

Poetry

Oldham, Thomas

BY THOMAS OLDHAM.

O! should I ever dare profane With venal touch the hallow'd lyre, Let me be banish'd from the Muses' train; Ne'er let me feel their heart-ennobling fire! Unworthy of a Poet's glorious name, Let me be doom'd to everlasting shame!

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PREFACE.

The writer of the following pages has been in the habit, for many years, of amusing himself with the composition of Poetry. Often has he been advised by his friends to publish; and at length, influenced by their persuasion, and feeling a sort of paternal fondness for the offspring of his own brain, he ventures to present this small volume to the notice of the Public.

It contains Poems of many different kinds, composed, of course, in as many varieties of style; and the author has exerted his best [Pg iv] endeavours to render them worthy of approbation. The present times—he is well aware—are unfavourable for the publication of poetical works. The booksellers complain generally of the little demand for them. Nevertheless, it is very improbable that Poetry,—if excellent, (as it ought to be to deserve the name,) should ever be totally neglected. The seed of poetic taste is sown by the hand of Nature in the souls of all men; though in a small number only it is by culture brought to maturity.

The author has exalted ideas of Poetry, He deems it—decidedly—the first of the Fine Arts. It is the most intellectual,—the most [Pg v] comprehensive,—the most powerful,—the most delightful,—and, also,—hear it, Utilitarians!—the most useful. In remote antiquity, as is well known, it was chiefly instrumental in teaching and civilising the then-barbarous human race. To lure their wild minds into reflection, it invested truth and morality with the many-coloured garb of Fiction, and introduced them, through their delighted imagination, to their understanding and their heart; while, by the charm of harmonious numbers, it soothed their fierce and licentious passions into submission to the laws of social life. It was believed to have something divine in its nature, and was universally held in the highest veneration. From ancient times, even to this [Pg vi] day, it has continued to be a favourite study with many of the most illustrious characters.

Finally,—and let this be for ever remembered, as conferring on it the highest honour! Poetry has been deemed worthy by the Sacred Writers to be made an instrument in the cause of Religion; and by its sublime descriptions it has assisted human imagination in forming grand, and awful conceptions of the Almighty Creator!

Park-Fields, Allesley, near Coventry,
22d January, 1840.

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[Pg 1]

THE MUSE'S TRIUMPH.

What adverse passions rule my changeful breast, With hope exalted, or by fear deprest! Now, by the Muse inspired, I snatch the lyre, And proudly to poetic fame aspire; Now dies the sacred flame, my pride declines, And diffidence the immortal wreath resigns. Friends, void of taste, warm advocates for trade, With shafts of ridicule, my peace invade: 'A Poet!'—thus they sneeringly exclaim— 'Well may you court that glorious, envied name; For, sure, no common joys his lot attend; None but himself those joys can comprehend.

[Pg 2] O, superhuman bliss, employ sublime, To scribble fiction, and to jingle rhyme! Caged in some muse-behaunted, Grub-street garret, To prate his feeders' promptings, like a parrot! And what, though want and scorn his life assail? What, though he rave in Bedlam, starve in jail? Such trifling ills the Bard may well despise; Sure of immortal honour when he dies. But, seriously—the advice of friendship hear: Stop short in your poetical career; O! quell the frenzies of your fever'd brain, And turn, at Wisdom's call, to trade and gain,'

Absorb'd in passive sadness, I comply; Turn from the Muse my disenchanted eye, And deign to study, as my friends persuade, [Pg 3] The little, money-getting arts of trade. But soon the Goddess, fired with high disdain To see me woo the yellow strumpet, Gain, Resuming all her beauty, all her power, Returns to triumph in the vacant hour; Weakly reluctant, on her charms I gaze, Trembling, I feel her fascinating lays; Roused from ignoble dreams, my wondering soul Springs to the well-known bliss, regardless of control.

Say then, ye blind, profane! who dare to blame The heaven-born Poet, and his thirst of fame; Ye slaves of Mammon! whose low minds behold No fair, no great, no good, in aught but gold; Say! will the Captive of tyrannic sway, [Pg 4] Restored to genial air, and boundless day, Turn to his dungeon's suffocating night? Will the proud Eagle, who with daring flight Sublimely soars against the solar blaze, And eyes the inspiring God with raptured gaze, Stoop from his native kingdom in the sky, To share the breathings of mortality?

How, then, can he, whose breast the Muse inspires, Restrain his soul, or quench those hallow'd fires? How can he quit the world of mental bliss, For all the riches,—miserics!—of this?

[Pg 5]

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

When to the region of the tuneful Nine, Rapt in poetic vision, I retire, Listening intent to catch the strain divine— What a dead silence hangs upon the lyre!

Lo! with disorder'd locks, and streaming eyes, Stray the fair daughters of immortal song; Aonia's realm resounds their plaintive cries, And all her murmuring rills the grief prolong.

O say! celestial maids, what cause of wo? [Pg 6] Why cease the rapture-breathing strains to soar? A solemn pause ensues:—then falters low The voice of sorrow: 'Chatterton's no more!'

'Child of our fondest hopes! whose natal hour Saw each poetic star indulgent shine; E'en Phœbus' self o'erruled with kindest power, And cried: "ye Nine rejoice! the Birth is mine."

'Soon did he drink of this inspiring spring; In yonder bower his lisping notes he tried; We tuned his tongue in choir with us to sing, And watch'd his progress with delight and pride.

'With doting care we form'd his ripening mind, Blest with high gifts to mortals rarely known; Taught him to range, by matter unconfined, [Pg 7] And claim the world of fancy for his own.

'The voice of Glory call'd him to the race; Upsprung the wondrous Boy with ardent soul, Started at once with more than human pace, And urged his flight, impatient for the goal:

'Hope sung her siren lay; the listening Youth Felt all his breast with rapturous frenzy fired, He hail'd, and boasted, as prophetic truth, The bright, triumphant vision Hope inspired:

'But short, alas, his transport! vain his boast! The illusive dream soon vanishes in shade; Soon dire Adversity's relentless host, Neglect, Want, Sorrow, Shame, his peace invade:

'Glad Envy hisses, Ridicule and Scorn [Pg 8] Lash with envenom'd scourge his wounded pride; Ah! see him, with distracted mien forlorn, Rush into solitude his pangs to hide.

'There to the Youth, disguised like Hope, Despair Presents the death-fraught chalice and retires: In vain, alas! Religion cries, forbear! Desperate he seizes, drains it, and expires.'

[Pg 9]

ELEGY,

(WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A YOUNG LADY.)

SYLVIA ON HER DEAD CANARY-BIRD.

Sweet little warbler! art thou dead? And must I hear thy notes no more? Then will I make thy funeral bed; Then shall the Muse thy loss deplore.

Beneath the turf in yonder bower, Where oft I've listened to thy lay, Forgetting care, while many an hour In music sweetly stole away;—

There will I bid thy relics rest; [Pg 10] Then sadly sigh my last farewell; But long, oh! long within my breast Thy memory, poor bird! shall dwell.

Still to that spot, now more endear'd, Shall thy fond mistress oft return, And haply feel her sorrows cheer'd, To deck with verse thy simple urn.

'Here lies a bird, once famed to be Peerless in plumage and in lay; This was the soul of melody, And that the golden blush of day.'

'Soon as the Morn began to peep, While yet with shade her smiles were veil'd, The sprightly warbler shook off sleep, [Pg 11] And with his song her coming hail'd.'

'His guardian rose, nor scorn'd as mean, But found it still a pleasing care, To keep his little mansion clean, And

minister his daily fare.'

'The dewy groundsel was his feast, Which when the watchful songster view'd, Straight his loud, thrilling strain he ceased, And softly chirp'd his gratitude.'

'Then would he peck his savoury treat,— Turn his head sly, and breathe a note— Now flutter wild with wings and feet — Then silent sit—now pour his throat.'

'His playful freaks, his joyous lay, [Pg 12] Well pleased, his mistress would attend; It call'd affection into play, And gave to solitude a friend.'

'Thus happily his days he led Even to the ninth revolving year; Then Fate, alas! her weapon sped; And Pity laid his relics here.'

[Pg 13]

TO JULIA.

Should Phœbus e'er desert my mind, And should the Nine their aid refuse, Enchanting Girl! I still could find A theme in thee, in thee a Muse.

Can Fiction any charms devise That proudly may with thine compare? On thee she turns her wondering eyes, And drops the pencil in despair.

Far sweeter are thy notes to me Than sweetest poet ever sung; And true perfection would it be [Pg 14] To sing thy beauties with thy tongue.

Let Phœbus, then, desert my mind! And let the Nine their aid refuse! Ever, my Julia! shall I find In thee a theme, in thee a Muse.

[Pg 15]

TO JULIA.

Sing, lovely Girl! to hear Thee sing Hush'd is the listening air; My spirit trembles on the wing, And no delay can bear.

Those down-cast eyes, that smile supprest, Thy conscious power betray; Yet, Siren! grant the bold request; Come, steal my heart away.

See, see, those ruby lips divide; An ivory shrine appears; There Harmony and Love reside, [Pg 16] To ravish mortal ears.

And hark! they from that sweet recess Breathe their celestial lays; The enchanting sounds my thought possess With rapture and amaze.

Still pressing on with strong control I feel the lavish strain, Till drunk with bliss, my wilder'd soul Reels on the brink of pain.

Ah! how could I so rashly dare Contend with Powers divine? The pride of victory forbear; My heart is wholly thine.

[Pg 17]

ON SEEING MADEMOISELLE ***

DANCE AT THE OPERA IN PARIS.

What fine aerial Shape, In orient colours dight, Springs from the world unknown Upon my wondering sight?
Loosely through various space The lovely Figure flows, And leaves the sleeping air Unconscious as it goes.
Hark! a spontaneous strain [Pg 18] Its fairy gait attends; In concord every sound With every movement blends.
Lo, now! the passive Form Moves as the music leads; Each motion from each note, Harmoniously proceeds.
By the same sense, methinks, At once I hear and see; And ears and eyes and mind Are all one harmony.
Along my shivering nerves The mingled raptures thrill, And strangely take my soul, [Pg 19] And rule it as they will;
True to the magic force, That shifts a thousand ways, An echo, and a shade, It answers and obeys.
But ah! the charm expires.— Did Fancy thus deceive? She smiles, and fondly vain, Would have me so believe.

[Pg 20]

SONNET,

**ON TAKING A FAVOURITE WALK, AFTER
RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.**

Ye scenes beloved! O welcome once again! Forbidden long to my desiring sight, Now, now! triumphant o'er disease
and pain, I visit ye with fresh, increased delight.

Vine-mantled Hills, whose heights I joy'd to climb, The Morn's sweet infant breathings to inhale; River! whose banks I
roved in trance sublime, [Pg 21] While fancy-whispering Eve spread soft her veil;

And thou, O Wood, in whose moon-checkered shade The nightly songstress oft has charm'd my ear Till Morning told
me I so long had stay'd: Hail all ye objects to my memory dear! Once more, to feel the transports ye impart, Health
wakes my every sense and tunes my heart.

[Pg 22]

SONNET,

WRITTEN ON MY BIRTH DAY.

Again has Time his annual circle run, And April ushers in my natal day: Since first my infant eyes beheld the sun, How
many a year has swiftly roll'd away! Full half my thread of life the Fates have spun; What various colours does the web
display! Some dark, some brighter; ere the work be done The sadder hues will overshadow the gay. Yet not to
Melancholy will I yield; Against Despondency and Discontent Still Fortitude and Hope shall keep the field; Swerving
from thee, O Virtue! I repent; Now! to repel Temptation I am steel'd; To follow thee I'm resolutely bent.

ECLOGUE.

SPRING.

Muse of the pastoral reed and sylvan reign, Divine inspirer of each tuneful swain, Who taught the Doric Shepherd to portray Primeval nature in his simple lay; And him of Mantua, in a nicer age, To form the graces of his artful page; O, come! where crystal Avon winds serene, And with thy presence bless the brightening scene; Now, while I rove his willowy banks along, With fond intent to wake the rural song, Inspire me, Goddess! to my strains impart The force of nature, and the grace of art.

[Pg 24] Now has the Night her dusky veil withdrawn, And, softly blushing, peeps the smiling Dawn; The lark, on quivering wings, amid the skies Pours his shrill song, inviting her to rise; The breathing Zephyrs just begin to play, Waking the flowers to steal new sweets away: And now with trembling steps, her swain to find, Fair Delia hastens to the spot assign'd: Her faithful Colin waits impatient there; How raptured to regain his long-lost fair! **COLIN.** O happiness!—and am I then so blest? Or does a heavenly dream possess my breast? Has not her father sternly bid us part, [Pg 25] And for my rival claim'd his daughter's heart? Has not my Delia sigh'd the sad adieu? Have I not long been banish'd from her view? Away, ye jealous fears! ye sorrows, flee! This letter, this! revokes the dire decree. And lo! she comes! she comes! but why so slow, Pensive, and shy, as if oppress'd with wo? My Delia!— **DELIA.** Colin! (*They embrace.*) **COLIN.** O my Delia! tell, What dark ideas in thy bosom dwell. Is not thy letter true? then give thy soul [Pg 26] To love and happiness without control. **DELIA.** O generous Colin! can'st thou, then, forget The painful past, and love thy Delia yet? Deem me not faithless; stern parental sway, Spite of my tears, constrained me to obey. **COLIN.** Faithless? O no! I knew thy father's ire; Thy filial virtue could not but admire; Still did I hope, believe, and know thee true: The pains I suffer'd thou did'st suffer too. Now weep no more; this bids our sufferings cease, This letter—heavenly messenger of peace!— That promises a more propitious fate; But thou, sweet girl! the same blest news relate; [Pg 27] Chase from thy fancy every shade of fear; Wipe from thy cheek that ill-beseeming tear; And tell thy lover all;—he burns to hear. **DELIA.** When Damon first his amorous suit address Thou long had'st reign'd the sovereign of my breast; My love, my heart, my soul were vow'd to thee, And none but Colin could have charms for me. With scorn, thou know'st, his courtship I declined: O, that my thoughts had sway'd my father's mind! But Damon's ampler wealth, which I despised, Too much, alas! my doting father prized. What were thy words that sad, that trying hour, When, in submission to paternal power, I sacrificed the feelings of my heart, [Pg 28] And faltering told thee we were doom'd to part? 'Part!—must we part, my Delia?' did'st thou say, 'Alas! 'tis Virtue's law; we must obey; But still, to render absence less severe, Let us, my Love, Hope's pleasing dictates hear. Little of Damon, yet, thy father knows: Time his perfidious purpose will disclose; Then will thy sire his hasty choice repent; And to our loves, perhaps, may yield consent. Meanwhile beware, my Delia, O beware! Lest Damon's arts thine innocence insnare.' Such were thy parting words. Now, Colin, hear! Then will thy words prophetic appear. Each night the favourite of my parents came To boast the matchless ardour of his flame; Still did he tease me with his flattering strain;— [Pg 29] Fool, to suppose his praise could make me vain! At length a favouring hour the traitor chose, And dared his wicked purpose to disclose. **COLIN.** Did he? O heaven! the impostor could not dare; I would, my Love, thy Colin had been there! **DELIA.** Just then, most luckily, my sire returned: Surprised, enraged, his Damon's guilt he learn'd: Then banish'd him, (his advocate no more,) With vengeful threats for ever from his door. **COLIN.** Look! how the glorious Sun, as he ascends, [Pg 30] His radiance o'er the dew-bright earth extends, While the last fogs of conquer'd night retreat, And Nature welcomes the reviving heat: So thy returning smiles, indulgent fair! Dispel my fears and every jealous care. **DELIA.** No less delight to me thy smiles impart, Diffusing sunshine through my raptured heart; Hope, like yon lark, has spread her drooping wings, And, mounting up to heaven, her carol sings. **COLIN.** Observe, my Love, the beauties of the scene; The youthful year puts forth its tender green; Awakened Flora bids her flowerets rise, [Pg 31] Opening their colours to the genial skies; Winter is fled; fair Spring's melodious voice Whispers, in every balmy breeze, rejoice! **DELIA.** The sparkling rills dance warbling in their beds; The trees with gladness lift their fresh, green heads; From yonder wood responsive cuckoos sing; The swallow skims the stream, and dips his wing. **COLIN.** Objects and sounds of joy! yet, Delia, these, Unaided by thy presence, would not please; Though thousand charms and harmonies unite, Thy favour only crowns the full delight. **DELIA.** Now, Colin, duty summons me away; [Pg 32] Gladly I would, but must no longer stay. **COLIN.** When duty summons we resist in vain: Yet tell me, kindest Delia, once again,— To give me courage unalarm'd to part, And soothe, till next we meet, my restless heart,— O tell me art thou now for ever mine? **DELIA.** Yes, Colin, now I am for ever thine.

ECLOGUE.

SUMMER.

DAVID. My task is done; no further will I mow; I faint with hunger, and with heat I glow. Well, Giles, what cheer? how far behind you lag! Badly your practice answers to your brag. **GILES.** Deuce take the scythe! no wonder I am last; The wonder is I work'd my way so fast; Sure such another never yet was made; [Pg 34] It's maker must have been a duller blade; The bungling fool, might I his fault chastise, Should use it for a razor till he dies. **DAVID.** Ha, ha, well said, young jester; though bereft Of strength and patience, yet your wit is left. But come, good friend, to dinner let us go; Tired are my limbs, my wasted spirits low. **GILES.** Poor David! age is weak, soon jaded out; I feel, as when beginning, fresh and stout; Your easy task is ended, therefore dine: I scorn refreshment till I finish mine. **DAVID.** Then to yon grassy bank I will retreat, [Pg 35] Shaded by willows from the oppressive heat; There may we dine, and seated all at ease, Imbibe fresh vigour with the cooling breeze. **GILES.** Curse his old arms! so nimble and so strong; How calmly did he seem to creep along! While I for conquest strove with eager pain, And labour'd, sweated, panted—all in vain! This awkward tool—yet no defect I see— The ground uneven—some cause must there be. He the best mower? let it not be known; No, crafty Giles, that secret is your own. Fatigue, thirst, hunger, strongly urge me hence.— I'll e'en o'ertake him with some fair pretence. **DAVID.** [Pg 36] Ha, ha, the foolish vanity of youth, Such painful efforts to disguise the truth! Who comes? what, Giles! so quickly change your mind? Too wise, I thought, to tarry long behind. **GILES.** In one employment when good fellows meet, They should together toil, together eat. **DAVID.** Here let us sit; against this trunk I'll lean, You against that; the dinner placed between. **GILES.** Now rest we silent till our meal be done; [Pg 37] While in our ears sweet watery murmurs run. **DAVID.** Right! when the body feels recruited force, More eloquently will the mind discourse. **GILES.** Now, David, I'll attempt a loftier strain; Listen, and judge of my poetic vein. See Phœbus his meridian height attains, And, like a king, in all his splendour reigns; Beneath his scorching radiance Nature lies Feverish and faint; her beauteous verdure dies; Oppress'd and panting with the sultry heat, The flocks and herds to shades or streams retreat; Through the still air no Zephyr dares to play,} Lest his soft pinion melt in heat away;} [Pg 38] But if, to mitigate the solar ray,} A lucid cloud should kindly intervene; Then the glad Zephyrs sport beneath the grateful screen. **DAVID.** How beautiful the thoughts! and how sublime! Rich is the language, and exact the rhyme. Inform me, friend, are those fine strains your own? They rise superior to the rustic tone. **GILES.** Why not be mine? does then the gift of song To wealth and rank exclusively belong? Fancy with choice unbribed her few selects, Nor affluence, nor exalted birth respects; The kingly mansion she will oft forsake, [Pg 39] Pleased with the shepherd her abode to make: With me the kind Enchantress long has dwelt; Long has my soul her inspirations felt. **DAVID.** I once the feelings of a poet knew; (Though in my best of days no match for you,) But now my genius yields to conquering time; Yet still I keep my judgment and my rhyme; Then what that judgment dictates I declare: No tuneful shepherd can with you compare; Although in many a county I have been, And many a rural poet I have seen. **GILES.** O cease your high applauses, kindest friend! [Pg 40] For sure my merit they must far transcend. How different men in different ways excel! My forte is rhyming, your's is mowing well; And while to me you deign in song to yield, You bear the scythe triumphant through the field. **DAVID.** That only Youth, whose sweetly-flowing lays, Resembling your's, deserve the second praise, Dwelt near this place—or memory I lack— Yes! now I recollect—five summers back, When to these parts for harvest-work I came, How all the fields resounded with his fame. The Bard I ne'er beheld; but heard the swains Still, with delight, repeat his peerless strains: Not less by Fortune, than the Muses, blest, [Pg 41] No cares of life disturb'd his peaceful breast; For poesy alone his happy soul possest. Did you not know that youth? **GILES.** Full well I knew; Nor is he, David, quite unknown to you;— That Youth am I!—(with what surprize you gaze!) Then was I blest indeed with golden days; My parents' only child, at home I dwelt, Indulged, caress'd, nor cares, nor wishes felt: How did they joy my verses to peruse! How praise each effort of my lisping Muse! Then sweetly glided on the stream of time; I tended flocks, or meditated rhyme. Alas! my friend, those blissful hours are o'er, [Pg 42] My then-propitious stars now rule no more. Long has my Father slept among the dead:— With his last breath my joys, my hopes all fled. The wealth he left, which might our woes have eased, His greedy creditors unpitying seized: My Mother and myself (our sole resource) For livelihood to labour took recourse. **DAVID.** Affecting tale! I've heard it with a tear. **GILES.** No longer sit we idly chatting here; The village clock has struck; come, let us up! To-night, friend David, we'll together sup.

EPISTLE

TO A FRIEND.

Has then, the Paphian Queen at length prevail'd? Has the sly little Archer, whom my Friend Once would despise, with all his boyish wiles, Now taken ample vengeance, made thee feel His piercing shaft, and taught thy heart profane With sacred awe, repentant, to confess The Son of Venus is indeed a God? I greet his triumph; for he has but claim'd His own; the breast that was by Nature form'd And destined for his temple Love has claim'd.

[Pg 44] The great, creating Parent, when she breathed Into thine earthly frame the breath of life, Indulgently conferr'd on thee a soul Of finer essence, capable to trace, To feel, admire, and love, the fair, the good, Wherever found, through all her various works. And is not Woman, then, her fairest work, Fairest, and oft her best? endowed with gifts Potent to captivate, and softly rule The hearts of all men? chiefly such as thou, By partial Nature favour'd from the birth? Why wast thou, then, reluctant to confess The sovereignty of Love? so strangely deaf Through half thy genial season to the voice Of Nature, kindly calling thee to taste Felicity congenial to thy soul? This was the secret cause:—inscrutable [Pg 45] To vulgar minds, who fancied thee foredoom'd To celibacy, for thyself alone Existing; but I rightlier judged my Friend— The cause was this: there lurk'd within thy breast A visionary flame; for, while retired In solitude, on classic lore intent, Thy fancy, to console thee for the loss Of female intercourse, conceived a Maid, With each soft charm, each moral grace, adorn'd, Fit Empress of thy soul; and oft would Hope Gaze on the lovely phantom, till at length She dared to stand on disappointment's verge, Anticipating such thy future bride. What wonder, then, that Chloe's golden locks Should weave no snare for thee? that Delia's eyes, So darkly bright, should innocently glance, [Pg 46] Nor dart their lightnings through thy kindling frame? That many a Fair should unregarded pass, So far unlike the picture in thy mind? At last, in happy hour, my Friend beheld Partial, a Maid of mild, engaging mien, Of artless manners, affable, and gay, Yet modestly reserved, with native taste Endued, with genuine feeling, with a heart Expansive, generous, and a mind well-taught, Well-principled in things of prime concern. Still, as, with anxious doubt, thou didst pursue The delicate research, new virtues dawn'd Upon thy ravish'd view:—'twas She!—'twas She! Then marvelling Fancy saw her image live; And Hope her dream fulfill'd; then triumph'd Love; And Nature was obeyed.—

[Pg 47] Yet still suspense Reign'd awful in thy breast, for who could stand Between the realms of happiness and pain, Waiting his sentence fearless? O my Friend! What was thy transport, when the gracious Maid With virgin blushes and approving smile Received thy vows, consented to be thine?

Now, then, let Friendship gratulate thy lot, Supremely blest! and let her fondly hope That, while the names of Husband, Father, thrill Thy soul with livelier joy, thou wilt, at times, Remember still, well pleased, the name of Friend.

[Pg 48]

TO DELILLE.

Amid the jingle of the rhyming throng I mark with transport some diviner song; Sweet to their native heaven the strains aspire, Commanding silence to the vulgar quire; Apollo smiles, and all the tongues of Fame Through the poetic realm Delille proclaim.

O let a British Bard, admiring, greet Thy glorious triumph, and thy praise repeat! When merit claims the panegyric lay, Envy he scorns, and joys the debt to pay. Painter of Nature hail! to thee belong [Pg 49] Unrivall'd talents for descriptive song: While others, fired with more ambitious views, Invoke the Epic, or the Tragic Muse, And, throned in Glory's temple, shine sublime, Proud of their laurel-wreaths that fear not Time, Thy Genius fondly stoops to softer themes, The landscape's beauties—flowers, and groves, and streams, And round his brows in modest triumph wears A simple garden-wreath, but ever green, as theirs.

[Pg 50] What though, some critics, in their taste severe, Turn from thy subject a disdainful ear, Demanding still, their duller minds to strike, War, passion, plot, surprises—and the like? Yet will true Taste, that ranges unconfined, And feels the charms of every various kind, Oft quit Voltaire, or Corneille, to peruse, Delille! the milder beauties of thy Muse; Oft love, with thee, through rural scenes to stray, And sweetly study Nature in thy lay.

But, ah! what boldness does thy breast inspire? Say, wilt thou dare to touch the Mantuan lyre? Long has thy country wish'd that classic spoil, Yet, of her tongue distrustful, shunn'd the toil; O cease then!—but thy hand essays the strings, — Amazement!—Fancy cries, 'tis Virgil sings! The same thy numbers, so correctly free, So full of sweetness, full of majesty!

Now, France, exult! nor view with envy more Surrounding nations rich in Roman lore; Delille has sung; then glory in his name, Engraved, immortal, on the rolls of Fame.

[Pg 51]

ODE

WRITTEN ON THE NIGHT OF THE ILLUMINATIONS FOR
LORD HOWE'S VICTORY ON 1ST JUNE, 1793.

Whence the shouts of public joy, Whence the galaxies of light, That strike the deafen'd ear? That charm the dazzled sight? While Night, arrested in her highest way, Stands wondering at the scene, and doubtful of her sway? Hark! Fame exalts her voice:— 'Britannia triumphs, let her sons rejoice! The Gallic Foe, that dared her vengeance brave, [Pg 52] Lies whelm'd in death beneath the blood-stain'd wave; Britannia thunder'd o'er the rebel main, His distant billows heard, and own'd her awful reign.'

Be hush'd my soul! in still amazement mourn! O fly the giddy train! From their inhuman transports turn With pity,— with disdain! Strip, strip, from Victory the fair disguise, And let her own dire form appal thine eyes! Ah, mark her triumphs in yon hideous scene! Myriads of brother-men untimely slain; Hear the deep groan, survey the dying mien, Convulsed with agonies of pain; And hark! what cries of wretchedness resound [Pg 53] Throughout the troubled air! Widows and Orphans doom'd a helpless prey To famine and despair! And does ambition glory? Oh! the shame! The direful outrage to the human name! Nature herself is moved, the blushing stars retire, And sudden storms denounce high heaven's awaken'd ire.

See the black firmament divide! The almighty sword, with heavenly lustre bright, Flashes on the sight Terrific glory, dazzling mortal pride; The parted concave closes, while around Deep, rushing peals resound, Scatter the clouds, in airy tempest hurl'd, [Pg 54] And shake the solid pillars of the world. As breathing from the tomb, A death-like stillness reigns, Save that in Fancy's jealous ear A sad, prophetic breeze complains Of some impending doom, While every soul is lost in vacancy and fear.

Now while Ambition lies in sleep unblest, Portentous visions haunt his guilty breast: Borne on a trophied car, sublime he goes Amid the gazing crowd, Who shout his triumphs loud; With haughty bliss his flatter'd spirit glows:— Sudden deserted and alone, Confused, alarm'd, in dreary shades unknown, [Pg 55] He hears the wild waves beat the shore, The din of battle roar:— 'Tis silence! frowning vengeful from the gloom, Before his shrinking eyes Unnumber'd spectres rise, Point to their bleeding wounds, and sternly curse their doom: The conscious Murderer starts, the thunders roll, And hell's dread chaos yawns on his despairing soul.

[Pg 56] But when the morn exerts her cheering power, And guilt-alarming darkness disappears, Wilt thou, Ambition! slight the warning hour, And fondly strive to dissipate thy fears? Yet wilt thou dare fulfil The madness of thy will? Kindle round earth the wasteful flames of strife, And glut the fiends of war with human life? Then mask with glory's name thy murderous cause, While fond, deluded mortals shout applause? Yet madly wilt thou dare?— Devoted Wretch! forbear!— Cries of the living, curses of the dead, Have claim'd thy destined head; And that same Power, whose mighty hand Once humbled thine aspiring flight, And hurl'd thee, with thy rebel band, Down to the deeps of hell and night, Now warns no more; that Power no longer spares, Thy sentence he hath fix'd, thy fate he now prepares.

[Pg 57]

ODE

TO HORROR.

I felt thee, Horror! rush upon my soul, Thy hideous band my frightened fancy saw; Spare me, O spare me! cease thy dire controul, And let my trembling hand the vision draw.

Lo! what terrific Forms around thee wait, The monstrous births abhorr'd of Mind and Fate! Murder, with blood of innocence defiled; Despair, deep-groaning; Madness screaming wild; Mid clouds of smoke, the fire-eyed Fury, War, [Pg 58] Through gore and mangled flesh whirl'd in her thundering car; Plague, sallow Hag! who arms her breath With thousand viewless darts of death; And Earthquake, image of the final doom, That, bursting fierce his anguish'd mother's womb, Whelms nations in the yawning jaws of night, And palsies mighty Nature with affright. Amid that direful band I see thee, Horror! stand, With bloodless visage, terror-frozen stare, Distorted, ice-bound limbs, and bristling hair, Thy shivering lips bereft of speech and breath, In monstrous union life combined with death. I see thee still, O Horror! and in thee Methinks an image of myself I see; For, while I gaze with fear-fixed sight, [Pg 59] O Horror! thy Gorgonian might Turns me to stone: dread tyrant, O forbear! To view thee I no longer dare.—

I feel my throbbing heart respire. Again my fancy with unquell'd desire, O Horror! courts thee, trembling owns thy power. Come, let us now, at this congenial hour, While midnight tempests sweep With bellowing rage the ship-ingulfing deep, While thunders roar, and livid lightnings blaze, Let us on that dread, watery chaos gaze. Or from the peopled vale, below, Uplooking, see, from lofty Alpine crown, The rolling mass of snow, Into a mountain grown, [Pg 60] Rush overwhelming down. Or let us, in Numidian desert drear, The roar of prowling beasts, and hiss of serpents hear; Or bask by blazing city; or explore, On Etna's brink, the sulphurous mouth of hell, And hear the fiery flood tempestuous roar, And hear the damn'd in hotter torments yell. Or wilt thou, Horror! haunt the villain's breast, In dismal solitude, by thought opprest; Where guilty Conscience fetter'd lies, Turn'd all her shrinking lidless eyes Full to the blaze of truth's unclouded sun, And struggles, still in vain, her pangs, herself to shun? Ah!—now more hideous grows thine air; [Pg 61] With direr aspect ne'er dost thou appear, To fright weak Beings in this earthly sphere; Faint semblance of thy most tremendous mien, As, in Tartarean gulfs of endless night, By agonizing demons thou art seen: But oh! what living eye could bear that sight? To look on it e'en Fancy does not dare.— Oh! may I ne'er be doom'd to see thee, Horror! there!

[Pg 62]

ODE

TO HOPE.

Thou Cherub fair! in whose blue, sparkling eye New joys, anticipated, ever play; Celestial Hope! with whose all-potent sway The moral elements of life comply; At thy melodious voice their jarrings cease, And settle into order, beauty, peace; How dear to memory that thrice-hallow'd hour Which gave Thee to the world, auspicious Power! Sent by thy parent, Mercy, from the sky, Invested with her own all-cheering ray, To dissipate the thick, black cloud of fate [Pg 63] Which long had shrouded this terrestrial state, What time fair Virtue, struggling with despair, Pour'd forth to pitying heaven her saddest soul in prayer: Then, then she saw the brightening gloom divide, And Thee, sweet Comforter! adown thy rainbow glide. From the veil'd awful future, to her view Scenes of immortal bliss thou didst disclose; With faith's rapt eye she hail'd the vision true, Spurn'd the base earth, and smiled upon her woes.

[Pg 64] Thou Sovereign of the human soul Whose influence rules without controul! Unlike thy gloomy rival, Fear, Abhorr'd, usurping Demon! who constrains The shuddering spirit in his icy chains: O Hope! be thou for ever near; Keep the dread tyrant far away, And all my willing, grateful bosom sway. Each coming hour, that smiles with promise sweet, In thy bright, spotless mirror let me greet, And fondly passive to thy dictates, deem Those smiling hours all heavenly as they seem: Should changeful Fortune, hostile in her mood, With storms and thunder arm her meteor-car, And 'gainst me summon all her host to war, Rouse thou, kind Power! the champion Fortitude, With his well-tempered shield To brave the threatening field. [Pg 65] Amid that scene of woes and mental strife Let thy sweet, distant whisper soothe my ear, Inviting Fancy far from mortal life, To wander, blest, her own-created sphere. Do thou her glowing thought possess, And let her fairy pencil draw, Free, and unconscious of thy law, Fair images of Happiness; Of that celestial form which lives imprest Indelible, eternal, in thy breast. E'en in the dead calm of the mind, When Fancy

sleeps, thou yet be kind; O Hope! still let thy golden pinions play, The unbreathing void to cheer, and shed a glancing ray!

[Pg 66]

ODE

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

This, this is inspiration's hour! Poetic Genius, rushing on my soul, Rouses her every sense, her every power, And with a force too mighty to controul Inspires the warm, enthusiastic song: Now will I sing, O Wellington! of thee; To thee my plausible strains, of right, belong; For thee my lyre shall pour its choicest harmony. Long have I fondly mused the theme sublime; And from my grateful heart of patriot flame [Pg 67] In secret, offer'd incense to thy name; But dared not with unhallow'd rhyme Profane the British Hero's fame. Thrice welcome this propitious time! Now, joining with my Country's minstrel-band, Thy deeds, O Wellington! will I rehearse In lofty never-dying verse, To which Britannia's self shall deign To lend a listening ear, While in thy military, swift career Triumphantly she leads thee by the hand, And proudly thrones thee high in glory's fane.

[Pg 68] In yonder eastern climes afar What dawning light attracts the Muse's eye?— She feels the influence of her ruling star, And with an eagle's gaze, an eagle's wings, As to Apollo's self, transported, springs— 'Tis Wellington in Victory's brilliant car, Who his triumphal progress has begun; Around him honour's sun Shoots forth its orient ray: In wondering India's sky He rises like the God of day. Greet him, O England! greet thy conquering Son! O! could'st thou but foresee The events of dark futurity, How would'st thou, then, adore the name of Wellington! Know!—he shall soon thy thunders wield In many a European field, Confound thy haughty foes with dread amaze, And fill the dazzled world with his meridian blaze.

[Pg 69] To Europe's frighten'd eyes What scenes of horror rise! See, from the darkness of the infernal world, Where with the rebel demons he was hurl'd, See, Revolution rears his hydra-head! Ill-fated Gallia is his destined prey. Thither the Monster makes his furious way; And with a loud, ferocious yell, That strikes the earth with dread, And spreads delight through hell, He summons all his hideous train, To strengthen and support his reign. Broke are the bonds of social life, All kindred, all domestic ties; Mid scenes of anarchy and civil strife, [Pg 70] Mid plots, cabals, and murderous rivalries, Eager for prey, with licence unconfined Range the fierce Passions of the human mind, Ambition, Avarice, Anger, Vengeance, Hate: With frantic men rejoicing devils howl, And all hell's ravenous blood-hounds barking prowl. O could oblivion veil that direst page of fate! The revolutionary storm subsides.— Lo! now, proud Gallia's Genius towers on high; O'er half Europa he already strides, And glorying in his might threats earth and sky; The neighbouring nations, vanquish'd to his sway, Like abject slaves his tyrant power obey. What conqueror leads the Gallic armies on? Fortune's loved child, Ambition's darling son, [Pg 71] 'Tis the French Emperor, great Napoleon: And subject to his high imperial will, His warlike marshals his commands fulfil. What can resist their overwhelming force? Has Liberty no succour? no resource? She has! she has! O save her, Wellington! Ere yet unhappy Spain be forced to yield, Fly with Britannic forces to the field, And pluck the noblest palm thou yet hast won.

The memory of Talavera's day Still strikes our foes with wonder and dismay; There did the Briton soldier boldly claim The honour due to his illustrious name.

[Pg 72] On Torres-Vedras' height, Like Jove upon the Olympian steep, When he defied the Giant-race to fight, Thy station calmly didst thou keep, Despite the vengeful threats of boasting France. How didst thou long to see her powers advance! But no: the veteran Chief, Massena, fled. Swiftly thy ardent troops his flight pursue; His soldiers fall in crowds; Confusion, Fear, And Slaughter dog them in the rear; Famine and Desolation meet their van. Spaniard with Portuguese in vengeance vies; New toils they still encounter, dangers new, Thus Fortune's Favourite, this unconquer'd man Accomplishes his haughty boast: Home he returns with less than half his host; His baggage, ordnance, thine, brave Wellington! And all his wreaths in former warfare won.

[Pg 73] So Albion, throned upon her rocky seat, Sees the proud-swelling billows idly beat; Resistance needs not their assaults to foil; Shrinking into themselves, they straight recoil, Leaving foam, dirt, and sea-weed at her feet.

On Douro's banks Methinks I view the hostile, threatening ranks; The Lord of war to battle calls:— Hark! through the

affrighted sky Bursts the dread cannons' roar; While thousand slaughterous balls In vollies whizzing fly. See, see, the Gallic Captain falls! His bold achievements now are o'er. The Britons shout, and rush into the field; [Pg 74] The French dishearten'd yield: What heaps of wounded, slain, O'er all the encumber'd plain! They now resist no more.— Hail Wellington! The battle's won! The voices of Renown the tidings spread: Exulting England echoes thy applause; Ambitious Gallia hears thy name with dread; While European Freedom lifts her head, And hails the great Defender of her cause. Hero of England, with admiring eyes We trace in thee the noble qualities That constitute the Chief complete: In others, oft, they singly shine; In thee they all united meet, And in one galaxy their rays combine.

[Pg 75] Nature has given thee an intrepid heart, That ever glows with patriotic flame, And with the impassion'd love of martial fame. And gifted, too, thou art With a strong, hardy frame, Patient of toils and hardships. In thy mind Deep judgment with sagacity we find; Coolness and firmness in rare union join'd. In tactics versed, in all the rules of art, By long experience taught, thou play'st the Chieftain's part.

[Pg 76] Lo, now! in vision rapt, I view The far-famed plains of Waterloo. As slowly, dimly dawns the morning-light, Around the battle-field I cast my sight; Thrill'd with delight severe, with awe oppress, My labouring heart throbs wildly in my breast. Hail fellow-countrymen! I trust in you, And in your great Commander too; Hail valiant Britons! hail brave Wellington! Full many a conquest have ye gain'd; O! may another, now, be soon obtain'd! But yonder see the great Napoleon! Secure of victory he proudly stands, Surrounded by his choicest veteran bands, Who welcome with loud shouts their long-loved Chief, From Elba's isle return'd, from exile brief; They idolize him as the warrior-God, And burn with zeal to obey his voice, his nod. The opponent armies on each other gaze, And look defiance though the view dismays.

[Pg 77] Sudden the French artillery rends the skies; And the Britannic instantly replies; Hundreds of brazen throats shoot forth afar Their iron globes, those thunderbolts of war; Hundreds of soldiers fall upon the plain; Some shot, expire; more, wounded, writhe in pain. The cavalries to combat fiercely dash, And like two comets 'gainst each other clash; Horses and men roll mingled on the ground, Confusion, slaughter, horror all around. Regiments of infantry form quick the square, And the fierce-charging horsemen firmly dare; In vain to break them every means they try, The troops well-disciplined, the attempts defy. Long time in dread suspense the strife remains, While heaps of dead and wounded load the plains.

[Pg 78] Angel of Britain! guard our Hero's life! On that, on that depends the upshot of the fight. How does Napoleon's soul indignant burn! Resolving, now, his last resource to try, And urge his desperate way to victory, He straight commands a vast, o'erpowering force Of infantry, artillery, and horse, The centre of his stubborn foe to turn. Ah! now tremendous grows the strife, On either side they war as Furies now; What deluges of blood! what waste of life! How will the mighty struggle finish?—how?— Thank heaven! 'tis o'er,—the French, driven back, retire; Again I breathe—more freely I respire. Lo! Bulow with the Prussian force appears! [Pg 79] The British Chief with joy his cannon hears, And, flush'd with confidence, exulting cries, We'll conquer yet; advance, my friends, advance! Shouting they spring upon their enemies; See, Wellington! the great Napoleon flies!— Britannia, yet again, has triumph'd over France!

[Pg 80]

DESCRIPTION OF A CONFLAGRATION.

'Tis night:—the busy, ceaseless noise of day No more is heard; the now-deserted-streets Lie dark and silent;—London's weary swarms Rest in profound repose. Hark! a loud cry Frightens the silence;—'tis the cry of fire! I hear the dissonance of rattling wheels, The tread of hasty feet, the doleful sigh Of sympathy, and terror's thrilling shriek:— O mercy heaven!—

[Pg 81] Behold the fiery Pest! See, how the flames climb up the lofty walls, Involve their prey, and greedily devour: The crowd exert their efforts to controul The spreading bane; some labour to supply The numerous engines; others bear aloft The pliant tubes, guiding their watery store Amid the fiercer fire; on ladders some Ascending, scale the walls, and undeterr'd, Their dangerous office ply; some wildly haste To save their properties: 'tis bustle all, And noisy tumult. Doubtful for a time The strife remains; where'er the Burning winds His flamy spires, the well-directed streams, Incessant spouting, damp the sickening flames, Repelling their advance; but, oft repulsed, As oft they rally with recruited strength: Alternate in the mind rise hope and fear. [Pg 82] Tumbles a roof with clattering noise, the sky Lightens, a burst of clamour!—all is hush'd In awful stillness, save that from beneath The ruins fall'n is heard a

muttering sound, As if the Demon of the element In indignation menaced dire revenge. Ah! now, unchain'd by some mysterious Power, Some Fiend of air, in league with That of fire, The wind begins to howl; its breath awakes The sleepy flames;—loud and more loud it howls, And rushes on them with collected might; Before the driving spirit burst the flames In a redoubled tempest, and deride Opposing man. See! how they proudly toss Their many heads on high, and through the vault Of darkness fling a sad, malignant day: [Pg 83] Look! with what fury, what resistless rage, From street to street the fiery Deluge pours His rapid billows, swallowing everything In horrible destruction; lowly roofs, And gorgeous mansions, lofty spires and domes Capacious, on whose fair, majestic tops, As on her throne exalted, Art assumed Her noblest honours, whose firm pillars braved Storms, and the still-corroding course of years; These, these with all their wealth, the various stores Of luxury and commerce, to the flames Abandon'd, sink an undefended prey, Swelling the general wreck; unheeded sink By their possessors, flying for their lives: Cries, groans, laments, on every side resound.

[Pg 84] Sudden a magazine of nitrous grain Bursts in a blazing column to the clouds; The dread explosion shakes the solid ground, And through the skies in lengthening thunder rolls: Driven by the furious overwhelming blast To distance round, the burning fragments fall On every side; see, see, yon ships catch fire, Their rigging's in a blaze; affrighted Thames Shrinks from the sight; his waters cast a gleam Portentous, dismal, like the light of hell.

Before the Conflagration numbers fly Frighted, in throngs precipitate, to seek A refuge in the distant fields secure, Which, cover'd thick with victims of distress, Present a wretched world. There Youth, surprised [Pg 85] By hard experience, learns, alas! too soon The destiny of Man; and from those eyes Where expectation and unclouded joy Serenely shone, the streams of sorrow flow: There helpless Age, robb'd of the scanty means A life of labour earn'd, driven from his home To wander, destitute, the vale of years, Yields to despondence, tears his hoary locks, Falls on the ground, and eagerly implores Rest in the grave: there, gazing on the fires, The tender Mother stands,—her frenzied soul Glares from her look, her bosom heaves a groan, She hugs her crying infant to her heart, Despairing, lost: what countless forms of wo! Lethargic some, and mute; some, giving loose To their distracted feelings, rave aloud In all the clamorous vehemence of grief.

[Pg 86] The din subsides;—a voice, distinctly heard, A frantic voice exclaims, my child! my child! My child is in the flames!—Oh! horrible!— What succour? what resource? the roaring wind More fiercely blows, the Burning pours along, The skies are lighten'd, Uproar opens wide His thousand mouths, Danger and Ruin prowl At large with boundless license, all is doubt And consternation, one tempestuous sea Of wretchedness, one chaos of despair.

Seized with wild fear Imagination sees The elements broke loose, Time on the brink Of dread Eternity, with all the signs Of that tremendous period when the dead Shall rise to judgment—hush'd in solemn awe— Listening the trump of doom.—

[Pg 87] Thus raged the storm, Till the great God of heaven in mercy bade The wind be silent, bade the gathering clouds Pour down abundant rain; the raging Fires, In prompt obedience to the sovereign will Of their Creator, dwindled and expired.

[Pg 88]

TO SPRING.

Fairest and loveliest of the sun-born train That o'er the varying year alternate reign; Whose eye, soft-beaming with thy father's fire, Fond Nature woos with ever-fresh desire, Enchanting Spring! O let thy votary's lay Invite thy angel smile, thy genial sway!

Still do thy beauties, to my partial heart, Whene'er I gaze, superior joys impart: When winter's cloudy veil thou draw'st away} And, vested with the sun's mild, dewy ray,} [Pg 89] First to the longing earth thy charms thou dost display;} Or when Aurora, to the lark's gay song, Full of thy spirit, lightly trips along; With joyful kisses greets the first-born flowers, And o'er them breathes thy warm, refreshing showers; Or when, on shadowy pillow in the west, Fann'd by thy gentlest Zephyrs into rest, Eve sweetly dozes, whilst, as in a dream, She sees the glimmerings of the solar beam O'er the dim landscape languishingly stray, On ocean's smiling face reflected play, Fade in the purple ether's darkening hues, And vernal peace and joy o'er earth diffuse.

[Pg 90] More grateful strains, O Spring! thy favours claim, Shine on thy beauties, and endear thy name. While Winter's

winds thy new-born charms deface, And the young Year starves in his cold embrace, The Hours, by stealth advancing, bear away, And on thy lap, with smiles of pleasure, lay The shivering Babe; new vigour there he gains, And spreads thy various treasures o'er the plains.

The joyous Naiades, from their icy bands Unfetter'd, dance and warble o'er the lands; The Dryads feel thy genial breath, and raise Their heads, new-crown'd with leaves, and whisper praise; The plummy warblers wake their amorous strains; The herds and flocks sport o'er the fresh, green plains; Fancy and Hope return the mind to bless, A paradise she sees and dreams of happiness.

[Pg 91] Come, then, indulgent Ruler of the year, Sweet Spring! to grateful Nature ever dear! From the blest regions of Elysian day, Climes favour'd high with thy perennial sway, O deign to come! and let our raptured eyes View thee, as through a veil, in these obscurer skies.

Methinks, I see thee coming from afar, Thy beauty decks Apollo's mounting car; The tyrant of the north with dazzled sight Beholds, and, yielding, meditates his flight; His dread, petrific rod he long has broke, And freed glad Nature from his icy yoke; She lifts her head, and hails the approaching hour When she shall feel thy more propitious power.

[Pg 92] O haste thy progress, and exert thy sway! In all thy charms, on some thrice-hallow'd day, When the soft-whispering air to Fancy's ears Wafts the celestial music of the spheres, While Pleasures, Loves, and Graces round thee fly, Glide on a sun-beam down the clear, blue sky; Crown'd with a myrtle-wreath, begin thy reign; Bid lingering Winter fly with all his train; Pour forth thy favours o'er this western isle, And let each grateful eye reflect thy smile.

[Pg 93]

TO WINTER.

No longer Beauty's many-colour'd robe Adorns the autumnal scene; no longer play The Zephyrs with her tresses; she has fled To happier regions, and has left the year Naked and void of charms; the leafless woods Tremble no more with rapture at the voice Of harmony: ah! how is Nature changed! Silent, and sad, she anxiously awaits Thy coming, mighty King! and, as the sun Less bright, less ardent, more and more declines Towards the horizon, with alarm she marks Thy shadow lengthening in the nightly shade [Pg 94] And towering o'er her, prostrate as she lies, More threatening, more gigantic; till, at length, Boreas, thy harbinger, forth-rushing fierce, Tears from chill'd Autumn's head the withering Crown, And blustering loud in her affrighted ear, O Winter! tells thy terrible approach.

Behold! in awful majesty thou comest! On huge, black clouds, that through the encumber'd sky, Before the northern blast, sail slowly on, Thou ridest sublime; aloft in ether towers Thy giant form; thy formidable frown Blackens the night; thy threatening voice, sent forth [Pg 95] Upon the impetuous winds, affrights the world. Yet dare I welcome thee, terrific Power! Dread Winter, hail! thy terrors fill my soul With a delightful awe; I love to trace Thy varying scenes, the wonders of thy reign. Thy Ministers await thy sovereign will, And, in the secret regions of the air, In cloudy magazines prepare thy stores Of snow, and rain, and hail. At thy command Frost, that invisible, mysterious Power, Breathes upon Nature, and thou see'st her soon An unresisting captive, bound in ice; Vainly she mourns, till, at thy bidding, Thaw With his damp, misty standard, from the south Comes creeping silently, and sets her free; She weeps for joy. Ah! now thou dost unchain [Pg 96] The Demon of the tempest, to exert On tortured Nature thy tyrannic might; Fierce on the whirlwind's wing he rushes forth With dreadful bellowsings, hurling all around Destructive deluges of rain, snow, hail, In wildest discord, and chaotic war Mingling earth, sea, and sky. All-potent Lord! Dread Winter! though Sublimity appears Thy chief attendant, and partakes thy throne; Yet Beauty often visits thee, and dares, In many a scene, with the more powerful charms Of her majestic sister to combine Her pleasing graces: I delight to view Thy snowy robe of purest, glowing white, The clear, blue skies, the cheerful evergreen Amid the wintry desert, from whose boughs [Pg 97] The little redbreast chirps; the trees and herbs With snow and hoarfrost fringed, to fancy's eye Presenting pictured shapes, and, when the sun Sheds o'er them his effulgence, sparkling keen With million living particles of light.

But with far nobler transport I survey Thy nightly scene, O Winter! when by frost Refined and clear'd, the pure transpicuous air Through her thin, azure veil, to wondering man Displays the unclouded heavens, myriads of stars Shining in all their glory: at the view Rapt Contemplation, in her car of light, Expatiates in the interminable space, Ranging from world to world, from sun to sun, O'erwhelm'd with wonder and astonishment, [Pg 98] And sacred awe, till lifting up her eyes, She sees Religion, from the opening gate Of heaven itself, on her seraphic wings Smiling

descend; she feels her power divine, And raptured hymns the great Creator's praise.

[Pg 99]

THE DESPERATION AND MADNESS OF GUILT.

In depth of loneliest wood, amid the din Of midnight storm and thunder, spoke Despair, While Horror, shuddering, heard that voice alone. Oh! load of guilt! relentless misery! Still, ever still the same where'er I fly; No peace, no hope, not one poor moment's glimpse Through all the blackness of eternity! Monster of direst guilt! this mother's hand Murder'd my babe, my new-born innocent. I seek not mercy, no!—long sought in vain [Pg 100] While conscience prey'd upon my secret heart, Wasting its life in agonizing groans, And floods of scalding tears,—but now no more; Those pangs are past, this heart is wither'd, dead! Changed all to crime, all rottenness and stench; 'Twould taint creation were it not confined. Parch'd are these eyes, their sorrows turn'd to ice, A mountain of impenetrable ice, In whose unfathom'd centre lies my soul, Imprison'd, numb'd, buried in conscious death. O could I cease to think! cease quite to be! O could I live in torments! writhe in hell! Raptures to this! Rouse, rouse to life, my soul, In madness of despair, O burst thy tomb; Call God and devils to behold thy guilt, And blast thee. (*It lightens.*)

[Pg 101] See, what sudden blaze! they come! Welcome, O welcome! follow me, look there! There lies my murder'd babe:—now strike!—avenge! (*It thunders.*) Overwhelming stroke! (*She falls upon the ground insensible:— at length, coming to herself*)—

Ah! am I conscious still? Not blasted then?—does this one little spark Amidst a universe of solid gloom Still live? I'll try to quench it with my blood. Come, dagger, pierce, pierce deep; I feel thy point; My blood flows fast, it animates my heart. The gathering cloud of death grows thick and dark, [Pg 102] It hangs oppressive on my swimming sight: See, see, the Spirit of my murder'd child Comes with a troop of demons to conduct My soul to hell;—they seize me for their prey, They drag me down: Oh! horror! horror! oh! (*She dies.*)

[Pg 103]

ON HEARING THE NIGHTINGALE.

Thanks for thy song, sweet Bird! thanks for thy song! O! 'twas delightful; how have I been lost As in a blissful dream! how has my soul Been wafted in a sea of melody! Scarce yet am I awake, yet scarce myself: Still with the enchanting music's dying breath The air is kept in motion, and conveys Sweet whispers to the finely-listening ear; Or is it but an echo from the cell Of memory that deludes my doating sense? [Pg 104] Ah! now 'tis gone; Silence resumes her sway, And o'er my hearing spreads her subtle web; But she resumes it, changed, methinks, in nature, More soft, more amiable, as if inform'd With the departed soul of harmony.

Thanks for thy song, sweet Bird! it well deserves All my heart's gratitude; for it has still'd Its anxious throbbings, and removed the load Of sadness that oppress'd the springs of life: More lightly now it beats, and welcomes back The glowing tide of health, and conscious feels The blessing of existence. It imparts To all my frame reanimating force; My nerves partake of its elastic spring; No longer falsely sentient, they receive [Pg 105] The just impression from external things, Vibrate harmoniously to Nature's touch, And in her general concert bear a part.

Thanks, sweetest Bird! enchanting Nightingale! How by the magic influence of thy song, How am I changed from what, of late, I was! And every object, too, how seems it changed! This wood, when first I enter'd it, appear'd To Fancy's eye the haunt of Melancholy, Her dreariest haunt, where, in her saddest mood, The Goddess loved to dwell; —'twas lonesome gloom, And awful stillness all: I felt her power; The imaginative Spirit she o'erwhelm'd With a mysterious load of shapeless feeling: [Pg 106] Her leaden hand oppress'd my labouring heart; Upon the ground I sank, —scarce sensible, And buried, as it were, in conscious death.

With what soft influence, what resistless power, Did thy mellifluous strain, kind Philomel! Insinuate itself into my ear,

Melting its dull unwillingness to listen, And opening soon a passage to my heart! But thou beginn'st again, be hush'd my soul! O wondrous power of heavenly harmony! See, Philomel! the Goddess of the night, Charm'd with thy strains her cloudy veil withdraws, And pays thee with a smile of gratitude; A smile that to her beauty adds new charms, [Pg 107] Enchanting heaven and earth, while Melancholy, Sighing away her sadness, lifts her head, And, gazing on her tutelary Power With eyes reflecting soft her dewy light, Feels her divinest inspiration steal Into her melting soul, absorb'd in heaven. My sympathizing heart with bliss o'erflows. Thanks sweetest Nightingale! thanks for thy song! Long on this night shall grateful memory doat; And oft to this loved wood will I return.

[Pg 108]

TO PAGANINI.

Long to the world have all the mouths of Fame, O Paganini! thunder'd forth thy name; Nations have vied their plausible voice to raise, And swell the general chorus of thy praise. Though not so loud, more dear the applause to thee Of all the favour'd sons of harmony, Who, with one full consent, admiring own} Thee as their master—monarch—thee alone;} And humbly bow before thee on thy throne.}

[Pg 109] O'er all musicians thou stand'st far apart; Thou hast created for thyself an art. As, in the natural world, around the sun The planets their career of brightness run, Each moving in an orbit of its own, And all obeying laws to science known. Musicians thus, each blest with his degree Of talent by the God of harmony, Shine forth distinguish'd in their several ways, While every one the rules of art obeys. We calculate the merits of their name, And pay them their proportion'd share of fame. Not thus in Honour's region thou career'st; Thou comet-like to fancy's ken appear'st, Like comet, blazing in its bold career, That leaves behind the planetary sphere, And rushes towards the centre of the sun Till with Apollo's self it seems but one.

[Pg 110] A Genius, an Original, art thou, Such as the astounded world ne'er heard till now. When thou dost take thy magic bow in hand What mortal ear the enchantment can withstand? Transported, we admire thy peerless skill; Thou movest our feelings, passions, at thy will; With fear we tremble, we with anger glow, Soft from our eyes the tears of pity flow; Or when thou play'st a gay, fantastic strain, From mirth and laughter who can then refrain? Such is thy music's power to rule the heart, Thou may'st be call'd the Shakspeare of thine art.

[Pg 111]

TO FANCY.

O! what a nameless feeling of delight Stole o'er my wondering spirit, like a gleam From opening heaven!—dost thou, then, Fancy, deign Once more to visit me? thou dost! thou dost! That breath of extacy, that heavenly light, Flow'd from the wafture of thy angel wings, And from thy smiling eyes: divinest Power! Welcome, thrice welcome! O vouchsafe to make My breast thy temple, and my heart thy shrine! Still will I worship thee, and thou shalt keep, In peace, thy new abode, nor fear the approach [Pg 112] Of aught profane or hostile, to disturb Thy holy mysteries; for I will chase Far from the hallow'd precincts where thou dwell'st Each worldly passion, every grovelling thought, And all the train of Vice; striving to make The shrine well-worthy its celestial guest. Still will I worship thee, and oft invoke Thine inspirations, and with transport yield To thy sweet, magic influence all my soul: The slightest breath of thine inspiring voice Shall wake my nerves, most feelingly alive, And bid them tremble with poetic bliss.

[Pg 113] The frown of Reason thou no more shalt fear; Did I say Reason's frown?—no!—'twas the frown Of false Philosophy, her foolish pride. Reason and Thou are sisters, born to rule Unitedly, in happiest harmony, The mind of man; and in the heaven-sent hour Of inspiration, from the self-same source Ye pour the stream of mingled light and flame That animates, illumines, and warms the soul. How could I e'er desert thee, loveliest Nymph! To court thy rival, false Philosophy? How could I quit thy verdant, flowery walks, To tread with painful toil the briary maze Of metaphysic lore? Indulgent Power! The offence forgive. Lured by the specious name, Philosophy, and by her meteor rays Misled, with fond presumptuousness I strove To penetrate the dark, unfathom'd depth [Pg 114] Where Truth in awful mystery resides. Not deigning in thy mirror to behold Her image, though in loveliest beauty clad, With lawless

curiosity I sought To view the Goddess in her naked form. But heaven to man, nor angel gives to scan Truth's very self; she lives for ever hid, Shrined in the bosom of Divinity. Long wandering mid the chaos, I at length Approach'd the border of the cold, dark waste, The bottomless abyss, the dreadful void Of scepticism; affrighted, back I shrunk.

[Pg 115] O Fancy! ne'er will I forsake thee more, Nor view thee with severe, truth-searching eye, Melting thy fairy visions into air. Thy paradise, delighted, let me rove, There study nature, and with grateful heart, In thy serene, translucent stream behold The light of truth reflected, and the smile Of heaven's benevolence, and in that glass The loveliness of every Virtue woo And every Grace. There let me, too, behold In all her beauty, bright-eyed Poesy, That heavenly Maid who charm'd my youthful heart; And let the love of glory fire my breast; And let me see, to stimulate my powers, The new-born crescent of my fame ascend, While on its pointed horn the Fairy, Hope, On tiptoe stands, fluttering her airy wings To fan its beams and joyful hails the hour When in its full-orb'd glory it shall shine.

[Pg 116]

A SUMMER-EVENING.

Come, my dear Love, and let us climb yon hill, The prospect, from its height, will well reward The toil of climbing; thence we shall command The various beauties of the landscape round.— Now we have reached the top. O! what a scene Opens upon the sight, and swallows up The admiring soul! She feels as if from earth Uplifted into heaven. Scarce can she yet Collect herself, and exercise her powers. While o'er heaven's lofty, wide-extended arch, And round the vast horizon, the bold eye Shoots forth her view, with what sublime delight [Pg 117] The bosom swells! See, where the God of day, Who through the cloudless ether long has rid On his bright, fiery car, amidst a blaze Of dazzling glory, and in wrath shot round His burning arrows, with tyrannic power Oppressing Nature, now, his daily course Well-nigh completed, toward the western goal Declines, and with less awful majesty Concludes his reign; his flamy chariot hid In floods of golden light that dazzles still, Though less intense. O! how these scenes exalt The throbbing heart! Louisa, canst thou bear These strong emotions? do they not o'erpower Thy tender nerves? I fear, my Love, they do; Those eyes that, late, with transport beam'd so bright, [Pg 118] Now veil their rays with the soft, dewy shade Of tenderness. Let us repose awhile; The roots of yonder tree, cover'd with moss, Present a pleasing seat; there let us sit. Hark! Zephyr wakes, and sweetly-whispering, tells The approach of Eve; already Nature feels Her soothing influence, her refreshing breath; The fields, the trees, imbibe the cool, moist air, Their feverish thirst allay, and smile revived. The Soul, too, feels her influence, sweetly soothed Into a tender calm. O! let us now, My loved Louisa! let us now enjoy The landscape's charms, and all the nameless sweets Of this, our favourite hour, for ever dear [Pg 119] To Fancy and to Love. Cast round thy sight Upon the altered scene, nor longer fear The dazzling sun; his latest, lingering beams Where are they? can'st thou find them?—see! they gild The glittering top of yonder village-spire; Upon that distant hill they faintly shine; And look! the topmost boughs of this tall oak Majestic, which o'er-canopies our heads, Yet catch their tremulous glimmerings:—now they fade, Fade and expire; and, as they fade, the Moon, The full-orb'd Moon, that seem'd, erewhile, to melt In the bright azure, from the darkening sky Emerging slow, and silent, sheds around [Pg 120] Her snowy light, that with the day's last, dim Reflection, from the broad, translucid lake, Insensibly commingles, and unites In sweetest harmony, o'er all the scene Diffusing magic tints, enchanting power. How lovely every object now appears! Each in itself, and how they all combine In one delightful whole! What eye, what heart, O Nature! can resist thy potent charms When thus in soft, transparent shade half-veil'd? Now Beauty and Sublimity, methinks, Upon the lap of Eve, embracing sleep. Mark the tree-tops, my Love, of yonder wood, Whose moonlight foliage fluctuates in the breeze, Say, do they not, in figure, motion, hue, Resemble the sea-waves at misty dawn? What shadowy shape along the troubled lake [Pg 121] Comes this way moving? how mysteriously It glides along! how indistinct its form! Imagination views with sweet surprise The unknown appearance—breathless in suspense. The Spirit of the waters can it be, On his aerial car? some fairy Power? Pants not thy heart, Louisa, half-alarm'd? It grows upon the sight,—strange, watery sounds Attend its course;—hark! was not that a voice? O! 'tis a fishing-boat!—its sails and oars I now discern. The church-clock strikes! how loud Burst forth its sound into the startled air, That feels it still, and trembles far around! My dearest Love! it summons us away; The dew begins to fall; let us depart: How sweetly have we spent this evening-hour!

[Pg 122]

PROLOGUE.

The piece, to-night, is of peculiar kind, For which the appropriate name is hard to find; No Comedy, 'tis clear; nor can it be, With strictest truth, pronounced a Tragedy; Since, though predominant the tragic tone, It reigns not uniformly and alone; Then, that its character be best proclaim'd, A Tragic-drama let the piece be named.

[Pg 123] But do not, Critics! rashly hence conclude, 'Tis a mere Farce, incongruous and rude, Where incidents in strange confusion blend, Without connexion, interest, or end: Not so;—far different was the bard's design; For though, at times, he ventures to combine With grave Melpomene's impassion'd strain The gay Thalia's more enlivening vein; (As all mankind with one consent agree How strong the charms of sweet variety,) Yet Reason's path he still with care observes, And ne'er from Taste with wilful blindness swerves, His plot conducting by the rules of art: And, above all, he strives to touch the heart; Knowing that, void of pathos and of fire, Art, Reason, Taste, are vain, and quickly tire.

[Pg 124] Be mindful then, ye Critics! of the intent; The poet means not here to represent The tragic Muse in all her terrors drest, With might tempestuous to convulse the breast; Nor in her statelier, unrelaxing mien, To stalk, in buskin'd pomp, through every scene; But with an air more mild and versatile,} Where fear and grief, sometimes, admit a smile,} Now loftier, humbler now, the changing style,} Resembling in effect an April-night When from the clouds, by fits, the moon throws forth her light; And louder winds, by turns, their rage appease, Succeeded by the simply-whispering breeze.

[Pg 125] But, in few words our author ends his plea, Already tending to prolixity, To paint from Nature was his leading aim; Let then, the play your candid hearing claim: Judge it, impartial, by dramatic laws; If good, reward it with deserved applause; If bad, condemn; yet be it still exempt From your severer blame, for 'tis a first attempt.

[Pg 126]

PROLOGUE.

Lo! Time, at last, has brought, with tardy flight, The long-anticipated, wish'd-for night; How on this blissful night, while yet remote, Did Hope and Fancy with fond rapture doat! Like eagles, oft, in glory's dazzling sky, With full-stretch'd pinions have they soar'd on high, To greet the appearance of the poet's name, Dawning conspicuous mid the stars of fame.

[Pg 127] Alas! they soar not now;—the demon, Fear, Has hurl'd the cherubs from their heavenly sphere: Fancy, o'erwhelm'd with terror, grovelling lies;— The world of torment opens on her eyes, Darkness and hissing all she sees and hears;— (*The speaker pauses—the audience are supposed to clap, when he continues,*) But Hope, returning to dispel her fears, Claps her bright wings; the magic sound and light At once have forced their dreaded foe to flight, Silenced the hissing, chased the darkness round, And charm'd up marvelling Fancy from the ground.

[Pg 128] Say, shall the cherubs dare once more to fly? Not, as of late, in glory's dazzling sky, To greet the appearance of the poet's name, Dawning conspicuous mid the stars of fame; Presumptuous flight! but let them dare to rise, Cheer'd by the light of your propitious eyes, Within this roof, glory's contracted sphere, On fluttering pinions, unsubdued by Fear; O! let them dare, ere yet the curtain draws, Fondly anticipate your kind applause.

[Pg 129]

EPILOGUE.

Perplexing case!—your pardon, Friends, I pray,— My head so turns, I know not what to say;— However, since I've dared to come before ye, I'll stop the whirligig,— (*Clapping his hand to his forehead,*) and tell my story: Though 'tis so strange, that I've a pre-conviction It may by some, perhaps, be judged a fiction.

[Pg 130] Learn, gentle Audience, then, with just surprise, That, when, to-night, you saw the curtain rise, Our poet's

epilogue was still unwrit: The devil take him for neglecting it! Nay though,—'twas not neglected; 'twas deferr'd From certain motives—which were most absurd; For, trusting blindly to his rhyming vein, And still-prepared inventiveness of brain, He'd form'd the whimsical, foolhardy plan, To set about it when the play began; Thus purposing the drama's fate to know, Then write his epilogue quite à propos.

The time at last arrives—the signal rings, Sir Bard, alarm'd, to pen and paper springs, And, snug in listening-corner, near the scene, With open'd ears, eyes, mouth-suspended mien,— Watches opinion's breezes as they blow, To kindle fancy's fire, and bid his verses flow.

[Pg 131] Now I, kind Auditors! by fortune's spite Was doom'd, alack! to speak what he should write, And therefore, as you'll naturally suppose, Could not forbear, at times, to cock my nose Over his shoulder, curiously to trace His progress;—zounds! how snail-like was his pace! Feeling, at length, my sore-tried patience sicken, Good Sir, I cried, your tardy motions quicken: 'Tis the fourth act, high time, Sir, to have done! As if his ear had been the touch-hole of a gun, My tongue a match, the Bard, on fire, exploded; He was—excuse the pun—with grape high-loaded. Hence, prating fool! return'd he, in a roar, Push'd me out, neck and heels, and bang'd the door.

[Pg 132] But lest, here too, like hazard I should run;} I'll end my story. When the play was done,} The epilogue was—look! 'tis here—begun:} Such as it is, however, if you will, I'll read it; shall I, Friends? (*They clap.*) Your orders I fulfil. (*He reads.*) 'Tis come! the fateful hour! list! list! the bell Summons me—Duncan-like, to heaven or hell; See, see, the curtain draws;—it now commences; Fear and suspense have frozen up my senses: But let me to my task:—what noise is this? They're clapping, clapping, O ye gods, what bliss! Now then, to work, my pen:—descend, O Muse! Thine inspiration through my soul infuse; Prompt such an epilogue as ne'er before Has been imagined,—never will be more.

[Pg 133] What subject? hark! new louder plaudits rise, I'm fired, and, like a rocket, to the skies Dart up triumphantly in flames of light:— They hiss, I'm quench'd, and sink in shades of night. Again they clap, O extacy!— Having thus far indulged his rhyming vein, He halts,—reads,—curses,—and begins again; But not a single couplet could he muster; How should he, with his soul in such a fluster, All rapture, gratitude, for your applause? Be then, the effect excused in favour of the cause!

[Pg 134]

LINES

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. MR. B.

(SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY MISS B***, HIS SISTER.)

At God's command the vital spirit fled, And thou, my Brother! slumber'st with the dead. Alas! how art thou changed! I scarcely dare To gaze on thee;—dread sight! death, death is there. How does thy loss o'erwhelm my heart with grief! But tears, kind nature's tears afford relief. Reluctant, sad, I take my last farewell:— Thy virtues in my mind shall ever dwell; Thy tender friendship felt so long for me, [Pg 135] Thy frankness, truth, thy generosity, Thy tuneful tongue's persuasive eloquence, Thy science, learning, taste, wit, common sense, Thy patriot love of genuine liberty, Thy heart o'erflowing with philanthropy; And chiefly will I strive henceforth to feel Thy firm religious faith and pious zeal, Enlighten'd, liberal, free from bigotry, And, that prime excellence, thy charity. Farewell!—for ever?—no! forbid it, Heaven! A glorious promise is to Christians given; Though parted in this world of sin and pain, On high, my Brother! we shall meet again.

[Pg 136]

LINES TO AN INFIDEL,

AFTER HAVING READ HIS BOOK AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

Your book I've read: I would that I had not! For what instruction, pleasure, have I got? Amid that artful labyrinth of doubt Long, long I wander'd, striving to get out; Your thread of sophistry, my only clue, I fondly hoped would guide me rightly through: That spider's web entangled me the more: With desperate courage onward still I went, Until my head was turn'd, my patience spent: [Pg 137] Now, now, at last, thank God! the task is o'er. I've been a child, who whirls himself about, Fancying he sees both earth and heaven turn round; Till giddy, panting, sick, and wearied out, He falls, and rues his folly on the ground.

[Pg 138]

LINES

**ON HEARING A YOUNG GENTLEMAN, WHO IS BOTH LAME
AND BLIND, BUT IN OTHER RESPECTS VERY HANDSOME,
SING AND PLAY ON HIS VIOLIN FOR THE FIRST TIME.**

Crippled his limbs, and sightless are his eyes; I view the youth, and feel compassion rise. He sings! how sweet the notes! in pleased amaze I listen,—listen, and admiring gaze. Still, as he catches inspiration's fire, Sweeping with bolder hands the obedient strings, That mix, harmonious, with the strains he sings, He pours into the music all his soul, And governs mine with strong, but soft controul: [Pg 139] Raptured I glow, and more and more admire. His mortal ailments I no longer see; But, of divinities my fancy dreams; Blind was the enchanting God of soft desire; And lame the powerful Deity of fire; His bow the magic rod of Hermes seems; And in his voice I hear the God of harmony.

[Pg 140]

LINES TO A PEDANTIC CRITIC.

Critic! should I vouchsafe to learn of thee, Correct, no doubt, but cold my strains would be: Now, cold correctness!—I despise the name; Is that a passport through the gates of fame? Thy pedant rules with care I studied once; Was I made wiser, or a greater dunce? Hence, Critic, hence! I'll study them no more; My eyes are open'd, and the folly's o'er. When Genius opes the floodgates of the soul, Fancy's outbursting tides impetuous roll, Onward they rush with unresisted sway,} Sweeping fools, pedants, critics, all away} [Pg 141] Who would with obstacles their progress stay.} As mighty Ocean bids his waves comply With the great luminaries of the sky, So Genius, to direct his course aright, Owns but one guide, the inspiring God of light.

[Pg 142]

LINES ON SHAKSPEARE.

(SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN NEAR HIS TOMB.)

Behold! this marble tablet bears inscribed The name of Shakspeare!— What a glorious theme For never-ending praise! His drama's page, Like a clear mirror, to our wondering view Displays the living image of the world, And all the different characters of men: Still, in the varying scenes, or sad, or gay, We take a part; we weep; we laugh; we feel All the strong sympathies of real life. [Pg 143] To him alone, of mortals, Fancy lent Her magic wand, potent to conjure up Ideal Forms, distinctly character'd, Exciting fear, or wonder, or delight.

The works of Shakspeare! are they not a fane, Majestic as the canopy of heaven, Embracing all created things, a fane

His superhuman genius has upraised, To Nature consecrate? The Goddess there For ever dwells, and from her sanctuary, By Shakspeare's voice, her poet and high-priest, Reveals her awful mysteries to man, And with her power divine rules every heart. At Shakspeare's name, then, bow down all ye sons Of learning, and of art! ye men, endow'd [Pg 144] With talent, taste! ye nobler few who feel The genuine glow of genius! bow down all In admiration! with deep feeling own Your littleness, your insignificance; And with one general voice due homage pay To Nature's Poet, Fancy's best-loved Child!

[Pg 145]

LINES ON MILTON.

(SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN NEAR HIS TOMB.)

Milton!— the name of that divinest Bard Acts on Imagination like a charm Of holiest power;—with deep, religious awe She hails the sacred spot where sleep entomb'd The relics that enshrined his godlike soul.

O! with what heartfelt interest and delight, With what astonishment, will all the sons Of Adam, till the end of time, peruse His lofty, wondrous page! with what just pride [Pg 146] Will England ever boast her Milton's name, The Poet matchless in sublimity! E'en now in Memory's raptured ear resound The deep-toned strains of the Miltonic lyre; Inspiring virtuous, heart-ennobling thought, They breathe of heaven; the imaginative Power No longer treads the guilt-polluted world, But soars aloft, and draws empyreal air: Rapt Faith anticipates the judgment-hour, When, at the Archangel's call, the dead shall wake With frames resuscitated, glorified: Then, then! in strains like these, the sainted Bard, Conspicuous mid salvation's earth-born heirs, Shall join harmoniously the heavenly choir, And sing the Saviour's praise in endless bliss.

[Pg 147]

ANACREONTIC.

Still, as the fleeting seasons change, From joy to joy poor mortals range, And as the year pursues its round, One pleasure's lost, another found; Time, urging on his envious course, Still drives them from their last resource. So butterflies, when children chase The gaudy prize with eager pace, On each fresh flower but just alight, And, ere they taste, renew their flight.

[Pg 148] Thanks to kind Fortune! I possess A constant source of happiness, And am not poorly forced to live On what the seasons please to give. Let clouds or sunshine vest the pole, What care I, while I quaff the bowl? In that secure, I can defy The changeful temper of the sky. No weatherglass, or if I be, Thou, Bacchus! art my Mercury.

[Pg 149]

ANACREONTIC.

Let us, my Friends, our mirth forbear, While yonder Censor mounts the chair: His form erect, his stately pace, His huge, white wig, his solemn face, His scowling brows, his ken severe, His haughty pleasure-chiding sneer, Some high Philosopher declare:— Hush! let us hear him from the chair:

'Ye giddy youths! I hate your mirth; How ill-beseeming sons of earth! Know ye not well the fate of man? [Pg 150] That death is certain, life a span? That merriment soon sinks in sorrow, Sunshine to-day, and clouds to-morrow? Harken then, fools! to Reason's voice, That bids ye mourn, and not rejoice?'

Such gloomy thoughts, grave Sage! are thine, Now, gentle Friends! attend to mine. Since mortals must die, Since life's but a span, 'Tis wisdom, say I, To live while we can, And fill up with pleasure The poor little measure. Of fate to complain How simple and vain! Long faces I hate; [Pg 151] They shorten the date. My Friends! while ye may, Be jovial to-day; The things that will be Ne'er wish to foresee; Or, should ye employ Your thoughts on to-morrow, Let Hope sing of joy, Not Fear croak of sorrow. But see! the Sage flies, so no more. Now, Friends! drink and sing, as before.

[Pg 152]

ANACREONTIC.

Why must Poets, when they sing, Drink of the Castalian spring? Sure 'tis chilling to the brain; Witness many a modern strain: Poets! would ye sing with fire, Wine, not water, must inspire. Come, then, pour thy purple stream, Lovely Bottle! thou'rt my theme. How within thy crystal frame Does the rosy nectar flame! Not so beauteous on the vine Did the clustering rubies shine, When the potent God of day [Pg 153] Fill'd them with his ripening ray; When with proudness and delight Bacchus view'd the charming sight. Still it keeps Apollo's fires; Still the vintage-God admires. Hail sweet antidote of wo! Chiefest blessing mortals know! Nay, the mighty powers divine Own the magic force of wine. Wearied with the world's affairs, Jove himself, to drown his cares, Bids the nectar'd goblet bear: Lo! the youthful Hebe fair Pours the living draught around;— Hark! with mirth the skies resound. 'Tis to wine, for aught I know, [Pg 154] Deities their godship owe; Don't we mortals owe to wine Manhood, and each spark divine? Say, thou life-inspiring Bowl, Who thy heavenly treasure stole? Not the hand that stole Jove's fire Did so happily aspire; Tell the lucky spoiler's name, Worthy never-dying fame. Since it must a secret be, Him I'll praise, in praising thee. Glory of the social treat! Source of friendly converse sweet! Source of cheerfulness and sense, Humour, wit, and eloquence, Courage and sincerity, [Pg 155] Candour and philanthropy! Source of—O thou bounteous wine! What the good that is not thine? Were my nerves relax'd and low? Did my chill blood toil on slow? When thy spirit through me flows, How each vital function glows! Tuned, my nerves, no longer coy, Answer to the touch of joy: On the steams, that from thee rise, Time on swifter pinions flies; Fancy gilds them with her rays; Hope amid the rainbow plays. But behold! what Image bright Rises heavenly to my sight! Could such wondrous charms adorn [Pg 156] Venus, when from ocean born? Say, my Julia, is it thou, Ever lovely, loveliest now? Yet, methinks, the Cyprian Queen Comes herself, but takes thy mien. Goddess! I confess thy power, And to love devote the hour, Let me but, with grateful soul, Greet once more the bounteous Bowl.

[Pg 157]

SONG.

Ere Reason rose within my breast,
To enforce her sacred law, Still would some charm, in every maid, My veering passions draw.

But now, to calm those gales of night, The morn her light displays; The twinkling stars no more I view, For only Venus sways:

The spotless heaven of genuine love Unveil'd I wondering see, And all that heaven, transported, claim For Julia and for me.

[Pg 158]

SONG.

Yes, I could love, could softly yield To passion all my willing breast, And fondly listen to the voice That oft invites me to be blest;

That still, when Fancy, lost in bliss, Stands gazing on the form divine, So sweetly whispers to my soul, O make the heavenly Julia thine!

But hush, thou fascinating voice! Hence visionary extacy! Yes, I could love, but ah! I fear She would not deign to smile on me.

[Pg 159]

SONG TO BACCHUS.

Come along, jolly Bacchus! no longer delay; See'st thou not how the table with bottles is crown'd? See'st thou not how thy votaries, impatient to pay Their devotion to thee, are all waiting around? O come then, propitious to our invocation, To preside of thy rites at the solemnization.

[Pg 160] Hark! the voice of Champagne, from its prison set free, And the music of glasses that merrily ring, Thy arrival announce, and invite us to glee; With what gladness we welcome thee, vine-crowned King! To honour thee, Bacchus! we pour a libation, And the lofty roof echoes our loud salutation.

On that wine-loaded altar, erected to thee, Sherry, burgundy, claret, invitingly shine; While all thy rich gifts thus collected we see, We greet thy munificence boundless, divine. From these we already inhale animation, Our hearts and heads warmth, and our souls elevation.

[Pg 161] As thy nectar, kind Bacchus! more copiously flows, We purge off the cold dregs that are earthy, profane; Each breast with thy own godlike character glows; There truth, generosity, happiness reign. Hail Bacchus! we hail thee in high exultation; Thou hast blest us, kind God! with thy full inspiration.

[Pg 162]

ON SEEING THE APOLLO BELVIDERE.

What majesty! what elegance and grace! The form how perfect! how divine the face! In admiration rapt, I gazing stand:— Is this a statue wrought by mortal hand? No! 'tis Apollo's self, methinks I see; I feel the presence of the Deity.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE APOLLO BELVIDERE.

O all ye Sons of Taste! with raptured sight Behold this image of the God of light; Admire its whole, admire its every part; 'Tis sculpture's master-work, the boast of Art. Not with more glory in his heavenly sphere The God appears, than in his Image here.

[Pg 163]

EPITAPH ON NELSON.

Lo! here are Nelson's honour'd relics laid;— Britons! your Country's Genius calls you here, And bids you pay to your lost Hero's shade The noble homage of a patriot tear.

Against the fleets of Gallia, Denmark, Spain, Full oft Britannia's war-bolts he has hurl'd; Stretch'd forth her sceptre o'er the vanquish'd main, And with her glory fill'd the astonish'd world.

His matchless triumphs shall the voice of Fame, With loud applause, to latest ages tell; Still uttering with a sigh Trafalgar's name, Where last he conquer'd, where—alas! he fell.

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EPITAPH ON HOWARD.

Ye! who this hallow'd ground with reverence tread, Where sleep in honour'd urns the illustrious dead, To trace the achievements of the Sons of Fame, And pay just worship to each godlike name; (If, blest with hearts that melt at human wo, And feel philanthropy's celestial glow,) Midst all the monuments that court your view, And claim the debt to buried merit due, Mark chiefly this;—on this with tearful eyes More fondly gaze;—beneath it Howard lies!

O'er other urns mere mortals only mourn; Celestial Beings honour Howard's urn; Benevolence sits weeping on his stone; Heaven's Angel still, though on her earthly throne.

[Pg 165]

EPITAPH ON VOLTAIRE.

Here lies interr'd Voltaire; no letter'd name Can boast more brilliant, more extensive fame. On him what various gifts did heaven confer!— Poet, historian, wit, philosopher; But ah!—peruse it, Christian, with a tear— The chief of infidels lies buried here: Lament the abuse of such rare talents given; Lament such dire ingratitude to heaven.

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EPITAPH ON NAPOLEON.

Lo! here, on this lone isle amid the deeps, From his proud height of conquest, greatness hurl'd, Buried in silent night, Napoleon sleeps! Long Gallia's boast, the wonder of the world!

Though humbly born, Ambition claim'd her child; Fate urged him on, his great career to fill; On him, in war, in dangers, Fortune smiled; And on his eagles Victory waited still.

By battles won, by policy profound, Kings he dethroned, fill'd Europe with dismay: England alone, of all the nations round, His power opposed, disdaining to obey.

[Pg 167] Forced by the flames of Moscow to retreat, Half his vast host by cold, by famine, dies. Famed Waterloo beheld his last defeat;— There sunk his glory's sun;—ne'er more to rise.

Briton! from this sad spot ere thou depart, Pause!—while his shade complains in Fancy's ear;— 'Had generous feeling warm'd thy Sovereign's heart, Though Briton's foe, I had not perish'd here.'

EPITAPH ON LORD BYRON.

Lo! Byron's tomb!— Here, deeply pensive, scan The greatness,—and the littleness of man. In timeless death here Freedom's Martyr sleeps, Whom, her lost Champion, Greece, desponding, weeps. The impassion'd Bard, whose Genius, wing'd with flame, Swept, like a comet, through the sphere of fame, Dazzling the astonish'd world, lies buried here. Thus human Glory ends its bright career. To Byron what high gifts did heaven impart! [Pg 169] An intellect sublime, a feeling heart; But ah! his wild desires, his passions strong, Hurried him irresistibly along Wherever Pleasure call'd, through good, or ill; No law could bridle his own proud self-will. O! had but Virtue ruled his mighty mind, Byron had been—the first of human kind!

EPITAPH ON SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY.

What, what can knowledge, virtue, fame, avail? Crown they with happiness our mortal state? Ah! no: what dire, unthought-of woes assail! O wretched Man! thou art the slave of fate.

Lo! Romilly, in pangs, expiring lies!— His frantic hand—O horror!—doom'd to bleed?— His wakening Conscience opes her frightened eyes— 'O God!' she groans, 'I disavow the deed.'

His guardian Angel sheds a pitying tear;— Then, fearless of the heavenly Judge's ire, He leads his Spirit, blushing to appear, Into the holy presence of her Sire.

EPITAPH ON WILBERFORCE.

Champion of justice and humanity, He toil'd, through life, to set the Negro free: At length, Britannia spoke the godlike word— Burst were the bonds, the shouts of Freedom heard! Thy life-bonds, too, O Wilberforce! were riven, Thy task was done,—it was thy call to heaven!

EPITAPH.

Mortal! whoe'er thou art, that passest by, Stop, and behold this stone with heedful eye! Here lies a Youth, whom Death's resistless power, In health's full vigour, at the festal hour, All unprepared, alas! to meet his doom, Snatch'd suddenly to an untimely tomb.

Mortal take heed!—in awful silence think, Thou stand'st upon Eternity's dread brink; O listen to Religion's warning cry!— 'Man, know thy nature, and prepare to die!'

TRANSLATED FROM ANACREON.

Though thou hast seen my locks are gray, Ah! do not, Julia, turn away; Nor, though the bloom of Spring is thine, Disdainfully my love decline. Behold yon wreath!—how lovely shows The snowy lily with the blushing rose!

[Pg 174]

EPIGRAMS.

ON HEARING OF THE BURNING OF MOSCOW.

May European Liberty In Moscow's flames her torch relume! And Gallic Tyranny In Moscow's ruins find a tomb!

Locke says—the soul may slumber;— Lavater says—the soul is seen Reflected in the mien;— The last assertion true, Proofs of the first we view In faces without number.

[Pg 175]

TO A HYPOCRITICAL CALVINIST.

By faith alone, you say, not works, Man must obtain salvation;— If you are saved, the doctrine needs No better confirmation.

My Lady Sceptical, for want of proof, What all believe, denies; Yet she believes what all, with proof, deny, That she is wondrous wise.

'The dullest ass may write In verse, that jingling stuff!' Indeed, Sir? have you tried? 'I have.' That's proof enough.

[Pg 176] Yon fop has strangely got it in his noddle That he excels in tragic declamation; Kemble's the favourite, and the model, That claims his praise, and prompts his imitation; Now, that the praise is just, none can deny; But the imitation gives that praise the lie: Decide, ye Critics! for 'tis hard to know,— Is he to Kemble's fame a friend or foe?

TO JULIA.

Mark! how the Rose, when Phœbus burns, Averts her blushing face; Mark! how the Sun-flower fondly turns To meet his warm embrace: Like the coy rose, when woo'd by others, be, Like the fond sun-flower, Love, when woo'd by me.

[Pg 177] The Chancellor keeps the conscience of the King. This seems, at first, a strange, mysterious thing; But there's a deep-laid policy in it; For, did the Chancellor not—that conscience keep, It might, perchance, be doom'd on thorns to

sit; Seated on wool, it may securely sleep.

Papist and Protestant can ne'er agree. "Pat!"—cries an Englishman—"tis clear to me, More grateful for the union you should be; Think what an honour is to Ireland done: Zounds! John Bull wed a whore of Babylon!" "Murther!"—cries Pat—"he wedded her by force, And, by my shoul, she longs for a divorce."

[Pg 178]

**ON THE NEW EXPERIMENT OF LIGHTING THE HOUSE
OF COMMONS BY MEANS OF GAS-PIPES PLACED
BETWEEN THE TWO CEILINGS.**

Too long within the House has darkness dwelt, Egyptian darkness, by the nation felt; Therefore, though demagogues, whose deeds are ill, For blind debate might love that darkness still, 'Tis well the new experiment to try: A stronger, purer light—none can deny— Will then illume the House—light coming from on high.

'Not one of all my actors, rot 'em!' Cried Hal,—'can play the part of Bottom.' "Play it yourself;"—retorted Ned,— "You'll look quite natural with an ass's head."

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ON SEEING MR. NUTES,

**A SENSELESS, UNFEELING FELLOW, WEEP AT THE
REPRESENTATION OF KING LEAR.**

Henceforth at miracles who'll dare to mock? No wonder Orpheus' lyre could move the brutes, Or Moses' rod strike water from the rock; Lo! Shakspeare's genius melts the heart of Nutes, Draws tears of pity from a barber's block!

A quack, a mere anatomy, Wanting to buy a nag, Questions his friend, a wag, What colour it shall be:— 'White,' he replies, 'let it be white, of course, For then you'll look like Death on the pale horse.'

[Pg 180]

**ON THE
LATE REFORM AND THE WHIG ADMINISTRATION.**

Reform! reform! cries out the longing nation;— The people hail their own-elected House; On tiptoe stands the general expectation:— What the grand doings of the Administration? Lo! from the labouring mountain creeps a mouse!

Metaphysical Sages Have writ many pages, To decide if the Mind Be Spirit or Matter:— How strange! that in the pages Of these metaphysical sages We so seldom can find Mind, Spirit, or Matter!

[Pg 181]

**TO A
CONCEITED & AFFECTED, BUT HANDSOME WOMAN.**

Why, when I praise you, Ma'am, why tell me flat, All flattery you despise?— Self-love, the greatest flatterer, tells you that, And I am sure he lies.

What a strong contrast to most modern sages Were some philosophers of ancient ages! E'en Socrates, so wise, yet modest too, Own'd he knew only that he nothing knew. Now! vain pretenders such presumption show, They seem to fancy that they all things know. Ye moderns, thus puff'd up with vanity, Would that ye knew but half as much as he!

[Pg 182]

ON TWO SISTERS WHO ARE ALWAYS QUARRELLING.

Pale is Amelia's face, And red Lavinia's nose is; The sisters ever jar: 'Tis like the civil war Between the rival roses.

On that dark theme, man's genealogy, How strangely people's notions disagree!— Sir Snub-nose, growling, swears that he can trace Strong kindred likeness to the monkey-race:— My Lady Graceful smiles, well-pleased, to find Far more resemblance to the Angelic-kind:— Sure the reflection from their looking-glasses [Pg 183] Into their minds,—to prompt opinion—passes. Would-be philosophers have tried to scan The pedigree of that odd creature, man. 'We are of monkey-race!' Sir Snub-nose cries. Your strange assertion strikes me with surprise; (I, for my part, the compliment decline)— But do you, Sir, sincerely thus opine? 'I do indeed: nay more, I'm sure 'tis true!' Is't possible?—Yet, when I look on you,— I, verily, begin to think so too.

'Oh! Doctor! I've had such a headache—so bad! I was fearful I should have gone out of my senses.' "I should not have wonder'd, dear Ma'am, if you had, You'd not have to go far to leap over those fences."

[Pg 184]

**ON THE CONDUCT OF SOME FEW CLERGYMEN, WHO
ARE A DISGRACE TO THEIR SACRED PROFESSION.**

Satan, says scripture, like a roaring lion, Goes about, seeking whom he may devour. What should a priest, then, chiefly keep his eye on? To guard his flock against the tempter's power.— Pshaw! what he chiefly looks at is to fleece 'em: To seize his prey, the tithes, and still increase 'em: Like a devouring lion is the priest; Or—give the devil his due—you'll own, at least, He has the marks about him of the beast.

Why, Sir, so proud to sign your name M.D.? 'It means I'm member of the Faculty.' Hum!—from your practice else one might infer It meant mock-doctor, or death's minister.

[Pg 185]

ON THE MARCH OF INTELLECT.

'March on! march swiftly on!' the people cry, Let us pursue Truth, Knowledge, Liberty! March not so fast, my friends! or you will find, That, in your haste, you've left them all behind.

One day Maria, that keen-witted Belle, Challenged her Beau to play at Bagatelle. 'What shall we play for?'—Edwin quickly cried; "Whate'er you please;" the smiling girl replied. 'Then for a kiss, fair lady, we will play.' He wins the game, and straight demands his pay. "No"—'Yes'—"I wont"—'You shall'—"I wont be kiss'd: I'll pay you with a check—if you persist."

[Pg 186]

ON HEARING MR. ** BOAST THAT HE COULD
TRANSLATE VIRGIL.**

Thou able, boaster! Virgil to translate! Can'st thou, then, be so vain, so shallow-pated? To a far higher intellectual state, Coxcomb! thou must, thyself, be first translated.

A lady had a sickly son; A skeleton but for his skin:— Her pretty maid he woo'd, and won;— The mother chid him for his sin.— 'Her charms were not to be withstood, Too tempting for frail flesh and blood! As you, dear Ma'am, must fairly own.' "That's no excuse for skin and bone."

[Pg 187]

ON DR. **,**

**A MERE PRETENDER TO MEDICAL SCIENCE, OFFICIOUSLY
OFFERING ME HIS SERVICES.**

'Should you e'er be unwell, send directly for me; To cure you I'll haste with all possible speed, Prescribe and find medicine without any fee.'— Oh! Doctor! your offer's most generous indeed; I'd accept—but for something—the vast obligation. 'But for what, pray?'—The instinct of self-preservation.

If, as Swift says, in the most delicate mind Nastiest ideas we are sure to find, Then—equal to his humour and his wit Swift's delicacy we must all admit.

[Pg 188]

**ON HEARING A PARSON READ VERY BADLY A
SERMON HE HAD BOUGHT.**

That sermon, reverend Sir, which you have bought, To save your idle brain the toil of thought, You read in such a dull, lethargic tone, It seems almost as stupid as your own.

Pursefull's a stickler for the law's abuse:— To him, 'tis clear, it was of sterling use.

Pursefull still advocates the law's abuse.— What moralist can gratitude condemn? They, formerly, have done so much for him; Ought he not, now, to do his best for them?

[Pg 189]

TO MR. BURY, AN EMINENT SURGEON IN COVENTRY,

**ON HIS HAVING PERFORMED A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION, IN A
CASE OF DEEPLY-SEATED INFLAMMATION IN THE NECK,
WHEN THE PATIENT WAS IN EXTREME DANGER OF
IMMEDIATE SUFFOCATION.**

Bury, for practice bold and skill Deserves to be of note; He cures by means that well might kill,— He cuts his patient's throat!

When Satan tempts a priest to rise, 'It is the call of heaven!' he cries, And mount's ambition's ladder:— To heaven's own call that bids him be, Like Christ, full of humility, He's deafer than an adder.

[Pg 190]

**AFTER HAVING SEEN SEVERAL BAD PAINTINGS OF
THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN MOORE.**

Cease, daubers! profane not the theme, I implore ye! But leave him, O leave him alone with his glory!

Man's owl-eyed reason—Popish Priests assert— Can't safely bear the gospel's heavenly light; Therefore, with kindest zeal, they do their best To keep their flocks in unillumined night.

'The brokers of the Stock-Exchange Are nicknamed bears and bulls;—how strange! What reason, Sir, to call them so?' Ma'am, see their manners, you will know.

[Pg 191]

**ON HEARING A LADY TALK VERY FAST AND
UNINTELLIGIBLY.**

Words upon words impetuous rush along, And tread each other's brains out as they throng.

'Admire my wife! did ever mortal eyes'— Cornuto, in a rapture, boasting cries— 'Such a fine set of teeth of ivory view? And such a fine complexion's ivory hue? Fool! hide thy head! both her and thee we scorn: Oft the wife's ivory makes the husband's horn.'

[Pg 192] I'm told Sir Pigmy mimics me;—what then? Don't we all know that monkees mimic men? 'I cannot say your poem I admire; It wants originality and fire; Besides, I find it, by no means, correct; You've written it in haste, I should suspect,' "What! do you think me then a jackass, pray?" 'I shall think so if you so loudly bray.'

[Pg 193] A worthy man of rags Intreats for charity A rogue of money-bags. 'Pshaw! it at home begins.' Then serve thyself and me; For it will be no less A cover to thy sins, Than to my nakedness.

The Fair-one, at her toilet, thus exprest The ambitious aims that swell'd her panting breast: 'Pull, Fanny, pull again, with all your might; I must, to-day, be laced up very tight; For, to a glorious conquest I aspire:— Know, that two Noblemen my charms admire! Pull, then, good girl! I'll be so tightly laced, That half-a-yard will measure round my waist.' 'Hold!' Cupid cries, 'for Love's, for Pity's sake; You'll strangle Beauty, and my bowstring break.'

[Pg 194] In altering thus and shortening his oration, Sure the Reporters do Lord Flimsy wrong; It well may fill his Lordship with vexation, When he has toil'd so hard to make it long. 'I've writ an epigram;—here, read it, do.— The critics praise it highly:—what think you?' "I don't much like it." 'No! 'tis very fine.' "It may be to your taste—'tis not to mine." 'I say 'tis finely pointed.' "Well! so be it!— The point may be too fine for me to see it." 'Then, let me tell you, Sir, you must be blind.' "Many more like me I'm afraid you'll find."

Wise radicals! to make it bear more fruit, They fain would tear the tree up by the root. Young trees, we know, may sometimes thrive transplanted, But old ones can't;—'tis by all gardeners granted. 'Twill die;—and when the good old tree is dead, What sort of tree, pray, will they plant instead?

[Pg 195] The Squire has long imagined that his son Is deeply studying Coke and Lyttelton. They meet.—'Dear Tom! to see you gives me joy.— How get you on in Law? my clever boy! In practice too?—But Tom, what bills you draw! Expensive work this studying of the law!' The sly young Templar gulls his easy Sire:— "O! I get on, Sir, to my heart's desire; In chamber-practice I have much to do."— His answer—in a certain sense—is true.

To move her lover, a coquetish Miss Began to sob, pretending she should faint;— Her maid restored her straight by whispering this: 'I fear, my lady, you forget your paint.'

[Pg 196]

ON THE MANY VIOLENT DISPUTES AMONG THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL.

The labourers in the vineyard toil (So numerous are their creeds) Far less to cultivate the soil, Than break each others' heads.

'Write epigrams! why, Sir, there's nothing in it. I would be bound—the merest scribbler could— To write one in a minute.' No doubt you could—but then there would Indeed, be nothing in it.

The ambitious rage of Russia nought controls, With her vast empire she'd unite the Poles.

[Pg 197]

**ON HEARING A CLERGYMAN PREACH A DULL
SERMON IN A LOUD, SHRILL VOICE.**

Still, still his bell-like voice rings through my head; Yet not one bright thought cheers my mental view; O! would that I were deaf, asleep, or dead! Ye marble statues! how I envy you!

To hear him preach the Methodistic creed, What eager crowds to Ranter's chapel speed! His eloquence the harden'd sinner frightens; Like heaven itself—says Fame, he thunders, lightens. I go to hear him;—Fame has made a blunder;— I see no lightning, though I hear the thunder.

[Pg 198] For flowery sermons Doctor Drudge Of preachers at the top is;— If from their influence we may judge, His flowers are only poppies.

Sir! you're both fool and knave!—to Frank, Blunt cries— I know I am, Sir, Frank to Blunt replies:— Now, in self-knowledge if all knowledge lies, A fool, like Frank, must be extremely wise!

Vice is a mouse-trap, pleasure is the bait, Like mice, enticing mortals to their fate; And of this truth experience leaves no doubt;— 'Tis far more easy to get in than out.

[Pg 199] Old maids their spleen on marriage vent;— The reason would you know? 'Tis not, that others are made wives, But that they can't be so.

How grave he looks! how mighty wise!— He seems Minerva's sacred bird:— He speaks! our ears refute our eyes— The cackling of a goose is heard.

[Pg 200] How came that Jew, deform'd and old, To wed the youthful, fair Coquette?— Ben had a purse well-stored with gold! He caught her in't;—'twas Hymen's net! Flirtilla's teeth, well-form'd and white, Were Hymen's pincers, and could bite! When the Royal Exchange to the flames fell a prey, All the Monarchs and Queens from their niches were thrown; Lackaday! on the pavement in fragments they lay, Every one except Charley the Second alone. Strange event! O my Muse! to blind mortals below Clear this mystery which none but immortals can know. "Cytherea and Momus pray'd Vulcan to spare The blithe, amorous King:—Vulcan granted their prayer."
