing none assistance of the storm,
 Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
 The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
 Or make his house his grave. Nor so content,
 Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
 And drown him in her dry and dusty gulphs.
 What then---were they the wicked above all,
 And not the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
 Moved not, while their's was rock'd like a light skiff,
 The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
 And none that are secure of life. But where all
 Stand on a ground, all being, and all alike

Of wrath obnoxious, God may chuse his mark,
 May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
 The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,
 Tremble and be amazed at thine escape
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee.

Happy the man who sees a God employed
 In all the good and ill that checquer life!
 Resolving all events, with their effects
 And manifold results, into the will
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
 Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
 The least of our concerns (since from the least
 The greatest oft originate) could chance
 Find place in his dominion, or dispose
 One lawless particle to thwart his plan,
 Then God might be surpriz'd, and unforeseen
 Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
 This truth, philosophy, though eagle-eyed
 In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks,
 And having found his instrument, forgets
 Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
 Denies the power that weilds it. God proclaims
 His hot displeasure against foolish men
 That live an atheist life. Involves the heav'n
 In tempests, quits his grasp upon the winds
 And gives them all their fury. Bids a plague
 Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
 And putrify the breath of blooming health.

He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
 Blows mildew from between his shrivel'd lips,
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
 And desolates a nation at a blast.
 Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs
 And principles; of causes how they work
 By necessary laws, their sure effects,
 Of action and re-action. He has found
 The source of the disease that nature feels,
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
 Thou fool! will thy discov'ry of the cause
 Suspend th' effect or heal it? Has not God
 Still wrought by means since first he made the world,
 And did he not of old employ his means
 To drown it? What is his creation less
 Than a capacious reservoir of means
 Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
 Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of him,
 Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
 And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
 My country! and while yet a nook is left,
 Where English minds and manners may be found,
 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
 Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deform'd
 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
 I would not yet exchange thy fullen skies,
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France,

With

With all her vines ; nor for Aufonia's groves
 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowr's.
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime,
 Of patriot eloquence, to flash down fire
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task ;
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
 Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
 As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
 Thy follies too, and with a just disdain,
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks
 Reflect dishonor on the land I love.
 How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
 And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
 With odors, and as profligate as sweet,
 Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
 And love when they should fight ; when such as these
 Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
 Of her magnificent and awful cause ?
 Time was when it was praise and boast enough
 In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
 That we were born her children. Praise enough
 To fill th' ambition of a private man,
 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
 Farewell those honors, and farewell with them
 The hope of such hereafter. They have fall'n
 Each in his field of glory : One in arms,
 And one in council. Wolfe upon the lap
 Of smiling victory that moment won,

And

And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those funs are set. Oh rise some other such!
Or all that we have left, is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew thy deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude favour maritime, invade
The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes,
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.
True, we may thank the perfidy of France,
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state.
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace, the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And sham'd as we have been, to th' very beard,
Brav'd and defied, and in our own sea proved

'Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
 Insured us mast'ry there, we yet retain
 Some small pre-eminence, we justly boast
 At least superior jockeyship, and claim
 The honors 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,
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
 'Tis gen'rous to communicate your skill
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd,
 And under such preceptors, who can fail?

There is a pleasure in poetic pains,
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
 Th' expedients and inventions multiform,
 To which the mind resorts, in chace of terms,
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
 T' arrest the fleeting images that fill
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
 And force them fit, 'till he has pencil'd off
 A faithful likeness of the forms he views;
 Then to dispose his copies with such art,
 That each may find its most propitious light,
 And shine by situation, hardly leis,
 Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
 Are compensations of the poet's mind
 So pleasing, that they steal away the thought
 Which should be given to some themes of sad import,
 That he who writes such songs, happy man!

He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
 Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
 Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task
 They never undertook, they little note
 His dangers or escapes, and hap'ly find
 There least amusement where he found the most.
 But is amusement all? studious of song,
 And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
 I would not trifle merely, though the world
 Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
 Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
 It may correct a foible, may chastise
 The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
 Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
 But where are its sublimer trophies found?
 What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd
 By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
 Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed,
 Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,
 Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
 That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit therefore (and I name it, fill'd
 With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
 With what intent I touch that holy thing)
 The pulpit (when the sat'rist has at last,
 Strutting and vap'ring in an empty school,

Spent all his force and made no profelyte)
 I say the pulpit (in the sober use
 Of its legitimate peculiar pow'rs)
 Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
 The most important and effectual guard,
 Support and ornament of virtue's cause.
 There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
 The legate of the skies. His theme divine,
 His office sacred, his credentials clear.
 By him, the violated law speaks out
 Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
 As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
 He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
 Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,
 And arm'd himself in panoply complete
 Of heav'nly temper, furnishes with arms
 Bright as his own, and trains by ev'ry rule
 Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
 The sacramental host of God's elect.
 Are all such teachers'? would to heav'n all were!
 But hark—the Doctor's voice—fast wedg'd between
 Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
 Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
 Than all invective is his bold harrangue,
 While through that public organ of report
 He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
 Announces to the world his own and theirs.
 He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
 And colleges untaught; sells accent, tone,
 And emphasis in score, and gives to pray'r

Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
 He grinds divinity of other days
 Down into modern use ; transforms old print
 To zig-zag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
 Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts.—
 Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware ?
 Oh name it not in Gath !—it cannot be,
 That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.
 He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before,
 Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church.

I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
 That he is honest in the sacred cause.
 To such I render more than mere respect,
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
 But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
 In conversation frivolous, in dress
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,
 Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
 But rare at home, and never at his books,
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
 And well prepar'd by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love o' th' world

To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride.—
 From such apostles, Oh ye mitred heads
 Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands
 On sculls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

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

In man or woman, but far most in man,
 And most of all in man that ministers
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loath
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;

Object of my implacable disgust.
 What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form
 And just proportion, fashionable mein
 And pretty face in presence of his God?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
 As with the di'mond on his lilly hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
 When I am hungry for the bread of life?
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and thames
 His noble office, and instead of truth
 Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
 Therefore avaunt! all attitude and stare,
 And start theatric, practis'd at the glass.
 I seek divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things divine; and all beside,
 Though learn'd with labor, and though much admir'd
 By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd,
 To me is odious as the nasal twang
 At conventicle heard, where worthy men
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
 Through the prest nostrils, spectacle-bestrud.
 Some, decent in demeanor while they preach,
 That task perform'd, relapse into themselves,
 And having spoken wisely, at the close
 Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye—
 Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.
 Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke
 An eye-brow; next, compose a straggling lock;
 Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,

Fall back into our seat ; extend an arm
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand, depending low.
The better hand more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye
With op'ra glafs to watch the moving scene,
And recognize the slow-retiring fair.
Now this is fulsome ; and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. An heav'nly mind
May be indiff'rent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation ; and t' address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart.
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip,
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till fides and benches fail.
No : he was serious in a serious cause,

And

And understood too well the weighty terms
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

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

All truth is from the sempiternal source
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome
 Drew from the stream below. More favor'd we
 Drink, when we chuse it, at the fountain head.
 To them it flow'd much mingl'd and defil'd
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams

Illusive

Illusive, of philosophy, so call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain, to filter off a chrystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
The thirst than slak'd it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.

In vain they push'd enquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world, ask'd, whence is man?
Why form'd at all? And wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? With what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers vague,
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unsanction'd, prov'd too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignifi'd 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
 To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
 Of man's occasions, when in him reside
 Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathom'd store?
 How oft when Paul has seiz'd us with a text,
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach'd!
 Men that, if now alive, would fit content
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
 Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.

And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
 By nature, or by flatt'ry made so, taught
 To gaze at his own splendor, and t' exalt
 Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
 Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn,
 Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach,
 Perverting often by the strefs of lewd
 And loose example, whom he should instruct,
 Exposés and holds up to broad disgrace
 The noblest function, and discredits much
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
 For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
 Below the exigence, or be not back'd
 With shew of love, at least with hopeful proof
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
 Or be dishonor'd in th' exterior form
 And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
 As move derision, or by soppish airs
 And histrionic mumm'ry, that let down

The pulpit to the level of the stage,
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
 The weak perhaps are 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
 Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapt,
 The laity run wild.—But do they now?
 Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

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

But thus admonish'd we can walk erect,
 One proof at least of manhood ; while the friend
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge,
 Our habits costlier than Lucullus wore,
 And by caprice as multiplied as his,
 Just please us while the fashion is at full,
 But change with ev'ry moon. The sycophant
 That waits to dress us, arbitrates their date,
 Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye ;
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd,
 And making prize of all that he condemns,
 With our expenditure defrays his own.
 Variety's the very spice of life
 That gives it all its flavor. We have run
 Through ev'ry change that fancy, at the loom
 Exhausted, has had genius to supply,
 And studious of mutation still, discard
 A real elegance, a little 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,
 And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
 Would fail t' exhibit at the public shows
 A form as splendid as the proudest there,
 Though appetite raise outcries at the cost ?
 A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough
With

With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
 'T' insure a side-box station at half price.
 You think perhaps, so delicate his dress,
 His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
 He picks clean teeth, and busy as he seems
 With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
 The rout is folly's circle which she draws
 With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
 That none decoy'd into that fatal ring,
 Unless by heav'n's peculiar grace, escape.
 There we grow early grey, but never wise.
 There form connexions, and acquire no friend.
 Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;
 Waste youth in occupations only fit
 For second childhood, and devote old age
 To sports which only childhood could excuse.
 There they are happiest who dissemble best
 Their weariness; and they the most polite
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile
 Though at their own destruction. She that asks
 Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all
 And hates their coming. They, what can they less?
 Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug,
 And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
 All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace
 Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
 And gild our chamber cielings as they pass,
 To her who frugal only that her thrift
 May feed excesses she can ill afford,
 Is hackney'd home unlacquey'd. Who in haste

Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
 And at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
 Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
 On fortune's velvet altar off'ring up
 Their last poor pittance. Fortune most severe
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
 Than all that held their routs in heathen heav'n.—
 So fare we in this prison-house the world.
 And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again.

Now basket up the family of plagues
 That waste our vitals. Peculation, sale
 Of honor, perjury, corruption, frauds
 By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
 By tricks and lies as num'rous and as keen
 As the necessities their authors feel;
 Then cast them closely bundl'd, ev'ry brat
 At the right door, Profusion is its fire.
 Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
 In character, has litter'd all the land,
 And bred within the mem'ry of no few
 A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
 A people such as never was 'till now.
 It is a hungry vice :—it eats up all
 That gives society its beauty, strength,
 Convenience,

Convenience, and security, and use.
 Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
 And gibbeted as fast as catchpole claws
 Can seize the slipp'ry prey. Unties the knot
 Of union, and converts the sacred band
 That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
 Profusion deluging a state with lusts
 Of grossest nature, and of worst effects,
 Prepares it for its ruin. Hardens, blinds,
 And warps the consciences of public men,
 Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools
 That trust them; and in th' end, disclose a face
 That would have shock'd credulity herself
 Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse,
 Since all alike are selfish—why not they?
 This does Profusion, and th' accursed cause
 Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth
 Were precious, and inculcated with care,
 There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head
 Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
 Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
 But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
 His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
 Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard
 Paternal sweetness, dignity and love.
 The occupation dearest to his heart
 Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
 The head of modest and ingenious worth

That

That blush'd at its 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 inform'd, the passions held
 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 controul, his gentle eye
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke ;
 His frown was full of terror, and his voice
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
 As left him not, till penitence had won
 Lost favour back again, and clos'd the breach.
 But discipline, a faithful servant long,
 Declin'd at length into the vale of years ;
 A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
 Was quench'd in rheums of age, his voice unstrung,
 Grew tremulous, and mov'd derision more
 Than rev'rence, in perverse rebellious youth.
 So colleges and halls neglected much
 Their good old friend, and Discipline at length
 O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and dy'd.
 Then study languish'd, emulation slept,
 And virtue fled. The schools became a scene
 Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
 His cap well lin'd with logic not his own,
 With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
 Became stone-blind, precedence went in truck,
 And he was competent whose purse was so.

A dissolution of all bonds ensu'd,
 The curbs invented for the mulcish mouth
 Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts
 Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates
 Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch ;
 'Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade ;
 The tassell'd cap, and the spruce band a jest,
 A mock'ry of the world. What need of these
 For gamesters, jockies, brothellers impure.
 Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oft'ner seen
 With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
 Than in the bounds of duty ? what was learn'd,
 If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot,
 And such expence 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 fits a stigma on his father's house,
 And cleaves through life inseparably close
 To him that wears it. What can after-games,
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
 The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
 Add to such erudition thus acquir'd,
 Where science and where virtue are profess'd ?
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task
 That bids defiance to th' united powers
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
 Now, blame we most the nursein's or the nurse ?
 The children crook'd, and twist'd and deform'd
 Through want of care, or her whose waking eye
And

And slumb'ring ofcitaney marrs the brood?
 The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
 She needs herself correction. Needs to learn
 That it is dang'rous sporting with the world,
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

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

Sec

* *Bennet Coll. Cambridge.*

See then! the quiver broken and decay'd
 In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there
 In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
 What wonder if 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
 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 birth-place and his dam? the country mourns,
 Mourns, because ev'ry plague that can infest
 Society, and that saps and worms the base
 Of th' edifice that policy has 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
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found.
 Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
 Of the rob'd pædagogue. Elie, let the arraign'd
 Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
 So when the Jewish Leader stretch'd his arm
 And wav'd his rod divine, a race obscene
 Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth
 Polluting Ægypt. Gardens, fields, and plains
 Were cover'd with the pest. The streets were fill'd:
 The croaking nuisance lurk'd in ev'ry nook,
 Nor palaces, nor even chambers 'scap'd,
 And the land stank, so num'rous was the fry.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

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

THE

T H E
T A S K.



B O O K III.



T H E G A R D E N.

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 fore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape,
If chance at length he find a green-sword smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He chirrupps brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease ;
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
T' adorn the Sofa with elogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,

Have rambl'd wide. In country, city, seat
 Of academic fame (howe'er deserv'd)
 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.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
 Crack the satyric 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 scars the plains,
 Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
 And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
 Feeds a blue flame and makes a chearful hearth;
 There undisturb'd by folly, and appriz'd
 How great the danger of disturbing her,
 To muse in silence, or at least confine
 Remarks that gall so many, to the few
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
 Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall!

Thought

Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy chrystal 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.
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,
And finding in the calm of truth-tied love,
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forfaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honor, dignity, and fair renown,
'Till prostitution elbows us aside .

In all our crowded streets, and senates seem
Conven'd for purposes of empire less,
Than to release th' adulteress from her bond.
Th' adulteress ! what a theme for angry verse,
What provocation to th' indignant heart
That feels for 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 chariotted along
In guilty splendor, shake the public ways ;
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white.
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,

Whom

Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd
 And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
 Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time
 Not to be pass'd. And she that had renounc'd
 Her sex's honor, 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 waif
 Desirous to return, and not receiv'd,
 But was an wholesome rigor 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 honor in those days,
 And judg'd offenders well. And he that sharp'd,
 And pocketted 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,
 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, a good-natur'd age!
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
 Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough
 To pass us readily through ev'ry door.
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
 May claim this merit still, that she admits

The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause ;
But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since ; with many an arrow deep infixt
My panting side was charg'd when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore
And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopl'd scene,
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wand'ers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions ; they are lost
In chace of fancy'd happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed ; rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remainder half,

And

And find the total of their hopes and fears
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
 As if created only like the fly
 That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.
 The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
 And pregnant with discov'ries new and rare.
 Some write a narrative of wars and feats
 Of heroes little known, and call the rant,
 An history. Describe the man, of whom
 His own coævals took but little note,
 And paint his person, character and views,
 As they had known him from his mother's womb.
 They disentangle from the puzzled skein
 In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
 The threads of politic and shrewd design
 That ran through all his purposes, and charge
 His mind with meanings that he never had,
 Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
 The solid earth, and from the strata there
 Extract a register, by which we learn
 That he who made it and reveal'd its date
 To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
 Some more acute and more industr'ous still
 Contrive creation. Travel nature up
 To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
 And tell us whence the stars. Why some are fixt
 And planetary some. What gave them first
 Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
 Great contest follows, and much learned duit

Involves

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

'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
 Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
 And overbuilt with most impending brows,
 'Twere well could you permit the world to live
 As the world pleases. What's the world to you?
 Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
 As sweet as charity from human breasts.
 I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
 And exercise all functions of a man.
 How then should I, and any man that lives,
 Be strangers to each other? pierce my vein,
 Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
 And catechise it well. Apply your glass,
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
 Congenial with thine own. And if it be,
 What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
 Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
 To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
 One common Maker bound me to the kind.
 True; I am no proficient, I confess,
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
 And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
 And bid them hide themselves in th' earth beneath,
 I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
 The parallax of yonder luminous point,
 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.

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

Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,
 And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
 And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
 Our British Themis glory'd with just cause,
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment prais'd
 And sound integrity not more, than fam'd
 For sanctity of manners undefil'd.

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.
 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
 To truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
 And wherefore? will not God impart his light
 To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,
 His glory, and his nature to impart.
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
 Or negligent enquirer, not a spark.
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
 And him that writes it, though the stile be neat,
 The method clear, and argument exact?

That

That makes a minister in holy things
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
 That while it gives us worth in God's account,
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
 What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
 That learning is too proud to gather up,
 But which the poor and the despis'd of all
 Seek and obtain, and often find unfought?
 Tell me, and I will tell thee, what is truth.

Oh friendly to the best pursuits of man,
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
 Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd!
 Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,
 Though many boast thy favours, and affect
 To understand and chuse thee for their own.
 But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss
 Ev'n 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.
 Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
 The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest
 By ev'ry pleasing image they present
 Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
 Compose the passions, and exalt the mind,
 Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
 To fill with riot and defile with blood.
 Should some contagion kind to the poor brutes

We

We persecute, annihilate the tribes,
 That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
 Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares ;
 Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
 Nor baited hook deceive the fishes eye ;
 Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
 Be quell'd in all our summer-month retreats ;
 How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
 Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
 Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the spleen,
 And crowd the roads, impatient for the town !
 They love the country, and none else, who seek
 For their own sake its silence and its shade.
 Delights, which who would leave, that has a heart
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind
 Cultured, and capable of sober thought,
 For all the savage din of the swift pack,
 And clamours of the field? detested sport,
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endu'd
 With eloquence that agonies inspire,
 Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs !
 Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
 A corresponding tone in jovial souls.
 Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell
 Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
 Whom ten long years experience of my care

Has .

Has made at last familiar, she has lost
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
 Yes---thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
 That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
 At evening, and at night retire secure
 To thy straw-couch, and slumber unalarm'd.
 For I have gain'd thy confidence, have 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,
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
 Calls idle, and who justly in return,
 Esteems that busy world an idler too!
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
 And nature, in her cultivated trim,
 Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
 Can he want occupation who has these?
 Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy?
 Me therefore, studious of laborious ease,
 Not slothful; happy to deceive the time,
 Not waste it; and aware that human life
 Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
 When he shall call his debtors to account,
 From whom are all our blessings, bus'ness finds
 Ev'n here. While sedulous I seek t' improve,

At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd
 The mind he gave me ; driving it, though slack,
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work,
 By causes not to be 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
 A social, not a dissipated life,
 Has business. Feels himself engag'd t' atchieve
 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 ;
 But wisdom is a pearl, with most success
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
 He that is ever occupy'd in storms,
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
 Fresh for his task, intend what talk he may.
 Whether inclement seasons recommend
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
 With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant nymph,
 Which neatly she prepares ; then to his book
 Well chosen, and not suddenly perus'd
 In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
 As aught occurs, that the easy friends can hear
 Or turn to nourishment, digest with ease

Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repay'd, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labor needs his watchful eye,
Oft loit'ring lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only, or direct,
But much performs himself. No works indeed,
That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil,
Servile employ—but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well spread walls, he views his trees
That meet (no barren interval between)
With pleasure more than ev'n their fruits afford,
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.
These therefore are his own peculiar charge,
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific pow'rs,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife. Nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at th' expence of neighb'ring twigs,
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat,
At measur'd distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate, and warm the swelling buds.

L

Hence

Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,
 And hence, ev'n winter fills his wither'd hand,
 With blushing fruits, and plenty, not his own. *
 Fair recompence of labour well bestow'd,
 And wise precaution, which a clime so rude
 Makes needful still, whose spring is but the child
 Of churlish winter, in her froward moods,
 Discov'ring much the temper of her fire.
 For oft, as if in her, the stream of mild
 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
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
 As the sun peeps, and vernal airs breathe mild,
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare,
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art,
 That toiling ages have but just matur'd,
 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

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

And these, the Grecian in ennobling strains,
 And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for ay
 The solitary shilling. Pardon then,
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!
 Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose pow'rs
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercorarious heap,
 Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
 And potent to resist the freezing blast.
 For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf,
 Deciduous, and 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,
 He seeks a favor'd spot, that where he builds
 Th' agglomerated pile, his frame may front
 The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
 Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge,
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
 Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
 Th' ascending damps; then leisurely impose,
 And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.
 What longest binds the closest, forms secure
 The shapely side, that as it rises, takes

By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
 Shelt'ring the base with its projected eaves.
 Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
 He settles next upon the slopping mount,
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure,
 From the dash'd pane, the deluge as it falls.
 He shuts it close, and the first labor ends.
 Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
 Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
 Diffus'd, attain the surface. When behold !
 A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
 Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
 And fast condens'd upon the dewy fash,
 Asks egress; which obtain'd, the overcharg'd
 And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad
 In volumes wheeling slow, the vapor dank,
 And purify'd, rejoices to have lost
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
 Th' impatient fervor which it first conceives
 Within its reeking bosom, threat'ning death
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
 Th' auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford
 Soft fermentation, and invite the seed.
 The seed selected wisely, plump and smooth,

And

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 drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These, on the warm and genial earth that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, 'till they stand immers'd.
Then rise the tender germs upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes, at first
Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious, he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish,
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulg'd in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foilage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of th' apparent fruit.
These have their sexes, and when summer shines,
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flow'r to flow'r, and ev'n the breathing air,
Waits the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art

Then

Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and insures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more num'rous half
Lives by contriving delicacies for you)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labor, and the skill,
That day and night are exercis'd, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense.
That ye may garnish your profuse regales,
With summer fruits, brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,
Minute as dust, and numberless, oft' work
Dire disappointment that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell th' expedients and the shifts,
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise,
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labor, worthless when produc'd.

Who loves a garden, loves a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.

The

The spiry myrtle, with unwith'ring leaf,
 Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
 Of Portugal, and western India there,
 The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
 Peep through their polish'd foilage at the storm,
 And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
 Th' amomum there with intermingling flowr's,
 And cherries, hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
 Her crimson honors, and the spangl'd beau
 Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
 All plants of ev'ry leaf that can endure
 The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
 Live there, and prosper. Those Aufonia claims,
 Levantine regions these; th' Azores send
 Their jessamine, her jessamine-remote
 Caffraia; foreigners from many lands,
 They form one social shade, as if conven'd
 By magic summons of th' Orphean lyre.
 Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass,
 But by a master's hand, disposing well
 The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r,
 Must lend its aid t' illustrate all her 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.
 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

Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
 And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
 In ev'ry flash of his far-beaming eye.
 Nor taste alone, and well-contriv'd display,
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
 Unfung, and many cares are yet behind,
 And more laborious. Cares on which depends
 Their vigor, injur'd soon, not soon restor'd.
 The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd,
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
 And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
 Close interwoven where they meet the vase,
 Must smooth be shorn away; the sapeless branch
 Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
 Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
 Contagion, and disseminating death.
 Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
 Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleas'd,
 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,
 Reiterated as the wheel of time
 Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.
 Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll

That

That softly swell'd and gayly dress'd, appears
 A flow'ry island from the dark green lawn
 Emerging, must be deem'd a labor due
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
 Here also grateful mixture of well match'd
 And sort'd hues, (each giving each relief,
 And by contrasted beauty shining more)
 Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'rous spade,
 May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
 But elegance, chief grace the garden shows
 And most attractive, is the fair result
 Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
 Without it, all is Gothic as the scene
 To which th' insipid citizen resorts,
 Near yonder heath; where industry mispent,
 But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
 Has made a heaven on earth. With suns and moons
 Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd th' incumber'd soil,
 And fairly laid the Zodiac 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,
 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,
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done,
 Few self-supported flow'rs endure the wind,
 Uninjur'd, but expect th' upholding aid,
 Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied,

Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
 For int'rest sake, the living to the dead.
 Some cloath 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 thè neighbour shrub
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon,
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
 The strength they borrow, with the grace they lend.
 All hate the rank society of weeds,
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
 Th' impoverish'd earth ; an overbearing race,
 That like the multitude made faction-mad,
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

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

What

What could I wish, that I possess not here ?
 Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace,
 No loose or wanton, though a wand'ring muse,
 And constant occupation, without care.
 Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss ;
 Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,
 And profligate abusers of a world,
 Created fair so much in vain for them,
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
 Allur'd by my report. But sure no less,
 That self-condemn'd, they must neglect the prize,
 And what they will not taste, must yet approve.
 What we admire we praise. And when we praise
 Advance it into notice, that its worth
 Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.
 I therefore recommend, though at the risk
 Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
 The cause of piety and sacred truth,
 And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd,
 Should best secure them, and promote them most ;
 Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
 Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
 Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her smiles,
 And chaste, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
 Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
 Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,
 To grace the full pavilion. His design
 Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
 Which all might view with envy, none partake.
 My charmer is not mine alone ; my sweets,
 And she that sweetens all my bitters too,

Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
 And lineaments divine, I trace a hand,
 That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
 Is free to all men, universal prize.
 Strange, that so fair a creature should yet want
 Admirers, and be destin'd to divide
 With meaner objects, even the few she finds.
 Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flowr's,
 She loses all her influence. Cities then
 Attract us, and neglected Nature pines,
 Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
 But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd
 By roses, and clear suns though scarcely felt,
 And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
 From clamour, and whose very silence charms,
 To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
 That Metropolitan volcano's make,
 Whose Stygian throats breathe darknes 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 madnes in the head,
 And folly in the heart; were England now,
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
 And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell,
 To all the virtues of those better days,
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
 Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds,
 That had surviv'd the father, serv'd the son.
 Now the legitimate and rightful Lord,
 Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd,
 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,
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 dews,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight,
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and th' alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tires, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes—
The omnipotent magician, Brown 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,
It may enjoy th' advantage of the North,
And agueish East, till time shall have transform'd,
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and vallies rise,
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,
Ev'n as he bids. Th' enraptur'd owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd. And yet finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, th' loveliest it could show,

A mine

A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
 He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
 Labor'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.
 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,
 Deals him out money from the public chest,
 Or if that mine be shut, some private purse
 Supplies his need, with an ufurious loan,
 To be refunded duly, when his vote,
 Well-manag'd, shall have earn'd its worthy price.
 Oh innocent, compar'd with arts like these,
 Crape and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball,
 Sent through the trav'lers temples! he that finds
 One drop of heav'n's sweet mercy in his cup,
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well-content,
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags,
 At his last gasp; but could not for a world,
 Fish up his dirty and dependant bread,
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
 Sordid and sick'ning at his own success.

Ambition, av'rice, penury incurr'd,
 By endless riot; vanity, the lust

Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
 As duly as the swallows disappear,
 The world of wand'ring knights and squires to town.
 London ingulphs them all. The shark is there,
 And the shark's prey. The spendthrift, and the leech,
 That sucks him. There, the sycophant and he,
 That with bare-headed, and obsequious bows,
 Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail,
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
 The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp,
 Were character'd on ev'ry statesman's door,
 "BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED
 "HERE."

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

Oh thou resort and mart of all the earth,
 Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
 And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
 Much that I love, and more that I admire,
 And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
 That pleases, and yet shocks me, I can laugh,
 And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,

Feel

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,
 And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
 Than Sodom, in her day, had pow'r to be,
 For whom God heard his Abr'am plead in vain.



ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The post comes in.—The news-paper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance.—Address to Winter.—The amusements of a rural winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to Evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter, what she was.—What she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit, and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and how it is to be totally extinguished.

T H E

T A S K.



B O O K IV.



T H E W I N T E R E V E N I N G.

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 unwrinkl'd face reflected bright;
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering 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,
And having dropp'd th' expected bag---pafs on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold, and yet cheerful: messenger of grief,

N

Perhaps

Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
 To him indifferent, whether grief or joy.
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of flocks,
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
 With tears that trick'd down the writers checks,
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
 Or charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains,
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
 But, oh th' important budget! usher'd in,
 With such heart-flaking music, who can say,
 What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
 Snore to the murmurs of th' atlantic wave?
 Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
 Or do we grind her still? the grand debate,
 The popular harrangue, the tart reply,
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
 And the loud laugh---I long to know them all;
 I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,
 And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn,
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
 That cheer, but not enebriate, wait on each,
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
 Not such his evening, who with shining face,

Sweats

Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeez'd,
 And bor'd, with elbow-points, through both his sides,
 Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage.
 Nor his, who patient stands 'till his feet throb,
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath,
 Of patriots burling with heroic rage,
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
 This folio of our pages, happy work !
 Which, not ev'n critics criticise, that holds
 Inquisitive attention, while I read
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
 'Though eloquent, themselves, yet fear to break,
 What is it but a map of busy life,
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,
 'That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,
 'The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
 And with a 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 ;
 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,
 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;
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,
 With merry descants on a nation's woes.
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange,
 But gay confusion, roses for the cheeks,
 And lilies for the brows of faded age,
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
 Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their sweets,
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
 Sermons, and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,
 Ætherial journies, submarine exploits,
 And Katterfelto, with his hair on end,
 At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

'Tis pleasant, through the loop-holes of retreat,
 To peep at such a world. To see the stir
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates,
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound
 Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
 Thus sitting, and surveying, thus at ease,
 The globe, and its concerns, I seem advanc'd
 To some secure, and more than mortal height,
 That lib'rates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns, submitted to my view, turns round,
 With all its generations; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
 Has lost its terrors, ere it reaches me,

Grieves,

Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
 And av'rice that makes man a wolf to man,
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
 By which he speaks the language of his heart,
 And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
 He travels, and expatiates, as the bee,
 From flow'r to flow'r, so he from land to land;
 The manners, customs, policy of all,
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans,
 He sucks intelligence in ev'ry clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research,
 At his return, a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes,
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart,
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes,
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

Oh Winter! ruler of th'inverted year,
 Thy scatter'd hair, with sleet, like ashes, fill'd,
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fring'd with a beard, made white with other snows
 Than those of age; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne,
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But 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'ner in the yet undawning East;

Short•

Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
 Down to the rosy West. But kindly, still
 Compensating his loss with added hours
 Of social converse, and instructive ease,
 And gathering, at short notice, in one group,
 The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispers'd by day-light, and its cares.
 I crown thee King of intimate delights,
 Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
 Of long uninterrupted evening know.
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates.
 No powder'd pert, proficient in the art
 Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors,
 'Till the street rings. No stationary floods
 Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound,
 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake.
 But here the needle plies its busy task,
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
 Unfolds its bosom, buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
 And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair,
 A wreath that cannot fade, of 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;
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds,

The

The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;
 And the clear voice, symphonious, yet distinct,
 And in the charming strife triumphant still,
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge,
 On female industry ; the threaded steel,
 Flies swiftly, and unick, 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,
 Perhaps, by moon-light, at their humble doors,
 And under an old oak's domestic shade
 Enjoy'd, spare feast ! a radish, and an egg.
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
 Nor such as with a frown, forbids the play
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth.
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
 That made them, an intruder on their joys,
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
 Extending oft our gratitude and love,
 Which we retrace, with mem'ry's pointing wand,
 That calls the past to our exact review,
 The dangers we have 'scap'd, the broken snare,
 The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found,
 Unlook'd for, life preserv'd, and peace restor'd,
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
 Oh evenings, worthy of the Gods ! exclaim'd,
 The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,

More

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 tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
 The pent-up breath of an unfav'ry throng,
 To thaw him into feeling, or the smart,
 And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits,
 Cail comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
 The self-complacent actor, when he views,
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
 The slope of faces, from the floor to th' roof,
 (As if one master-spring controul'd them all)
 Relax'd into an universal grin,
 Sees not a count'nance there that speaks a joy,
 Half so refin'd, or so sincere as ours.

1 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.
 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 motely plumes, and where the peacock shows
 His auzure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red,
 With spots quadrangular, of di'mond form,
 Enanguin'd hearts, clubs, typical of strife,
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.

. What

What should be, and what was, an hour-glass once,
 Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast,
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
 Thus deck'd, he charms a world, whom fashion blinds
 To his true worth, most pleas'd, when idle most,
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
 Ev'n misses, at whose age, their mothers wore
 The back-siring, 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,
 Learn ev'ry trick, and soon play all the game.
 But truce, with censure. Roving, as I rove,
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
 As he that travels far, oft turns aside,
 To view some rugged rock, or mould'ring tow'r,
 Which seen, delights him not; then coming home,
 Describes, and prints it, that the world may know
 How far he went, for what was nothing worth;
 So I, with brush in hand, and pallet spread,
 With colours mixt, for a far diff'rent use,
 Paint cards, and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing,
 That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come ev'ning once again, season of peace,
 Return, sweet ev'ning, and continue long!
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
 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 ;
 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,
 With ostentatious pageantry, but set,
 With modest grandeur, in thy purple zone,
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy vot'ry calm,
 Or make me so. Composure is thy gift.
 And whether I devote thy gentle hours
 To books, to music, or the poets toil,
 To weaving nets, for bird-alluring fruit ;
 Or twining filken threads round iv'ry reels,
 When they command, whom man was born to please,
 I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze,
 With lights, by clear reflection multiply'd,
 From many a mirrour, in which he of Gath,
 Goliah, might have seen his giant bulk,
 Whole, without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,
 My pleasures too begin. But me, perhaps,
 The glowing hearth, may satisfy awhile,
 With faint illumination, that uplifts
 The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits,
 Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
 Not undelightful, is an hour to me,

So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom,
 Suits well the thoughtful, or unthinking mind,
 The mind contemplative, with some new theme,
 Pregnant, or 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.
 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.
 Nor less amus'd, have I quiescent watch'd
 The footy 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,
 In indolent vacuity of thought,
 And sleeps, and is refresh'd. Mean while the face
 Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
 Of deep deliberation, as the man,
 Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd, and lost.
 Thus, oft 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 powers, and snapping short,
 The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves,
 Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.

How calm is my recess ! and how the frost,
 Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
 The silence and the warmth, enjoy'd within !
 I saw the woods, and fields, at close of day,
 A variegated show ; the meadows green,
 Though faded, and the lands, where lately wav'd,
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
 Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
 I saw far off the weedy fallows smile,
 With verdure, not unprofitable, 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,
 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.
 Fast falls a fleecy show'r. The downy flakes,
 Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,
 Softly alighting upon all below,
 Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
 Gladly, the thick'ning mantle, and the green,
 And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
 Escapes unhurt, beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and, where none
 Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
 Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
 It seems the part of wisdom, and no less

Against

THE WINTER EVENING. 101

Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus,
We may with patience, bear our mod'rate ills,
And sympathize with others, suff'ring more.
Ill fares the trav'ler now, and he that stalks
In pond'rous boots, beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded fore,
By congregated loads, adhering close,
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace,
Noiseless, appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong,
Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear,
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth,
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save, when with both,
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, deny'd,
That sensibility of pain, with which,
Refinement is endu'd, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame robust, and hardy, feels indeed,
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vig'rous pulse, and the unhealthy East,
That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on, exempt from household care,

Thy

Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,
 That drag the dull companion to and fro,
 Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
 Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
 Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
 With needless hurry, whirl'd from place to place,
 Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
 Such claim compassion in a night like this,
 And, have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.
 Warm'd, while it lasts, by labor, 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
 Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing clear,
 But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
 The few small embers left, she nurses well,
 And while her infant race, with out-spread hands,
 And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
 Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd,
 The man feels least, as more inur'd than she,
 To winter, and the current in his veins,
 More briskly mov'd by his feverer toil;
 Yet he too, finds his own distress, in theirs.
 The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw,
 Dangled along at the cold fingers 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,

Sleep,

Sleep seems their only refuge. For, alas!
 Where penury is felt, the thought is chain'd,
 And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
 With all this thrift, they thrive not. All the care
 Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
 Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
 Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from public sale,
 They live, and live without extorted alms,
 From grudging hands, but other boast have none,
 To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
 Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
 I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
 For ye are worthy; chusing rather far,
 A dry, but independent crust, hard earn'd,
 And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
 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 oft-times deaf to suppliants, who would blush,
 To wear a tatter'd garb, however coarse,
 Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
 These ask, with painful shyness, and refus'd,
 Because deserving, silently retire.
 But be ye of good courage. Time itself,
 Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
 And all your num'rous progeny well train'd,
 But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
 And labor too. Mean while ye shall not want,
 What conscious of your virtues we can spare,

Nor

Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
 I mean the man, who, when the distant poor,
 Needs help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty, with most who whisper forth
 Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe,
 Th' effect of laziness, or sottish waste.
 Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad,
 For plunder; much solicitous how best,
 He may compensate, for a day of sloth,
 By works of darkness, and nocturnal wrong.
 Woe to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
 Plash'd neatly, and 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,
 An ass's burthen, and when laden most,
 And heaviest, light of foot, steals fast away.
 Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
 The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots,
 From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave,
 Unwrench'd the door, however well 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,
 And loudly wond'ring at the sudden change.
 Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,
 Did pity of their sufferings, warp aside
 His principle, and tempt him into sin,

For

For their support, so destitute. But they,
 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
 His ev'ry action, and imbrutes the man.
 Oh for a law, to noose the villain's neck,
 Who starves his own. Who persecutes the blood,
 He gave them in his children's veins, and hates,
 And wrongs the woman, he has sworn to love.

Pass where we may, through city, or through town,
 Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
 Though lean, and beggar'd, ev'ry twentieth pace,
 Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
 Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the styes
 That law has licens'd, as makes temperance reel.
 There sit involv'd and lost, in curling clouds
 Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
 The lacquey, and the groom. The craftsman there,
 Takes a Lethæan leave of all his toil;
 Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the sheers,
 And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
 All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams,
 Plaintive, and piteous, as it wept and wail'd,
 Its wasted tones, and harmony unheard:
 Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme While see,
 Fell! Discord, arbitress of such debate,
 Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand,

Her undecifive scales. In this, she lays
 A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride,
 And smiles, delighted with th' eternal poise.
 Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
 The cheek-distending oath, not to be prais'd,
 As ornamental, musical, polite,
 Like those which modern senators employ,
 Whose oath is rhet'ric, and who swear for fame.
 Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
 Once simple, are initiated in arts,
 Which some may practise with politer grace,
 But none with readier skill! 'tis here they learn,
 The road that leads from competence, and peace,
 To indigence and rapine; till at last,
 Society, grown weary of the load,
 Shakes her incumber'd lap, and casts them out.
 But censure profits little. Vain th' attempt,
 To advertize in verse a public pest,
 That, like the filth, with which the peasant feeds
 His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
 Th' excise is fatten'd, with the rich result
 Of all this riot. And ten thousand casks,
 For ever dribbling out their base contents,
 Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
 Bleed gold for Ministers to sport away.
 Drink, and be mad, then. 'Tis your country bids.
 Gloriously drunk, obey th' important call,
 Her cause demands th' assistance of your throats,
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon those happier days
 That poets celebrate. Those golden times,
 And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,
 And Sydney, warbler of poetic prose.
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts,
 That felt their virtues. Innocence it seems,
 From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves.
 The footsteps of simplicity impress'd,
 Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)
 Then were not all 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
 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 favor'd such a dream, in days like these,
 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,
 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, pin'd aloft,
 And ribbands, streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
 And magnify'd beyond all human size,

Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand,
 For more than half the tresses it sustains;
 Her elbows ruff'd, and her tott'ring form,
 Ill prop'd, upon French heels; she might be deem'd,
 (But that the basket dangling on her arm,
 Interprets her more truly) of a rank
 Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs.
 Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,
 Her train, and her umbrella, all her care.

The town has ting'd the country. And the flain,
 Appears a spot upon the vestal's robe,
 The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
 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.
 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,
 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,
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.

Ev'n day-light has its dangers. And the walk,
 Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
 Of other tenants, than melodious birds,
 Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
 Lamented change! to which full many a cause
 Invet'rate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
 The course of human things, from good to ill,
 From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
 Increase of pow'r begets increase of wealth,
 Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
 Excess, the scrophulous and itchy plague,
 That seizes first the opulent, descends
 To the next rank contagious, and in time,
 Taints downward all the graduated scale
 Of order, from the chariot, to the plough.
 The rich, and they that have an arm to check,
 The licence of the lowest in degree,
 Desert their office; and themselves intent
 On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus,
 To all the violence of lawless hands,
 Resign the scenes, their presence might protect,
 Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
 The plump convivial parson often bears
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
 His rev'rence, and his worship, both to rest,
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm,
 When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free,
 Himself enslav'd by terror of the band,

Th' au-

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 out-side,
 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. Whofo seeks an audit here
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
 Wildfowl or ven'son, and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,
 A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
 Of public virtue, ever wish'd remov'd,
 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,
 Seem most at variance, with all moral good,
 And incompatible with serious thought.
 The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
 Blest with an infant's ignorance of all,
 But his own simple pleasures, now and then,
 A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair,
 Is balloted, and trembles at the news.
 Sheepish, he doffs his hat, and mumbling, swears
 A Bible-oath, to be whate'er they please,
 To do, he knows not what. The task perform'd,
 That

That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
 His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
 His aukward gait, his introverted toes,
 Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
 Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
 Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
 He yet, by slow degrees, puts off himself,
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.
 He stands erect, his slouch becomes a walk,
 He steps right onward, martial in his air,
 His form and movement; is as smart above
 As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
 His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace,
 And his three years of heroish expir'd,
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
 He hates the field in which no fife or drum
 Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
 But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
 His ignorance, and harmless manners too.
 To swear, to game, to drink, to shew at home,
 By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath-breach,
 The great proficiency he made abroad,
 T' astonish, and to grieve his gazing friends,
 To break some maiden's, and his mother's heart,
 To be a pest where he was useful once,
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.

Man,

Man, in society, is like a flow'r,
 Blown in its native bed. 'Tis there alone,
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
 Shine out, there only reach their proper use.
 But man associated and leagu'd with man,
 By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond,
 For int'rest-sake, or swarming into clans,
 Beneath one head, for purposes of war,
 Like flow'rs selected from the rest, and bound,
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
 Fades rapidly, and by compression marr'd,
 Contracts defilement, not to be endur'd.
 Hence, charter'd boroughs are such public 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.
 Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin,
 Against the charities of domestic life,
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose
 Their nature, and disclaiming all regard
 For mercy, and the common rights of man,
 Build factories with blood, conducting trade
 At the sword's point, and dying the white robe
 Of innocent commercial justice, red.
 Hence too, the field of glory, as the world
 Misdems it, dazzl'd by its bright array,
 With all the majesty of its thund'ring pomp,
 Enchanting music, and immortal wreaths,
 Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught

On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice.

But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes,
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene, There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too,
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells,
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.
No bard could please me, but whose lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praises. Heroes, and their feats,
Fatigu'd me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tytirus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng, beneath his fav'rite beech.
Then Milton had indeed, a poet's charms.
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue,
To speak its excellence; I danc'd for joy.
I marvel'd much, that at so ripe an age,
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engag'd my wonder, and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret suppos'd
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.

Thee too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
 Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
 Determin'd, and possessing it at last
 With transports, such as favor'd lovers feel,
 I study'd, 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,
 Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
 I still revere thee, courtly, though retir'd,
 Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowr's,
 Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends
 For a lost world, in solitude and verse.
 'Tis born with all. The love of Nature's works,
 Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
 Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
 And though th' Almighty Maker, has throughout,
 Discriminated each from each by strokes,
 And touches of his hand, with so much art
 Diversified, that two were never found
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
 That all discern a beauty in his works,
 And all can taste them. I find that have been form'd
 And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
 But none without some relish, none immov'd.
 It is a flame that dies not, even there,
 Where nothing feeds it. No low bus'ness, crowds,
 Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
 Whatever else they find, or of true worth
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.

The villas with which London stands begirt,
 Like a swarth Indian, with his belt of beads,
 Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
 Ev'n in the stifling bosom of the town,
 A garden in which nothing thrives, has charms
 That sooth the rich possessor; much consol'd,
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint,
 That Nature lives, that sight-refreshing green
 Is still the livery she delights to wear,
 Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.
 What are the casements lin'd with creeping herbs,
 The proudier sashes fronted with a range,
 Of Orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
 The Frenchman's * darling? are they not all proofs,
 That man, imbur'd in cities, still retains
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss,
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
 The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,
 And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds,
 To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,
 Yet feel the burning instinct: over-head,
 Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
 And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands

Q 2

A frag-

* *Mignonette*.

A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there ;
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
 The country, with what ardour he contrives,
 A peep at nature, when he can no more.

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

ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The 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.

THE

T H E

T A S K.



B O O K V.



THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

T I S morning; and the sun, with ready orb
Ascending, fires the horizon. While the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent, as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb, and every fairy blade,
Stretches a length of shadow over the field.
Mine, spinning into long, wide immense,
In spite of gravity, and force remark,
That I myself am but a floating shade,

Provokes

Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance,
 I view the muscular proportion'd limb,
 Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
 As they design'd to mock me, at my side,
 Take step for step, and as I near approach
 The cottage, walk along the plaister'd wall,
 Prepost'rous sight! the legs without the man.
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
 Beneath the dazzling deluge, and the bents,
 And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
 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,
 Fretful, if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
 And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
 He from the stack carves out th' accustom'd load,
 Deep plunging, and again, deep plunging oft,
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass.
 Smooth as a wall, the upright remnant stands,
 With such undeviating and even force,
 He severs it away. No needless care,
 Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
 Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd,
 The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe,
 And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,

From

From morn to eve, his solitary task.
 Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
 And tail cropt 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-scampering snatches up the drifted snow,
 With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
 Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
 Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl,
 Moves right toward the mark. Nor stops for aught,
 But now and then, with pressure of his thumb,
 T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
 That fumes beneath his nose. The trailing cloud,
 Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
 Now from the roost, or from the neighb'ring pale,
 Where diligent to catch the first faint gleam
 Of smiling day, they gossipp'd side by side,
 Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call,
 The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
 And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
 Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
 The sparrows peep, and quit the shelt'ring eaves,
 To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
 The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolv'd,
 T' escape th' impending famine, often scar'd,
 As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
 Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
 Remains to each, the search of funny nook.
 Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
 To sad necessity, the cock foregoes

His wonted strut, and wading at their head,
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait, and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and vallies with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is safe,
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close, and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigor of the year,
Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes,
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts, self bury'd ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut now
Repays their labor 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
The streams are lost, amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indinited and fixt, the snowy weight
Lies undissolv'd, while silently beneath,
And unperceiv'd, the current steals away.
Not so, where scornful of a check, it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulph below.

No frost can bind it there. Its utmost force,
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
 And see where it has hung th' embroider'd banks
 With forms so various, that no pow'rs of art,
 The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
 Here glitt'ring turrets rise, unbearing high
 (Fantastic misarrangement) on the roof,
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees,
 And shrubs of fairy land. The chrystal drops,
 That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
 And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
 Here grotto within grotto safe defies
 The sun beam. There emboss'd and fretted wild,
 The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
 Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain,
 The likeness of some object seen before.
 This nature works as if to mock at art,
 And in defiance of her rival pow'rs;
 By these fortuitous and random strokes,
 Performing such inimitable feats,
 As she with all her rules can never reach.
 Less worthy of applause, though more admir'd,
 Becaus' a novelty, the work of man,
 Imperial mistresses of the fur-clad Rus!
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
 The wonder of the North. No forest fell
 When thou wast built; no quarry sent its stores
 To enrich thy walls. But thou didst hew the floods,

And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
 In such a palace Aristæus found
 Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale,
 Of his lost bees, to her maternal ear.
 In such a palace poetry might place,
 The armoury of winter, where his troops,
 The gloomy clouds find weapons, arrowy fleet
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruifing hail,
 And snow, that often blinds the trav'ler's course,
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
 Silently, as a dream, the fabric rose.
 No sound of hammer, or of saw was there.
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
 Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd,
 Than water interfus'd to make them one.
 Lamps gracefully dispos'd, and of all hues,
 Illumin'd ev'ry side. A wat'ry light
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
 Another moon new-risen, or meteor fall'n
 From heav'n to earth, of lambent flame serene.
 So stood the brittle prodigy, though smooth
 And slipp'ry the materials, yet frost-bound
 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. Mirrour needed none,
 Where all was vitreous, but in order due
 Convivial table, and commodious seat,
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there,

Sofa,

Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
 The same lubricity was found in all,
 And all was moist to the warm touch, a scene
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
 And soon to slide into a stream again.
 Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanc'd,
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
 On human grandeur, and the courts of kings.
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
 'Twas durable. As worthless as it seem'd
 Intrinsically precious. To the foot
 Treach'rous and false, it smil'd, and it was cold.

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

When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confed'raey of projectors wild and vain,
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace,
Peace was awhile their care. They plough'd and sow'd,
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In ev'ry heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war,
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood :
The deluge wash'd it out ; but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found,
The first artificer of death ; the shrewd
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,
And forc'd the blunt, and yet unblooded steel,
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him Tubal nam'd, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and faulchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murd'rer's son.
His art surviv'd the waters ; and ere long,
When man was multiplied, and spread abroad,
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call,

These

These meadows, and that range of hills his own,
 The tailed sweets of property beget
 Desire of more; and industry in some,
 To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
 Made others covet what they saw so fair.
 Thus wars began on earth. These fought for spoil,
 And those in self-defence. Savage at first,
 The onset, and irregular. At length
 One eminent above the rest, for strength,
 For st atagem or courage, or for all,
 Was chosen leader. In all they serv'd in war,
 And him in peace, for like of warlike deeds
 Rev'renc'd no less. Who could with him compare?
 Or who so worthy to command themselves,
 As he whose prowess had subdu'd their foes?
 Thus war affording field for the display
 Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
 Which have their exigencies too, and call
 For skill in government, at length made king.
 King was a name too proud for man to wear,
 With modesty and meekness, and the crown,
 So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
 Was sure t' intoxicate the brows it bound.
 It is the abject property of most,
 That being parcel of the common mass,
 And destitute of means to raise themselves,
 They sink and settle lower than they need.
 They know not what it is to feel within,
 A comprehensive faculty that grasps
 Great purposes with ease, that turns and weilds,

Almost

Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man,
Step forth to notice ; and befotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, stand there,
And be our admiration, and our praise.
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account,
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they rais'd themselves.
Thus by degrees self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and altrut with self-conceit
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle. Drudges born
To bear his burthens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service. His caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand or ten thousand lives
Spent in the purchase of renown for him
An easy reck'ning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange

Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
 To eminence, fit only for a God,
 Should ever drivel out of human lips,
 Ev'n in the cradled weakness of the world !
 Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
 Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
 And could discriminate, and argue well,
 On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
 Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
 And quake, before the Gods themselves had made.
 But above measure strange, that neither proof
 Of sad experience, nor examples set
 By some, whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,
 Can even now, when they are grown mature
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps,
 Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest !
 Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
 To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead
 A course of long observance for its use,
 That even servitude, the worst of ills,
 Because, deliver'd down from sire to son,
 Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
 But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
 Of rational discussion, that a man,
 Compounded and made up, like other men,
 Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
 And folly in as ample measure meet,
 As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
 Should be a despot absolute, and boast
 Himself the only freeman of his land ?

S

Should,

Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
 Wage war, with any, or with no pretence
 Of provocation giv'n, or wrong sustain'd,
 And force the beggarly last doit, by means
 That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
 Of poverty, that thus he may procure
 His thousands, weary of penurious life,
 A splendid opportunity to die?
 Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old,
 Jotham ascrib'd to his assembled trees
 In politic convention) put your trust
 I' th' shadow of a bramble, and reclin'd
 In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch,
 Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
 Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs,
 Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good
 To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
 His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
 We too are friends to loyalty. We love
 The king who loves the law; respects his bounds,
 And reigns content within them. Him we serve
 Freely, and with delight, who leaves us free.
 But recollecting still that he is man,
 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 chose to grant:
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
 T' administer, to guard, t' adorn the state,

But

But not to warp or change it. We are his,
 To serve him nobly in the common cause,
 True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
 Mark now the diff'rence, ye that boast your love
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
 We love the man. The paultry pageant you.
 We, the chief patron of the commonwealth;
 You, the regardless author of its woes.
 We, for the sake of liberty, a king;
 You, chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
 Our love is principle, and has its root
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free.
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
 I would not be a king to be belov'd
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by suff'rance, and at will
 Of a superior, he is never free.
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life
 Expos'd to manacles, deserves them well,
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
 And forc'd t' abandon what she bravely fought,
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
 Not often unsuccessful; pow'r usurp'd,

Is weakness, when 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
 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,
 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,
 That monarchs have supply'd from age to age,
 With music, such as suits their sov'reign ears,
 The sighs and groans of miserable men !
 There's not an English heart that would not leap,
 To hear that ye were fall'n at last, to know,
 That ev'n our enemies, so oft employ'd
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
 For he that values liberty, confines

His

* *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.*

His zeal for her predominance within
 No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
 There dwell the most forlorn of human kind
 Immur'd, though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
 Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape.
 There, like the visionary emblem seen
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
 And filleted about with hoops of brass,
 Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
 To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
 And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
 Still to reflect, that though a joyless note,
 To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
 Account it music; that it summons some
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball;
 The wearied hireling finds it a release
 From labor, and the lover, that has chid
 Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke
 Upon his heart-strings trembling with delight—
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought,
 To such amusements as ingenious woe
 Contrives, hard-shifting; and without her tools—
 To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
 In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
 To turn parveyor to an overgorg'd
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,

Comes

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

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
 Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
 Their progress in the road of science; blinds
 The eyelight of discovery, and begets

In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
 Bellial, a meagre intellect, unfit
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.
 Thee, therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd
 By public exigence, 'till annual food
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
 Thee, I account still happy, and the chief
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free!
 My native nook of earth! thy clime is rude,
 Replete with vapours, and disposes much
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
 And plausible than social life requires,
 And thou hast need of discipline and art,
 To give thee what politer France receives
 From Nature's bounty—that humane address
 And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
 In converse, either starv'd by cold reserve,
 Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
 Yet being free, I love thee. For the sake
 Of that one feature, can be well content,
 Disgrac'd as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.
 But once enslav'd, farewell! I cou'd 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
 Of British natures, wanting its excuse,
 That it belongs to freemen, would disgust

And

And shock me. I should then, with double pain,
 Feel all the rigour of thy sickle clime,
 And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,
 For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
 I would at least bewail it under skies
 Milder, among a people less austere,
 In scenes which, having never known me free,
 Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
 Do I forebode impossible events,
 And tremble at vain dreams? Heav'n grant I may!
 But th' age of virtuous politics is past,
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
 Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp,
 Design'd by loud declaimers on the part
 Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
 Incurs derision for his easy faith,
 And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough.
 For when was public virtue to be found,
 Where private was not? Can he love the whole
 Who loves no part? he be a nation's friend,
 Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
 Who fights 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
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts

So

So loose to private duty, that no brain,
 Healthful, and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
 Can dream them trusty to the gen'ral weal.
 Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
 Dilpers'd the shackles of usurp'd controul,
 And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons,
 Were sons indeed. They felt a filial heart
 Beat high within them, at a mother's wrongs,
 And shining each in his domestic sphere,
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.
 'Tis therefore, many whose sequester'd lot
 Forbids their interference, looking on,
 Anticipate perforce some dire event ;
 And seeing the old cattle of the state,
 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 heaven ere time began.
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
 Die too. The deep foundations that we lay,
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
 We build with what we deem eternal rock,
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood,
 And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty unsung
 By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
 Of earth and hell confederate take away.

T

A liberty,

A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind,
Which, whoſo taſtes, can be enſlav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, deriv'd from heav'n,
Bought with HIS blood, who gave it to mankind,
And ſeal'd with the ſame token. It is held
By charter, and that charter ſanction'd ſure,
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath,
And promiſe of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal ſtamp that ſpeaks them his,
And are auguſt, but this tranſcends them all.
His other works, this viſible diſplay
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word,
That finding an interminable ſpace
Unoccupy'd, has fill'd the void ſo well,
And made ſo ſparkling, what was dark before.
But theſe are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of ſo fair a ſcene,
Might well ſuppoſe th' artificer Divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himſelf
Pronounc'd it tranſient, glorious as it is,
And ſtill deſigning a more glorious far,
Doom'd it, as inſufficient for his praiſe.
Theſe therefore are occaſional, and paſs.
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whoſe lying heart diſputes againſt a God,
That office ſerv'd, they muſt be ſwept away.
Not ſo the labours of his love. They ſhine
In other heav'ns than theſe that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears

No forfeiture, and of its fruits, he sends
 Large prelibation oft to saints below.
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge,
 And confident assurance of the rest,
 Is liberty. A flight into his arms,
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
 A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
 And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
 Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.
 Propense his heart to idols, he is held
 In silly dotage on created things,
 Careless of their Creator. And that low,
 And sordid gravitation of his pow'rs
 To a vile clod, so draws him, with such force,
 Resistless from the center he should seek,
 That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
 Tend downward, his ambition is to sink,
 To reach a depth profounder still, and still
 Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
 Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
 But ere he gain the comfortless repose
 He seeks, an 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
 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 forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future, Not an hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears ;
What none can prove a forg'ry, may be true,
What none but bad men wish exploded, must
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud,
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethron'd and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short liv'd, the puny child
Of self-congratulating pride, begot
On fancy'd Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again ; but finds his best essay,
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonor, by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing nature foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause,
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd ;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Cov'ring his shame from his offended sight.

“ Hath

“ Hath God indeed giv’n appetites to man,
 “ 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
 “ So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
 “ Falsehood! which, who so but suspects of truth,
 “ Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
 “ Do they themselves, who undertake for hire,
 “ The teacher’s offic’, and dispense at large,
 “ Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
 “ Attend to their own music? have they faith
 “ In what with such solemnity of tone
 “ And gesture, they propound to our belief?
 “ Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
 “ Is but an instrument, on which the priest
 “ May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
 “ The unequivocal authentic deed,
 “ We find sound argument, we read the heart.”

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

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change,
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech,
 And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
 As if like him of fabulous renown,
 They had indeed ability to smooth
 The shag of savage nature, and were each
 An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.

But

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

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
 Bled nobly, and their deeds, as they deserve,
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
 Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historic muse,
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
 To latest times; and sculpture, in her turn,
 Gives bond in stone, and ever-during brads,
 To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust.
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
 To those who posted at the shrine of truth,
 Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
 And for a time, insure 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,
 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

Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
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,
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious suff'ers 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
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green wyths.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of Nature, and though poor, perhaps, compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
And the resplendent rivers. His t' enjoy,
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,
Can lift to heav'n an unpretentious eye,
And smiling, say—My father made them all.
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind,
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world

So

* See *Hume*.

So cloath'd with beauty, for rebellious man?
 Yes—ye may fill your garner, ye that reap
 The loaded foil, and ye may waste much good
 In senseless riot; but ye will not find
 In feast, or in the chace, in song or dance,
 A liberty like his, who unimpeach'd
 Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
 Appropriates nature as his father's work,
 And has a richer use of yours, than you.
 He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth,
 Of no mean city, plann'd or ere the hills
 Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea,
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.
 His freedom is the same in ev'ry state,
 And no condition of this changeful life,
 So manifold in cares, whose ev'ry day
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less.
 For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
 No nook so narrow, but he spreads them there
 With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds
 His body bound, but knows not what a range
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain,
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
 Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
 Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart
 Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,

'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone,
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them, or recumbent on its brow,
Ruminates, heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away,
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it, and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from heav'n,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for his,
Much more, who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;
Praise, that from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledg'd sov'reign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him, or receives sublim'd
New faculties, or learns at least t'employ
More worthily the pow'rs she own'd before;
Discerns in all things, with what stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then, she overlook'd,
A ray of heav'nly light gilding all forms
Terrestrial, in the vast, and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

Much

Much conversant with heav'n, she often holds
 With those fair ministers of light to man,
 That fill the skies nightly, with silent pomp,
 Sweet conference ; enquires what strains were they,
 With which heav'n rang, when ev'ry star, in haste
 To gratulate the new-created earth,
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts
 “ That navigate, a sea that knows no storms
 “ Beneath a vault unfulled with a cloud,
 “ If from your elevation, whence ye view
 “ Distinctly, scenes invisible to man,
 “ And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet
 “ Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
 “ Favor'd as our's, transgressors from the womb,
 “ And hast'ing to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
 “ And to possess a brighter heav'n than yours ?
 “ As one who long detain'd on foreign shores
 “ Pants to return, and when he sees afar,
 “ His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
 “ From the green wave emerging, darts an eye,
 “ Radiant with joy, towards the happy land ;
 “ So I with animated hopes behold,
 “ And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 “ That shew like beacons in the blue abyss,
 “ Ordain'd to guide th' embodied spirit home,
 “ From toilsome life, to never-ending rest.
 “ Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires,
 “ That give assurance of their own success,
 “ And that infus'd from heav'n, must thither tend.”

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious word !
Which, who so 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,
Worlds that had never been, hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy pow'r
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,
'Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice ; but 'tis the praise of thine,
That whom it teaches, it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
'Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect, and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and prov'd
Then skilful most, when most severely judg'd.
But chance is not ; or is not where thou reign'st :
Thy providence forbids that sickle pow'r,
(If pow'r she be, that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can,
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves

Gods,

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,
 Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
 For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
 Then we are free: then liberty, like day,
 Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heav'n,
 Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
 A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not
 'Till thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of song,
 A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,
 Which he that hears it, with a shout repeats,
 And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praise.
 In that blest moment, nature throwing wide
 Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
 The author of her beauties, who retir'd
 Behind his own creation, works unseen
 By the impure, and hears his pow'r deny'd.
 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 honor, hope, or peace.
 From thee is all that sooths the life of man,
 His high endeavour, and his glad success,
 His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
 But oh, thou bounteous giver of all good,
 Thou art, of all thy gifts, thyself the crown!
 Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
 And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

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 reprov'd.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from scripture.—That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and the unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end.—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An Invocation and an Invitation of him who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness.—Conclusion.

THE

T H E

T A S K.



B O O K VI.



THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

TH E R E is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling, at intervals, upon the ear,
In cadence sweet! now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on.
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,

And

And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace,
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short, as in retrospect, the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path,
And prospect, oft so dreary and forlorn,
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,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found.
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
A father, whose authority, in show,
When most severe, and must'ring all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love.
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might low'
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threat'ning at once, and nourishing the plant.
We 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
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected fire! a mother too,

That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
 Might he demand them at the gates of death.
 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,
 'Till time has stol'n away the slighted good,
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
 And makes the world the wilderness it is.
 The few that pray at all, pray oft amiss,
 And seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,
 Would urge a wiser suit, than asking more,

The night was winter, in his roughest mood,
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue,
 Without a cloud, and white, without a speck,
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
 Again, the harmony comes o'er the vale,
 And through the trees I view th' embattl'd tow'r,
 Whence all the music. I again perceive
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
 And settle, in soft musings, as I tread
 The walk, still verdant under oaks and elms,
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
 The roof, though moveable, through all its length,

As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The red-breast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd.
Pleas'd with his solitude, and fitting light,
From spray to spray, where'er he rests, he shakes,
From many a twig, the pendant drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompany'd with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here,
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart,
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning, wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom, in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
'Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place,
Does but incumber whom it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthral'd.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hood-wink'd. Some the stile
Infatu-

Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
 Of error, leads them by a tune entranc'd.
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
 The unsupportable fatigue of thought,
 And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
 But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
 And lanes, in which the primrose, ere her time,
 Peeps through the moss that cloaths the hawthorn root,
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
 Not shy as in the world, and to be won,
 By slow solicitation, seize at once
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can pow'r divine perform
 More grand, than it produces year by year,
 And all in sight of inattentive man?
 Familiar with th' effect, we slight the cause,
 And in the constancy of nature's course,
 The regular return of genial months,
 And renovation of a faded world,
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
 Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
 How would the world admire! but speaks it less
 An agency divine, to make him know
 His moment when to sink, and when to rise,
 Age after age, than to arrest his course?

All we behold is miracle, but seen
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.
 Where now the vital energy that mov'd,
 While summer was, that pure and subtle lymph,
 Through th' imperceptible mæand'ring veins
 Of leaf and flow'r? It sleeps; and th' icy touch
 Of unprolific winter, has impress'd
 A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.
 But let the months go round, a few short months,
 And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,
 Barren as lances, among which the wind
 Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
 And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
 Then, each in its peculiar honors clad,
 Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
 In streaming gold; syringa iv'ry pure,
 The scented, and the scentless rose; this red,
 And of an humbler growth, the * other tall,
 And growing up into the darkest gloom
 Of neigh'bring cypress, or more sable yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf,
 That the wind severs from the broken wave.
 The lilac, various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd

Which

* *The Guelder-rose.*

Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all.
 Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
 But well compensating their sickly looks,
 With never-cloying odours, early and late.
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
 Of flow'rs, like flies, cloathing her slender rods,
 That scarce a leaf appears. Mezerion too,
 Though leafless, well attir'd, and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths investing ev'ry spray.
 Althæa, with the purple eye, the broom,
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
 Her blossoms, and luxuriant above all,
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green, of whose unvarnish'd leaf
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more,
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—
 These have been, and these shall be in their day,
 And all this uniform uncolour'd scene
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
 And flush into variety again.
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
 In heav'nly truth; evincing, as she makes
 The grand transition, that there lives, and works,
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,
 That make so gay the solitary place,
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
 That cultivation glories in, are his.
 He sets the bright procession on its way.

And

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,
 Ruffet and rude, folds up the tender germ
 Uninjur'd, with inimitable art,
 And ere one flow'ry season fades and dies,
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say, that in the origin of things,
 When all creation started into birth,
 The infant elements receiv'd a law,
 From which they swerve not since. That under force
 Of that controuling 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
 The 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.
 So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
 To span Omnipotence, and measure might
 That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
 And standard of his own, that is to-day,
 And is not, ere to-morrow's sun go down.
 But how should matter occupy a charge
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
 So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
 To ceaseless service, by a ceaseless force,

And

And under pressure of some conscious cause?
 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,
 Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight,
 Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
 Whose work is without labor, whose designs
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
 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
 That were not, and commending, as they would,
 To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
 But all are under one. One spirit—His,
 Who bore the platted thorns, with bleeding brows,
 Rules universal nature. Not a flow'r,
 But shows some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,
 Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
 Their balmy odors, and imparts their hues,
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
 In grains, as countless as the sea-side sands,
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
 Happy, who walks with him! whom, what he finds
 Of flavour, or of scent, in fruit or flow'r,
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand

In Nature, from the broad majestic oak,
 To the green blade, that twinkles in the sun,
 Prompts, with remembrance of a present God.
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
 Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
 Is dreary; so with him all seasons please.
 Though winter had been none, had man been true,
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,
 Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream,
 Recov'ring fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd
 To contemplation, and within his reach,
 A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,
 Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,
 His host of wooden warriors, to and fro,
 Marching, and counter-marching, with an eye
 As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridg'd,
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung
 In balance, on his conduct of a pin?
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
 Who pant with application, misapply'd
 To trivial joys, and pushing iv'ry balls
 Across the velvet level, feel a joy
 Akin to rapture, when the bawble 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,
 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 diff'rence of a Guido from a daub,
 Frequents the crowded auction. Station'd there,
 As duly as the Langford of the show,
 With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
 And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant,
 And pedantry, that coxcombs learn with ease.
 Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,
 That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
 The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
 Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
 Ev'n in the spring, and play-time of the year,
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad,
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,
 To gather king-cups, in the yellow mead,
 And 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,
 Scarce skuns me; and the stock-deve, unalarm'd,
 Y Sits

Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love ditty, for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Whereon his bed of wool, and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk a while, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighb'ring beech; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps, and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleas'd
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse, as wanton, and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops, and snorts, and throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine, that gambol at high noon,
The total herd, receiving first from one
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though

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 extasy, too big to be suppress'd—
 These, and a thousand images of blifs,
 With which kind nature graces ev'ry scenc,
 Where cruel man defeats not her design,
 Impart to the benevolent, who wish
 All that are capable of pleasure, pleas'd,
 A far superior 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.
 God set the diadem upon his head,
 And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring stood,
 The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd
 All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
 The creatures summon'd from their various haunts,
 To see their sov'reign, and confess his sway.
 Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
 Or bounded only by a law, whose force
 'Twas his sublimest privelege to feel
 And own, the law of universal love.
 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,

Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear, as yet, was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change,
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! ev'ry heart,
Each animal of ev'ry name, conceiv'd
A jealousy, and an instinctive fear,
And conscious of some danger, either fled
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,
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain,
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good,
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dy'd
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
Earth groans beneath the burthen of a war,
Wag'd with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfy'd to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs

Need-

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.
 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, uncontroul'd,
 Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
 Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude,
 Within the confines of their wild domain;
 The lion tells him—I am monarch here—
 And if he spares him, spares him on the terms
 Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn,
 To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
 In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
 Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
 Dependent upon man, those in his fields,
 These at his crib, and some beneath his roof;
 They prove too often, at how dear a rate
 He sells protection. Witness, at his foot,
 The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
 Under dissection of the knotted scourge.
 Witness, the patient ox, with stripes and yells,
 Driv'n to the slaughter, goaded as he runs
 To madness, while the savage, at his heels,
 Laughs at the frantic suff'rer's fury spent
 Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
 He too is witness, noblest of the train,

That

That wait on man, the flight-performing horse :
 With unsuspecting readiness he takes,
 His murth'rer on his back, and push'd all day,
 With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,
 To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies.

So little mercy shows, who needs so much !
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts,
 (As if barbarity were high desert)

Th' inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose,
 The honors of his matchless horse his own.

But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,
 Is register'd in heav'n, and these, no doubt,
 Have each their record, with a curse annex.

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
 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,
 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 controul

Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute.

The Governor of all, himself to all
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear,
 The 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,
 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
 Sav'd him, or th' unrelenting ser had died.
 He sees that human equity is slack
 To interfere, though in so just a cause,
 And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
 And helpless victims, with a sense so keen
 Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
 And such sagacity to take revenge,
 That oft the beast, has seem'd to judge the man.
 An ancient, not a legendary tale,
 By one of sound intelligence rehears'd,
 (If such, who plead for Providence, may seem
 In modern eyes) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where

Where England stretch'd towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus. A scorner he,
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd, and his chance was, as he went,
To join a traveller of far diff'rent note,
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years
Deserving honor, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man,
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high,
The charity that warm'd his heart was mov'd
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile,
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he ply'd his ear with truths,
Not harshly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,
But like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
And dost thou dream, th' impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, that me, the lullabies of age,
And fantasies of dotards, such as thou,
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids as superstition lends,
To steel their hearts against the dread of death.
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand,

Push'd

Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
 And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
 Of such a gulph, as he design'd his grave.
 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.
 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
 Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
 With sounding whip, and rowels dy'd 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.
 And now, his prowess prov'd, and his sincere
 Incorruptable 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
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze
 Of good Evander, still where he was left,
 Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.
 So on they far'd; discourse on other themes
 Ensuing, seem'd to obliterate the past,
 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.
 The impious challenger of pow'r divine
 Was now to learn, that heav'n, though slow to wrath,
 Is never with impunity defy'd.
 His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
 Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
 Unbidden, and not now to be controul'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,
 The death he had deserv'd, and dy'd alone.
 So God wrought double justice; made the fool
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends,
 (Though 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 evening, in the public path,
 But he that has humanity forewarn'd,
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
 And charg'd, perhaps, with venom, that intrudes
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
 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,
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field.
 There they are priviledg'd. And he that hunts
 Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
 Disturbs th' œconomy of nature's realm,
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
 The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
 Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
 Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
 As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
 As God was free to form them at the first,
 Who in his sov'reign wisdom made them all.
 Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
 To love it too. The spring-time of our years
 Is soon dishonour'd, and defil'd in most
 By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
 To check them. But alas! none sooner sheets,
 If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
 Than cruelty, most dev'lish of them all.
 Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule
 And righteous limitation of its act,
 By which heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man;
 And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,
 Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more,
 By our capacity of grace divine,
 From creatures that exist but for our sake,
 Which having serv'd us, perish, we are held
 Accountable, and God, some future day,
 Will reckon with us roundly, for th' abuse
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
 Superior as we are, they yet depend,
 Not more on human help, than we on theirs.
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv'n
 In aid of our defects. In some are found
 Such teachable, and apprehensive parts,
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,
 Match'd with th' expertness of the brutes in theirs,
 Are oft-times vanquish'd, and thrown far behind.
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
 And read with such discernment, in the port
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
 To quadrupede instructors, many a good
 And useful quality, and virtue too,
 Rarely exemplify'd among ourselves.
 Attachment never to be wean'd, or chang'd,
 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

And trivial favors, lasting as the life,
And glitt'ning, even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms,
Wins public honor; and ten thousand sit
Patiently, present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of music's pow'r!)
Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.
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,
And hang it up in honor of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel! who that was not born
Deaf, as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer, of his age?
Yes—we remember him And while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too,
That His most holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never us'd before
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.
But hush!—the muse, perhaps, is too severe,
And with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment, than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,

When

When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
 And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George.
 —Man praises man, and Garrick's mem'ry next,
 When time had somewhat mellow'd it, and made
 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
 Its squeez'd contents, and more than it admits,
 Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
 Ungratify'd. For there some noble lord
 Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,
 Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
 And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and stare,
 To show the world how Garrick did not act.
 For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
 He drew the Liturgy, and fram'd the rites,
 And solemn ceremonial of the day,
 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'ry tree was hung with blooming wreaths,
 The mulb'ry tree stood centre of the dance,
 The mulb'ry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs,
 And from his touchwood trunk, the mulb'ry tree

Supply'd.

Supply'd such relics, as devotion holds
 Still Sacred, and preserves with pious care.
 So 'twas an hallow'd time. Decorum reign'd,
 And mirth, without offence. No few return'd,
 Doubtless, much edify'd, and all refresh'd.
 —Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
 From tipling-benches, cellars, halls, and styes,
 Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
 A pompous and slow-moving pageant comes.
 Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
 To gaze in's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
 Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy.
 While others, not so satisfy'd, unhorse
 The gilded equipage, and turning loose
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
 Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he sav'd the state?
 No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
 Inchanting novelty, that moon at full,
 That finds out ev'ry crevice of the head
 That is not found and perfect, hath in theirs
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use,
 And just direction, sacred, to a thing
 Dem'd to the dust, or lodg'd already there.
 Eponium in old time was poets' work.
 But poets having lavishly long since,
 Exhausted all materials of the art,
 The task now falls into the public hand.

And

And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
The vale of nature, where it creeps, and winds
Among her lovely works, with a serene,
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth of brutes.
And I am recompens'd, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindl'd at the prophet's 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,
Over a sinful world. And what remains
Of this tempelluous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For he whose ear the winds are, and the clouds,
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot pay'd with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defac'd
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet

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

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

Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the serpent now. The mother sees,
 And smiles, to see her infant's playful hand
 Stretch'd forth, to dally with the crested worm,
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind,
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place ;
 That creeping pestilence is driv'n away,
 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.
 One song employs all nations, and all cry,
 " Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us."
 The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops,
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
 'Till nation, after nation, taught the strain,
 Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd,
 See Salem built, the labour of a God !
 Bright, as a sun, the sacred city shines ;
 All kingdoms, and all princes of the earth,
 Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her, unbounded in her joy,
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there

* Nebaioth,

* Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates. Upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there,
 Kneels, with the native of the farthest West.
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
 Into all lands. From ev'ry clime they come,
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
 O Sion! an assembly, such as earth
 Saw never, such as heav'n stoops down to see.

Thus heav'n-ward 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,
 In his dishonor'd works himself endure
 Dishonor, and be wrong'd without redress.
 Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
 Ye slow revolving seasons! We would see
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
 A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
 And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
 The creature is that God pronounces good,

A a 2

How

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

How pleasant in itself, what pleases him.
 Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a sting,
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs,
 And ev'n the joy that haply some poor heart
 Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
 Is sullied in the stream; taking a taint,
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
 Oh for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish! over which,
 Custom, and prejudice, shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, should ring aside
 The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife,
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men.
 Where violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong.
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears.
 Where he that fills an office, shall esteem
 Th' occasion it presents of doing good,
 More than the perquisite. Where law shall speak
 Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts,
 And equity: not jealous more to guard
 A wretched's form, than to decide aright.
 Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth good-breeding, (supplemental grace)
 With lean performance ape the work of love.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth.
 Thou who alone art worthy! it was thine

By ancient cov'nant, ere nature's birth,
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood
 Thy faints proclaim thee King; and in their hearts,
 Thy title is engraven with a pen
 Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
 Thy faints proclaim thee King; and thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
 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,
 "Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,
 'Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
 He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
 And aims them at the shield of truth again.
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes,
 And all the mysteries to faith propos'd
 Insulted and traduc'd, are cast aside
 As useless, to the moles, and to the bats.
 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 ev'n these,
 Worthy, compar'd with hypocrites, who kneel,
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man.

So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare,
The world takes little thought; who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wand'ring sheep, 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
With conscience, and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and noting down
The features of the last degen'rate times,
Exhibit ev'ry lineament of these.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last, and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world.

He is the happy man, whose life, ev'n now,
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come.
Who doom'd to an obscure, but tranquil state,
Is pleas'd with it, and were he free to chuse,
Would make his fate his choice. Whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one,
Content indeed to sojourn, while he must,
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;

And

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.
He cannot skim the ground, like summer birds,
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honors, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose pow'r is such, that whom she lifts from earth,
She makes familiar with a heav'n unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least, is longest on the wing.
Ask him indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—none.
His warfare is within. There unfatigu'd
His fervent spirit labors. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which,
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,
Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see,
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring,

And

And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,
When Isaac like the solitary saint,
Walks forth to meditate at even-tide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him then, thou buffler in concerns
Of little worth, and idler in the best,
If author of no mischief, and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder thine.
Nor though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an incumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.
His sphere, though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which, at least, a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe,
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country; recompenses well
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.
The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop, indeed, the hope of public praise;
But he may boast what few that win it can,
That if his country stand not by his skill,
At least, his follies have not wrought her fall.

Polite refinement, offers him in vain
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
 The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode,
 Because that world adopts it. If it bear
 The stamp, and clear impression of good sense,
 And be not costly more than of true worth,
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake,
 Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
 She judges of refinement by the eye,
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart
 Not soon deceiv'd; aware that what is base
 No polish can make sterling, and that vice,
 Though well perfum'd, and elegantly dress'd,
 Like an unburied carcase, trick'd with flow'rs,
 Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
 For cleanly riddance, than for fair attire.
 So life glides smoothly, and by stealth, away,
 More golden than that age of fabl'd 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
 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.
 It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd,

To dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task, but soon to please her more,
Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little please,
Let fall th' unfinish'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit.
Rov'd far, and gather'd much. Some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested. Grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth,
Insipid else, and sure to be 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,
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.

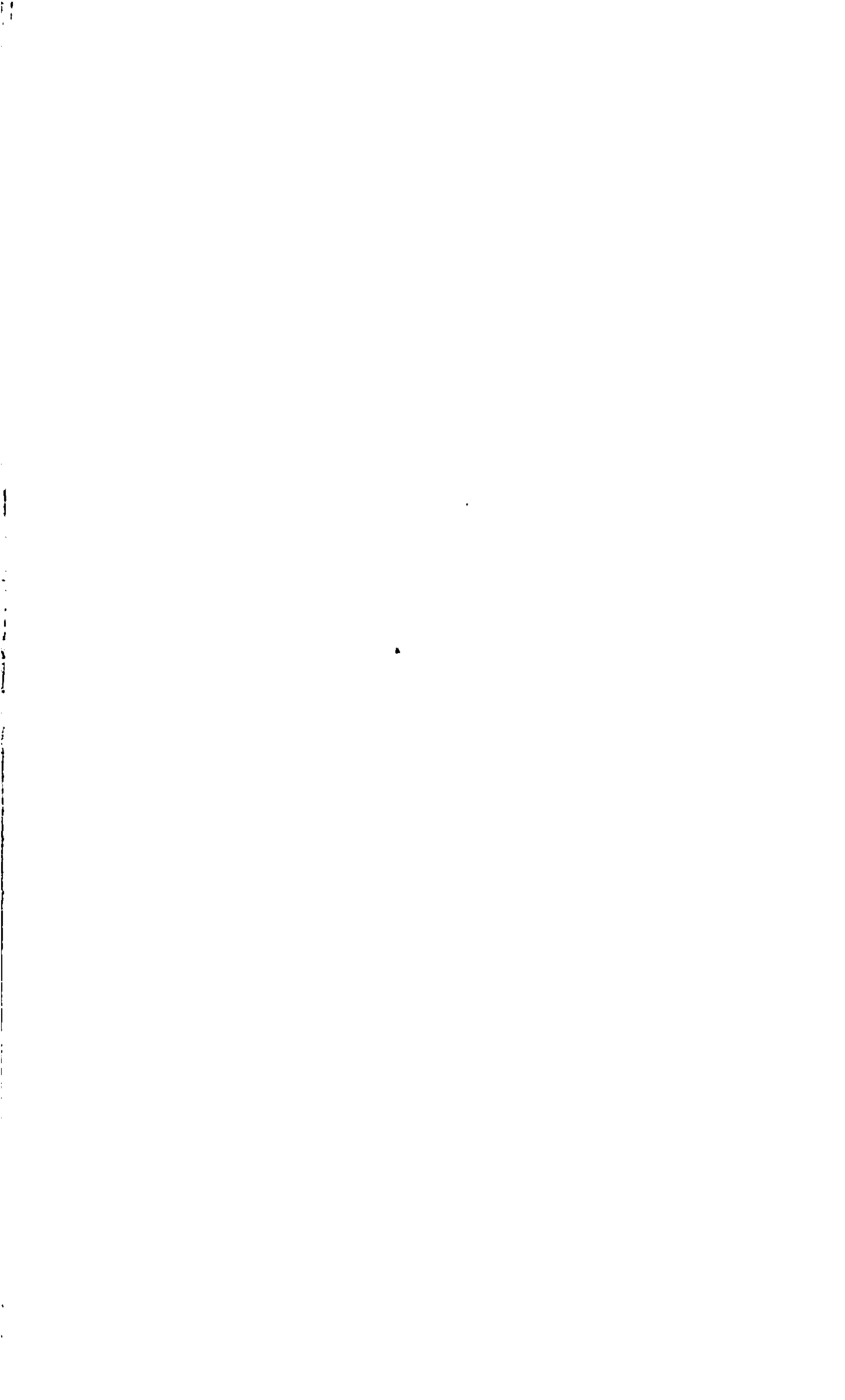


T I R O C I N I U M:

O R, A

R E V I E W O F S C H O O L S.





T I R O C I N I U M :

O R, A

R E V I E W O F S C H O O L S.



IT is not from his form in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, th' associate of a mind,
Vast in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of almighty skill,
Fram'd for the service of a free-born will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks controul,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her, the mem'ry fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from ev'ry distant age,

For her amasses an unbounded store,
 The wisdom of great nations, now no more,
 Though laden, not incumber'd with her spoil,
 Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil,
 When copiously supply'd, then most enlarg'd,
 Still to be fed, and not to be furcharg'd.
 For her, the fancy roving unconfin'd,
 The present muse of ev'ry pensive mind,
 Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
 To nature's scenes, than nature ever knew,
 At her command, winds rise, and waters roar,
 Again, she lays them slumb'ring on the shore,
 With flow'r and fruit the wilderness supplies,
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
 For her, the judgment, umpire in the strife,
 That grace and nature have to wage through life,
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
 Appointed sage preceptor to the will,
 Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice,
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
 To yon fair sun, and his attendant earth,
 And when descending he resigns the skies,
 Why takes the gent'ler moon her turn to rise,
 Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,
 And owns her pow'r on ev'ry shore he leaves?
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
 Fruitful and young, as in their first career?

Spring

Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze,
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives,
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 'Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues—
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 Pow'r misemploy'd, munificence misplac'd,
 Had not its author dignify'd 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
 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,
 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 burnt by turns
 With ev'ry lust with which frail nature burns,
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond,
 Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
 And useless while he lives, and when he dies,
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

T I R O C I N I U M.

Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains ;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
'That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of ev'ry path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true, that if to trifle life away
Down to the sun-set 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,
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.
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,
Fulfill the purpose, and appear design'd
Proofs of the wisdom of th' all-seeing mind,
'Tis plain, the creature whom he chose t' invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands array'd,
That first or last, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his author's wisdom clear,
Praise him on earth, or obstinately dumb
Suffer his justice in a world to come.

This

This once believ'd, 'twere logic misapply'd
 To prove a consequence by none deny'd,
 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,
 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,
 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,
 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.
 Lispering out syllables, we scramble next,
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text,
 And learn with wonder how this world began,
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man.
 Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain.

Oh thou, whom borne on fancy's eager wing,
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleas'd remember, and while mem'ry yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget,
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail,
 Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple stile,
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
 Witty, and well-employ'd, and like thy Lord,
 Speaking in parables his slighted word,
 I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name,
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
 Yet ev'n in transitory life's late day
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
 Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road
 And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
 Their childhood, 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,
 And not with curses on his art who stole
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
 The stamp of artless piety impress'd,
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
 Regards with scorn, though once 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

Touch

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
 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 !
 While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange,
 Of modest truth, for wits eccentric range.
 Time was, he clos'd, as he began the day,
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray ;
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part,
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
 A pow'r, confess'd so lately on his knees,
 But now, farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
 Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves,
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves,
 Priests have invented, and the world admir'd,
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspir'd,
 'Till reason, now no longer overaw'd,
 Resumes her pow'rs, and spurns the clumsy fraud,
 And

* See Chron. Ch. xxvi. v. 19.

And common-sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the gospel dies away.
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert enquirers after truth,
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.
 And thus well-tutor'd only while we share
 A mother's lectures, and a nurse's care,
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff*,
 But found religion sparingly enough,
 Our early notices of truth disgrac'd,
 Soon loose their credit, and are all effac'd.

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 expence, and fashionable waste,
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last,
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness, men.

There

* 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,
 That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold,
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long.
 The management of Tiro's of eighteen
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
 The stout tall Captain, whose superior size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
 His pride, that scorns t' obey or to submit,
 With them is courage, his effront'ry wit ;
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
 Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
 His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
 Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
 In little bosoms such achievements strike
 A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.
 Thus half accomplish'd, ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin,
 And as maturity of years come on,
 Made just th' adept that you design'd your son,
 T' insure the perseverance of his course,
 And give your monstrous project all its force,

Send him to college. If he there be tam'd,
 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 strumpet's charms, nor drinking-bout,
 Nor gambling practices can find it out. }
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
 Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you.
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds,
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
 With pack-horse constancy we keep the road,
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
 True to the jingling of our leaders bells.
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think.
 And such an age as ours bauks no expence,
 Except of caution, and of common sense,
 Else sure, notorious fact, and proof so plain,
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
 I blame not those, who with what care they can,
 C'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan,
 Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
 Promise a work of which they must despair.
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
 An ubiquarian presence and controul,
 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.
 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,
 And evils not to be endur'd, endure,
 Lest pow'r exerted, out without success,
 Should make the little ye retain still less.
 Ye once were justly fam'd for bringing forth
 Undoubted scholarship, and genuine worth,
 And in the firmament of fame still shines,
 A glory bright as that of all the signs
 Of poets 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.
 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,
 No muse can hesitate or linger long)
 What causes move us, knowing, as we must,
 That these *Menageries* all fail their trust,
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
 We love the play-place of our early days.
 The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
 The wall on which we try'd our graving skill,
 The very name we carv'd subsisting still,
 The bench on which we sat while deep-employ'd,
 Though mangled, hack'd and hew'd, not yet destroy'd,
 The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
 Playing our games, and on the very spot,
 As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw,
 To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
 Or drive it devious with a dext'rous pat,
 The pleasing spectacle at once excites
 Such recollection of our own delights,
 That viewing it, we seem almost t' obtain
 Our innocent sweet simple years again.
 This fond attachment to the well-known place
 Whence first we started into life's long race,
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
 We feel it ev'n in age, and at our latest day.
 Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
 Of classic food begins to be his care,
 With his own likeness plac'd on either knee,
 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 th' adventures of his early life,

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 fums he lost at play, and how he sold
 Watch, seals, and all, 'till all his pranks are told.
 Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)
 He gives the local biases all its sway,
 Resolves, that where he play'd, his sons shall play,
 And destines their bright genius to be shown
 Just in the scene where he display'd his own.
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
 To be as bold and forward as he ought,
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
 Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
 Th' event is sure, expect it, and rejoice!
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

'The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
 Excus'd th' incumbrance 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 expence,
 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

But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
 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
 With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist,
 They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least,
 And while the playful jocky 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,
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease. }
 But how? resides such virtue in that air
 As must create an appetite for pray'r?
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,
 To take the lead, and be the foremost still,
 In all true worth and literary skill?
 “ Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
 “ The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
 “ Church-ladders are not always mounted best
 “ By learned Clerks, and Latinate profess'd.
 “ Th'

“ Th’ exalted prize demands an upward look,
 “ Not to be found by poring on a book.
 “ Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
 “ Is more than adequate to all I seek;
 “ Let erudition grace him or not grace,
 “ I give the bawble but the second place,
 “ His wealth, fame, honors, all that I intend,
 “ Sublist and center in one point—a friend.
 “ A friend, whate’er he studies or neglects,
 “ Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
 “ His intercourse with peers, and sons of peer—
 “ There dawns the splendour of his future years,
 “ In that bright quarter his propitious skies
 “ Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
 “ *Your Lordship, and your Grace*, what school can teach
 “ A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
 “ What need of Flomer’s verse, or Tully’s prose,
 “ Sweet interjections! if he learn but those!
 “ Let rev’reud churls his ignorance rebuke,
 “ Who flarve upon a dogs-ear’d Pentateuch,
 “ The parson knows enough who knows a Duke.”—

Egregious purpose! worthily begun
 In barb’rous prostitution of your son,
 Prefs’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
 For more than common punishment, it shall.

The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth,
 Least qualified in honor, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
 A king that would, might recommend his horse,
 And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,
 Christian in name, and Infidel in heart,
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man,
 Dumb as a senator, and as a priest,
 A piece of mere church-furniture at best;
 'To live 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
 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.
 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
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste,

And

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

Our public hives of puerile resort,
 That are of chief and most approv'd report,
 To such base hopes in many a fordid soul,
 Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
 A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
 Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass,
 That with a world, not often over-nice,
 Ranks as a virtue; and is yet a vice,
 Or rather a gross compound, justly try'd,
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride,
 Contributes most, perhaps, t' enhance their fame,
 And Emulation is its specious name.
 Boys once on fire with that contentious zeal,
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,

The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes,
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
 The spirit of that competition burns,
 With all varieties of ill by turns,
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,
 Resents his fellows, wishes it were less,
 Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail,
 Deems his reward too great, if he prevail,
 And labors to surpass him day and night,
 Less for improvement, than to tickle spite.
 The spur is pow'rful, and I grant its force,
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
 And felt alike by each, advances both;
 But judge where so much evil intervenes,
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert,
 Against an heart deprav'd, and temper hurt,
 Hurt too, perhaps for life, for early wrong
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long,
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
 If you can crown a discipline that draws
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connection form'd for int'rest, and endear'd
 By selfish views, thus censur'd and cashier'd,
 And emulation, as engendering hate,
 Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate,
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,
 The JACHIN and the BOAZ of them all.

Great

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,
 I praise a school as Pope a government;
 So take my judgment in his language dress'd,
 "Whate'er is best administer'd, is best."
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,
 But all are capable of living well.
 Then ask not, whether limited or large,
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?
 If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
 While *Morals* languish, a despis'd concern;
 The great and small deserve one common blame,
 Diff'rent in size, but in effect the same.
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most.
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
 For there, the game they seek is easiest found,
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
 If fir'd, and of a well-constructed brain,
 Keen in pursuit, and vig'rous to retain,
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill,
 As whereforever taught, so form'd, he will,
 The pædagogus, with self-complacent air,
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share;
 But if with all his genius he betray,
 Not more intelligent, than loose and gay,

Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread,
 Unenvy'd there, he may sustain alone,
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

Oh, 'tis a sight to be with joy perus'd,
 By all whom sentiment has not abus'd,
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace,
 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 ingenious son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor all in one.
 How? turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—why not?
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
 To take in childish plays, a childish part,
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
 Then, why resign into a stranger's hand,
 A task as much within your own command,
 That God and nature, and your int'rest too,
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown,
 For one whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round
 your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his!

Th' in-

Th' indented stick that loses day by day,
 Notch after notch, 'till all are smooth'd away,
 Bears witness long ere his dismissal come,
 With what intense desire he wants his home.
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof,
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
 Harmless, and safe, and nat'ral as they are,
 A disappointment waits him even there:
 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,
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
 And least familiar where he should be most,
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
 Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
 Say, what accomplishments at school acquir'd,
 Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesir'd?
 Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none.
 None, that in thy domestic snug recess,
 He had not made his own with more address,
 Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
 And better never learn'd, or left behind.
 Add too, that thus estrang'd, thou can'st obtain,
 By no kind arts, his confidence again,
 That here begins with most that long complaint,
 Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which,

Which, oft neglected in life's waning years,
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees,
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray, and sore disgrace,
The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race,
While ev'ry worm industriously weaves,
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So num'rous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of ev'ry sprightly boy,
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed,
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough, that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his sickle thoughts engage,
Ev'n in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
O'er-all his pleasures gently to provide,
Watch his emotions, and controul their tide,
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
'T' impress a value not to be eras'd,
On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye,
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

For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public 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.
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
Would deem it no abuse or waste of pains,
T' improve this diet at no great expence,
With sav'ry truth, and wholesome common sense,
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
To some not steep, though philosophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes,
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect or a flow'r,
Such microscopic proofs 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,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame,
And more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.

Such

Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,
 Would make him what some lovely boys have been,
 And more than one, perhaps, that I have seen,
 An evidence, and reprehension both,
 Of the mere school-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally ty'd,
 With all thy faculties elsewhere apply'd,
 Too busy to intend a meaner care,
 Than how t' enrich thyself, and next, thine heir;
 Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)
 But poor in knowledge, having none to impart—
 Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,
 His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad,
 Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then,
 Heard to articulate like other men,
 No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
 His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force,
 And his address, if not quite French in ease,
 Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please,
 Low in the world, because he scorns its arts,
 A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
 Unpatroniz'd, and therefore little known,
 Wife for himself, and his few friends alone,
 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

Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye to prove
The force of discipline, when back'd by love,
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below.
Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd
By footman Tom, for witty and 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
An 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' expence of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,
Great cause occurs to save him from a band,
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand,
A point secur'd, if once he be supply'd,
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps, they would abound,
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools, that have outliv'd all just esteem,
Exchang'd for the secure domestic scheme.
But having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou would'st th' advancement of thine heir,
In all good faculties beneath his care,

Respect, as is but rational and just,
 A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
 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;
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
 And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend,
 Are a stream choak'd, or trickling to no end. }
 Doom him not then to solitary meals,
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels,
 And, that possessor of a soul 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,
 Account him no just mark for idle wit,
 Offend not him, whom modestly restrains
 From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,
 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth—
 And trust me, his utility may reach,
 To more than he is 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,
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
 And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
 The world accounts an honourable man,

Because

Because forsooth, thy courage has been try'd,
 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side,
 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 indutry begins to snore,
 Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door,
 And thrice, in ev'ry winter throngs thine own,
 With half the chariots and sedans in town,
 Thyself, meanwhile, e'en shifting as thou mayst,
 Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
 Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
 If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
 And thou at best, and in thy sob'rest mood,
 A trifler, vain, and empty of all good?
 Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
 Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
 Sav'd from his home, where ev'ry day brings forth,
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
 Find him a better in a distant spot,
 Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
 Where vile example (your's I chiefly mean,
 The most seducing, and the oft'nest seen)
 May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
 Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
 Where early rest makes early rising sure,
 Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
 Prevented much by diet neat and plain,
 Or if it enter, soon starv'd out again.

Where all th' attention of his faithful host
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air.

Where stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclin'd,
Not occupy'd in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last,
In settled habit, and decided taste.

But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation suit,
Not better much than spectacles a brute,
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment, whose, or where,
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay t' have any of their own.

But courage, man! methought the muse reply'd,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide;
The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And while on public nurs'ries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft, not caring why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice,
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,

Whose

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' inforce
 Th' expedience of a less advent'rous course.
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn,
 But *they* have human feelings. Turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely plac'd between the small and great,
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
 Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
 Who wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
 Look round you on a world perversely blind,
 See what contempt is fall'n on human kind ;
 See wealth abus'd, and dignities misplac'd,
 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 closetted and hand-cuff'd charge,
 Surpass'd in frenzy, by the mad at large ;
 See great commanders making war a trade,
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made,
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
 Who far enough from furnishing their shelves
 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,
 Civetted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,

Elle coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
 Now flush'd with drunk'ness, now with whoredom pale,
 Their breath a sample of last nights regale ;
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts
 Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,
 Design'd by nature wise, but self-made fools ;
 All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
 That though school bred, the boy be virtuous still,
 Such rare exceptions shining in the dark,
 Prove rather than impeach the just remark,
 As here and there a twinkling star descry'd,
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.
 Now look on him whose very voice in tone
 Just echos thine, whose features are thine own,
 And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
 And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
 And say, my boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
 When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
 Must find a colder soil, and bleaker air,
 And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;
 What character, what turn thou wilt assume,
 From constant converse with I know not whom,
 Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
 And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt chuse,
 Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
 Is all chance medly, and unknown to me.
 Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
 And while the dreadful risk foreseen, forbids,
 Free too, and under no constraining force,
 Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,

Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not: Nature pulling at thine heart,
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part,
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tend'rest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
Then, only govern'd by the 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)
That since thy strength must with thy years clope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompence of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,
Besfriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware, then, how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine. Its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not, if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But if thou guard its secret chambers sure,
From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last,

Or if he prove unkind, (as who can say,
But being man, and therefore frail, he may)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

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

Or throw them up to liv'ry nags and grooms,
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?
—A captious question, Sir, and your's is one,
Deserves an answer similar, or none.

Would'st thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Appriz'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.

From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws,
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let,*
Unless the world were all prepar'd to embrace,
A plan well worthy to supply their place,
Yet backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better manag'd, or encourag'd less.

B O O K S,

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