

A Voice From the Factories

Caroline Sheridan Norton

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A Voice From the Factories

Caroline Sheridan Norton

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Transcribed and encoded by
Mary Mark Ockerbloom

Dedication

MY LORD, AN anonymous Author, whose own name could give no importance to this ephemeral production, ventures to claim the aid of yours; as one not only noble, but intimately connected with the subject of his verse.

To the just-minded, the opinions of **no** individual, however obscure, should be utterly indifferent; since each man undoubtedly represents the opinions of a certain number of his fellow-men. It is the conviction of this, and the belief, that to abstain from giving our views on any point because we fear due attention will not be paid us, savours rather of vanity than humility, which have induced me to intrude at this time on your Lordship and the Public.

For the **mode** in which I have done so, some apology is perhaps necessary; since the application of serious poetry to the passing events of the day has fallen into disuse, and is, if not absolutely contemned, at least much discouraged.

Doubtless there are those to whose tastes and understandings, dry and forcible arguments are more welcome than reasonings dressed in the garb of poetry. Yet as poetry is the language of feeling, it should be the language of the multitude; since all men can feel, while comparatively few can reason acutely, and still fewer reduce their reasoning theories to practicable schemes of improvement.

My Lord, I confess myself anxious to be **heard**, even though unable to convince. It is the misfortune of the time, that subjects of great and pressing interest are so numerous, that many questions which affect the lives and happiness of hundreds, become, as it were, comparatively unimportant; and are thrust aside by others of greater actual moment. Such, as it appears to me, is the present condition of the Factory Question: and although I am conscious that it requires but an inferior understanding to **perceive** an existing evil, while the combined efforts of many superior minds are necessary to its remedy; yet I cannot but think it is incumbent on all who feel, as I do, that there **is** an evil which it behoves Christian lawgivers to remove,—to endeavour to obtain such a portion of public attention as may be granted to the expression of their conviction.

My Lord, my ambition extends so far, and no farther. I publish this little Poem with the avowed hope of obtaining that attention; I publish it **anonymously**, because I have no right to expect that my personal opinion would carry more weight with it than that of any other individual. The inspiring cheer of triumph, and the startling yell of disapprobation, are alike composed of a number of voices, each in itself insignificant, but in their union most powerful. I desire, therefore, only to **join** my voice to that of wiser and better men, in behalf of those who suffer; and if the matter or the manner of my work be imperfect, allowance will, I trust, be made for its imperfection, since it pretends to so little.

I will only add, that I have in **no** instance overcharged or exaggerated, by poetical fictions, the picture drawn by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into this subject. I have strictly adhered to the printed Reports; to that which I believe to be the melancholy truth; and that which I have, in some instances, myself had an opportunity of witnessing.

I earnestly hope I shall live to see this evil abolished. There will be delay—there will be opposition: such has ever been the case with all questions involving interests, and more especially where the preponderating interest has been on the side of the existing abuse. Yet, as the noble-hearted and compassionate Howard became immortally connected with the removal of the abuses which for centuries disgraced our prison discipline; as the perseverance of Wilberforce created the dawn of the long-delayed emancipation of the negroes;—so, my Lord, I trust to see **your** name enrolled with the names of these great and good men, as the Liberator and Defender of those helpless beings, on whom are inflicted many of the evils both of slavery and imprisonment, without the odium of either.

I remain, my LORD, Your Lordship's Obedient Servant, THE AUTHOR.

London, October, 1836.

A VOICE FROM THE FACTORIES.

WHEN fallen man from Paradise was driven,
Forth to a world of labour, death, and care;
Still, of his native Eden, bounteous Heaven
Resolved one brief memorial to spare,
And gave his offspring an imperfect share
Of that lost happiness, amid decay;
Making their first **approach** to life seem fair,
And giving, for the Eden past away,
CHILDHOOD, the weary life's long happy holyday.

A Voice From the Factories

II.

Sacred to heavenly peace, those years remain!
And when with clouds their dawn is overcast,
Unnatural seem the sorrow and the pain
(Which rosy joy flies forth to banish fast,
Because that season's sadness may not last).
Light is their grief! a word of fondness cheers
The unhaunted heart; the shadow glideth past;
Unknown to them the weight of boding fears,
And soft as dew on flowers their bright, ungrieving tears.

A Voice From the Factories

III.

See the Stage-Wonder (taught to earn its bread
By the exertion of an infant skill),
Forsake the wholesome slumbers of its bed,
And mime, obedient to the public will.
Where is the heart so cold that does not thrill
With a vexatious sympathy, to see
That child prepare to play its part, and still
With simulated airs of gaiety
Rise to the dangerous rope, and bend the supple knee?

IV.

Painted and spangled, trembling there it stands,
Glances below for friend or father's face,
Then lifts its small round arms and feeble hands
With the taught movements of an artist's grace:
Leaves its uncertain gilded resting-place—
Springs lightly as the elastic cord gives way—
And runs along with scarce perceptible pace—
Like a bright bird upon a waving spray,
Fluttering and sinking still, whene'er the branches play.

A Voice From the Factories

V.

Now watch! a joyless and distorted smile
Its innocent lips assume; (the dancer's leer!)
Conquering its terror for a little while:
Then lets the **TRUTH OF INFANCY** appear,
And with a stare of numbed and childish fear
Looks sadly towards the audience come to gaze
On the unwonted skill which costs so dear,
While still the applauding crowd, with pleased amaze,
Ring through its dizzy ears unwelcome shouts of praise.

VI.

What is it makes us feel relieved to see
That hapless little dancer reach the ground;
With its whole spirit's elasticity
Thrown into one glad, safe, triumphant bound?
Why are we sad, when, as it gazes round
At that wide sea of paint, and gauze, and plumes,
(Once more awake to sense, and sight, and sound,)
The nature of its age it re-assumes,
And one spontaneous smile at length its face illumines?

VII.

Because we feel, for Childhood's years and strength,
Unnatural and hard the task hath been;—
Because our sickened souls revolt at length,
And ask what infant–innocence may mean,
Thus toiling through the artificial scene;—
Because at that word, **CHILDHOOD**, start to birth
All dreams of hope and happiness serene—
All thoughts of innocent joy that visit earth—
Prayer—slumber—fondness—smiles—and hours of rosy mirth.

VIII.

And therefore when we hear the shrill faint cries
Which mark the wanderings of the little sweep;
Or when, with glittering teeth and sunny eyes,
The boy-Italian's voice, so soft and deep,
Asks alms for his poor marmoset asleep;
They fill our hearts with pitying regret,
Those little vagrants doomed so soon to weep—
As though a term of joy for all was set,
And that **their** share of Life's long suffering was not yet.

IX.

Ever a toiling **child** doth make us sad:
'T is an unnatural and mournful sight,
Because we feel their smiles should be so glad,
Because we know their eyes should be so bright.
What is it, then, when, tasked beyond their might,
They labour all day long for others' gain,—
Nay, trespass on the still and pleasant night,
While uncompleted hours of toil remain?
Poor little **FACTORY SLAVES**—for You these lines complain!

A Voice From the Factories

X.

Beyond all sorrow which the wanderer knows,
Is that these little pent-up wretches feel;
Where the air thick and close and stagnant grows,
And the low whirring of the incessant wheel
Dizzies the head, and makes the senses reel:
There, shut for ever from the gladdening sky,
Vice premature and Care's corroding seal
Stamp on each sallow cheek their hateful die,
Line the smooth open brow, and sink the saddened eye.

XI.

For them the fervid summer only brings
A double curse of stifling withering heat;
For them no flowers spring up, no wild bird sings,
No moss-grown walks refresh their weary feet;—
No river's murmuring sound;—no wood-walk, sweet
With many a flower the learned slight and pass;—
Nor meadow, with pale cowslips thickly set
Amid the soft leaves of its tufted grass,—
Lure **them** a childish stock of treasures to amass.

XII.

Have we forgotten our own infancy,
That joys so simple are to them denied?—
Our boyhood's hopes—our wanderings far and free,
Where yellow gorse-bush left the common wide
And open to the breeze?—The active pride
Which made each obstacle a pleasure seem;
When, rashly glad, all danger we defied,
Dashed through the brook by twilight's fading gleam,
Or scorned the tottering plank, and leapt the narrow stream?

XIII.

In lieu of this,—from short and bitter night,
Sullen and sad the infant labourer creeps;
He joys not in the glow of morning's light,
But with an idle yearning stands and weeps,
Envyng the babe that in its cradle sleeps:
And ever as he slowly journeys on,
His listless tongue unbidden silence keeps;
His fellow-labourers (playmates hath he none)
Walk by, as sad as he, nor hail the morning sun.

XIV.

Mark the result. Unnaturally debarred
All nature's fresh and innocent delights,
While yet each germinating energy strives hard,
And pristine good with pristine evil fights;
When every passing dream the heart excites,
And makes even **guarded** virtue insecure;
Untaught, unchecked, they yield as vice invites:
With all around them cramped, confined, impure,
Fast spreads the moral plague which nothing new shall cure.

XV.

Yes, this reproach is added; (infamous
In realms which own a Christian monarch's sway!)
Not suffering **only** is their portion, thus
Compelled to toil their youthful lives away:
Excessive labour works the **SOUL'S** decay—
Quenches the intellectual light within—
Crushes with iron weight the mind's free play—
Steals from us **LEISURE** purer thoughts to win—
And leaves us sunk and lost in dull and native sin.

XVI.

Yet in the British Senate men rise up,
(The freeborn and the fathers of our land!)
And while these drink the dregs of Sorrow's cup,
Deny the sufferings of the pining band.
With nice—drawn calculations at command,
They prove—rebut—explain—and reason long;
Proud of each shallow argument they stand,
And prostitute their utmost powers of tongue
Feebly to justify this great and glaring wrong.

XVII.

So rose, with such a plausible defence
Of the unalienable **RIGHT OF GAIN**,
Those who against Truth's brightest eloquence
Upheld the cause of torture and of pain:
And fear of Property's Decrease made vain,
For years, the hope of Christian Charity
To lift the curse from **SLAVERY'S** dark domain,
And send across the wide Atlantic sea
The watchword of brave men—the thrilling shout, "**BE FREE!**"

XVIII.

What is to be a slave? Is't not to spend
A life bowed down beneath a grinding ill?—
To labour on to serve another's end,—
To give up leisure, health, and strength, and skill—
And give up each of these **against your will?**
Hark to the angry answer:—"Theirs is not
A life of slavery; if they labour,—still
We **pay** their toil. Free service is their lot;
And what their labour yields, by us is fairly got."

XIX.

Oh, Men! blaspheme not Freedom! Are they free
Who toil until the body's strength gives way?
Who may not set a term for Liberty,
Who have no time for food, or rest, or play,
But struggle through the long unwelcome day
Without the leisure to be good or glad?
Such is their service—call it what you may.
Poor little creatures, overtasked and sad,
Your Slavery hath no name,—yet is its Curse as bad!

XX.

Again an answer. "T is their parents' choice.
By **some** employ the poor man's child must earn
Its daily bread; and infants have no voice
In what the allotted task shall be: they learn
What answers best, or suits the parents' turn."
Mournful reply! Do not your hearts inquire
Who tempts the parents' penury? They yearn
Toward their offspring with a strong desire,
But those who starve **will** sell, even what they most require.

XXI.

We grant their class must labour—young and old;
We grant the child the needy parents' tool:
But still our hearts a better plan behold;
No bright Utopia of some dreaming fool,
But rationally just, and good by rule.
Not against **TOIL**, but **TOIL'S EXCESS** we pray,
(Else were we nursed in Folly's simplest school);
That so our country's hardy children may
Learn not to loathe, but bless, the well apportioned day.

XXII.

One more reply! The **last** reply—the great
Answer to all that sense or feeling shows,
To which all others are subordinate:—
"The Masters of the Factories must lose
By the abridgement of these infant woes.
Show us the remedy which shall combine
Our equal gain with their increased repose—
Which shall not make our trading class repine,
But to the proffered boon its strong effects confine."

XXIII.

Oh! shall it then be said that **TYRANT** acts
Are those which cause our country's looms to thrive?
That Merchant England's prosperous trade exacts
This bitter sacrifice, e'er she derive
That profit due, for which the feeble strive?
Is her commercial avarice so keen,
That in her busy multitudinous hive
Hundreds must die like insects, scarcely seen,
While the thick-thronged survivors work where they have been?

XXIV.

Forbid it, Spirit of the glorious Past
Which gained our Isle the surname of 'The Free,'
And made our shores a refuge at the last
To all who would not bend the servile knee,
The vainly—vanquished sons of Liberty!
Here ever came the injured, the opprest,
Compelled from the Oppressor's face to flee—
And found a home of shelter and of rest
In the warm generous heart that beat in England's breast.

XXV.

Here came the Slave, who straightway burst his chain,
And knew that none could ever bind him more;
Here came the melancholy sons of Spain;
And here, more buoyant Gaul's illustrious poor
Waited the same bright day that shone before.
Here rests the Enthusiast Pole! and views afar
With dreaming hope, from this protecting shore,
The trembling rays of Liberty's pale star
Shine forth in vain to light the too-unequal war!

XXVI.

And shall **REPROACH** cling darkly to the name
Which every memory so much endears?
Shall **we**, too, tyrannise,—and tardy Fame
Revoke the glory of our former years,
And stain Britannia's flag with children's tears?
So shall the mercy of the English throne
Become a by-word in the Nation's ears,
As one who pitying heard the stranger's groan,
But to these nearer woes was cold and deaf as stone.

XXVII.

Are there not changes made which grind the Poor?
Are there not losses every day sustained,—
Deep grievances, which make the spirit sore?
And what the answer, when **these** have complained?
"For crying evils there hath been ordained
The **REMEDY OF CHANGE**; to obey its call
Some individual loss must be disdained,
And pass as unavoidable and small,
Weighed with the broad result of general good to all."

XXVIII.

Oh! such an evil **now** doth cry aloud!
And **CHANGE** should be by generous hearts begun,
Though slower gain attend the prosperous crowd;
Lessening the fortunes for their children won.
Why should it grieve a father, that his son
Plain competence must moderately bless?
That he must trade, even as his sire has done,
Not born to independent idleness,
Though honestly above all probable distress?

XXIX.

Rejoice! Thou hast not left enough of gold
From the lined heavy ledger, to entice
His drunken hand, irresolutely bold,
To squander it in haggard haunts of vice:—
The hollow rattling of the uncertain dice
Eats not the portion which thy love bestowed;—
Unable to afford that **PLEASURE'S** price,
Far off he slumbers in his calm abode,
And leaves the Idle Rich to follow Ruin's road.

A Voice From the Factories

XXX.

Happy his lot! For him there shall not be
The cold temptation given by vacant time;
Leaving his young and uncurbed spirit free
To wander thro' the feverish paths of crime!
For **him** the Sabbath bell's returning chime
Not vainly ushers in God's day of rest;
No night of riot clouds the morning's prime:
Alert and glad, not languid and opprest,
He wakes, and with calm soul is the Creator blest.

XXXI.

Ye save for children! Fathers, is there not
A plaintive magic in the name of child,
Which makes you feel compassion for **their** lot
On whom Prosperity hath never smiled?
When with your **OWN** an hour hath been beguiled
(For whom you hoard the still increasing store),
Surely, against the face of Pity mild,
Heart-hardening Custom vainly bars the door,
For that less favoured race—**THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR.**

XXXII.

"The happy homes of England!"—they have been
A source of triumph, and a theme for song;
And surely if there be a hope serene
And beautiful, which may to Earth belong,
'T is when (shut out the world's associate throng,
And closed the busy day's fatiguing hum),
Still waited for with expectation strong,
Welcomed with joy, and overjoyed to come,
The good man goes to seek the twilight rest of home.

XXXIII.

There sits his gentle Wife, who with him knelt
Long years ago at God's pure altar-place;
Still beautiful,—though all that she hath felt
Hath calmed the glory of her radiant face,
And given her brow a holier, softer grace.
Mother of **SOULS IMMORTAL**, she doth feel
A glow from Heaven her earthly love replace;
Prayer to her lip more often now doth steal,
And meditative hope her serious eyes reveal.

XXXIV.

Fondly familiar is the look she gives
As he returns, who forth so lately went,—
For they **together** pass their happy lives;
And many a tranquil evening have they spent
Since, blushing, ignorantly innocent,
She vowed, with downcast eyes and changeful hue,
To love Him only. Love fulfilled, hath lent
Its deep repose; and when he meets her view,
Her soft look only says,—"I trust—and I am true."

XXXV.

Scattered like flowers, the rosy children play—
Or round her chair a busy crowd they press;
But, at the **FATHER'S** coming, start away,
With playful struggle for his loved caress,
And jealous of the one he first may bless.
To each, a welcoming word is fondly said;
He bends and kisses some; lifts up the less;
Admires the little cheek, so round and red,
Or smooths with tender hand the curled and shining head.

XXXVI.

Oh! let us pause, and gaze upon them now.
Is there not one—beloved and lovely boy!
With Mirth's bright seal upon his open brow,
And sweet fond eyes, brimful of love and joy?
He, whom no measure of delight can cloy,
The daring and the darling of the set;
He who, though pleased with every passing toy,
Thoughtless and buoyant to excess, could yet
Never a gentle word or kindly deed forget?

XXXVII.

And one, more fragile than the rest, for whom—
As for the weak bird in a crowded nest—
Are needed all the fostering care of home
And the soft comfort of the brooding breast:
One, who hath oft the couch of sickness prest!
On whom the Mother looks, as it goes by,
With tenderness intense, and fear suppress,
While the soft patience of her anxious eye
Blends with "God's will be done,"—"God grant thou may'st not die!"

XXXVIII.

And is there not the elder of the band?
She with the gentle smile and smooth bright hair,
Waiting, some paces back,—content to stand
Till these of Love's caresses have their share;
Knowing how soon his fond paternal care
Shall seek his violet in her shady nook,—
Patient she stands—demure, and brightly fair—
Copying the meekness of her Mother's look,
And clasping in her hand the favourite story—book.

XXXIX.

Wake, dreamer!—Choose;—to labour Life away,
Which of these little precious ones shall go
(Debarred of summer—light and cheerful play)
To that receptacle for dreary woe,
The Factory Mill?—Shall He, in whom the glow
Of Life shines bright, whose free limbs' vigorous tread
Warns us how much of beauty that we know
Would fade, when **he** became dispirited,
And pined with sickened heart, and bowed his fainting head?

XL.

Or shall the little quiet one, whose voice
So rarely mingles in their sounds of glee,
Whose life can bid no living thing rejoice,
But rather is a long anxiety;—
Shall he go forth to toil? and keep the free
Frank boy, whose merry shouts and restless grace
Would leave all eyes that used his face to see,
Wistfully gazing towards that vacant space
Which makes their fireside seem a lone and dreary place?

XLI.

Or, sparing these, send Her whose simplest words
Have power to charm,—whose warbled, childish song,
Fluent and clear and bird-like, strikes the chords
Of sympathy among the listening throng,—
Whose spirits light, and steps that dance along,
Instinctive modesty and grace restrain:
The fair young innocent who knows no wrong,—
Whose slender wrists scarce hold the silken skein
Which the glad Mother winds;—shall **She** endure this pain?

XLII.

Away! The thought—the **thought** alone brings tears!
THEY labour—**they**, the darlings of our lives!
The flowers and the sunbeams of our fleeting years;
From whom alone our happiness derives
A lasting strength, which every shock survives;
The green young trees beneath whose arching boughs
(When failing Energy no longer strives,)
Our wearied age shall find a cool repose;—
THEY toil in torture!—No—the painful picture close.

XLIII.

Ye shudder,—nor behold the vision more!
Oh, Fathers! is there then one law for these,
And one for the pale children of the Poor,—
That to their agony your hearts can freeze;
Deny their pain, their toil, their slow disease;
And deem with false complaining they encroach
Upon your time and thought? Is yours the Ease
Which misery vainly struggles to approach,
Whirling unthinking by, in Luxury's gilded coach?

XLIV.

Examine and decide. Watch through his day
One of these little ones. The sun hath shone
An hour, and by the ruddy morning's ray,
The last and least, he saunters on alone.
See where, still pausing on the threshold stone,
He stands, as loth to lose the bracing wind;
With wistful wandering glances backward thrown
On all the light and glory left behind,
And sighs to think that **HE** must darkly be confined!

XLV.

Enter with him. The stranger who surveys
The little natives of that dreary place
(Where squalid suffering meets his shrinking gaze),
Used to the glory of a young child's face,
Its changeful light, its coloured sparkling grace,
(Gleams of Heaven's sunshine on our shadowed earth!)
Starts at each visage wan, and bold, and base,
Whose smiles have neither innocence nor mirth,—
And comprehends the Sin original from birth.

XLVI.

There the pale Orphan, whose unequal strength
Loathes the incessant toil it **must** pursue,
Pines for the cool sweet evening's twilight length,
The sunny play-hour, and the morning's dew:
Worn with its cheerless life's monotonous hue,
Bowed down, and faint, and stupefied it stands;
Each half-seen object reeling in its view—
While its hot, trembling, languid little hands
Mechanically heed the Task-master's commands.

XLVII.

There, sounds of wailing grief and painful blows
Offend the ear, and startle it from rest;
(While the lungs gasp what air the place bestows;)
Or misery's joyless vice, the ribald jest,
Breaks the sick silence: staring at the guest
Who comes to view their labour, they beguile
The unwatched moment; whispers half suppress
And mutterings low, their faded lips defile,—
While gleams from face to face a strange and sullen smile.

XLVIII.

These then are his Companions: he, too young
To share their base and saddening merriment,
Sits by: his little head in silence hung;
His limbs cramped up; his body weakly bent;
Toiling obedient, till long hours so spent
Produce Exhaustion's slumber, dull and deep.
The Watcher's stroke,—bold—sudden—violent,—
Urges him from that lethargy of sleep,
And bids him wake to Life,—to labour and to weep!

XLIX.

But the day hath its End. Forth then he hies
With jaded, faltering step, and brow of pain;
Creeps to that shed,—his **HOME**,—where happy lies
The sleeping babe that cannot toil for Gain;
Where his remorseful Mother tempts in vain
With the best portion of their frugal fare:
Too sick to eat—too weary to complain—
He turns him idly from the untasted share,
Slumbering sinks down unfed, and mocks her useless care.

A Voice From the Factories

L.

Weeping she lifts, and lays his heavy head
(With a woman's grieving tenderness)
On the hard surface of his narrow bed;
Bends down to give a sad unfelt caress,
And turns away;—willing her God to bless,
That, weary as he is, he need not fight
Against that long-enduring bitterness,
The **VOLUNTARY LABOUR** of the Night,
But sweetly slumber on till day's returning light.

A Voice From the Factories

LI.

Vain hope! Alas! unable to forget
The anxious task's long, heavy agonies,
In broken sleep the victim labours yet!
Waiting the boding stroke that bids him rise,
He marks in restless fear each hour that flies—
Anticipates the unwelcome morning prime—
And murmuring feebly, with unawakened eyes,
"Mother! Oh Mother! is it yet **THE TIME?**"—
Starts at the moon's pale ray—or clock's far distant chime.

LII.

Such is **his** day and night! Now then return
Where your **OWN** slumber in protected ease;
They whom no blast may pierce, no sun may burn;
The lovely, on whose cheeks the wandering breeze
Hath left the rose's hue. Ah! not like these
Does the pale infant-labourer ask to be:
He craves no tempting food—no toys to please—
Not Idleness,—but less of agony;
Not Wealth,—but comfort, rest, **CONTENTED POVERTY.**

LIII.

There is, among all men, in every clime,
A difference instinctive and unschooled:
God made the **MIND** unequal. From all time
By fierceness conquered, or by cunning fooled,
The World hath had its Rulers and its Ruled:—
Yea—uncompelled—men abdicate free choice,
Fear their own rashness, and, by thinking cooled,
Follow the counsel of some trusted voice;—
A self-elected sway, wherein their souls rejoice.

LIV.

Thus, for the most part, willing to obey,
Men rarely set Authority at naught:
Albeit a weaker or a worse than they
May hold the rule with such importance fraught:
And thus the peasant, from his cradle taught
That some must **own**, while some must **till** the land,
Rebels not—murmurs not—even in his thought.
Born to his lot, he bows to high command,
And guides the furrowing plough with a contented hand.

LV.

But, if the weight which habit renders light
Is made to gall the Serf who bends below—
The dog that watched and fawned, prepares to bite!
Too rashly strained, the cord snaps from the bow—
Too tightly curbed, the steeds their riders throw—
And so, (at first contented his fair state
Of customary servitude to know,)
Too harshly ruled, the poor man learns to hate
And curse the oppressive law that bids him serve the Great.

LVI.

THEN first he asks his gloomy soul the **CAUSE**
Of his discomfort; suddenly compares—
Reflects—and with an angry Spirit draws
The envious line between his lot and theirs,
Questioning the **JUSTICE** of the unequal shares.
And from the gathering of this discontent,
Where there is strength, **REVOLT** his standard rears;
Where there is weakness, evermore finds vent
The sharp annoying cry of sorrowful complaint.

LVII.

Therefore should Mercy, gentle and serene,
Sit by the Ruler's side, and share his Throne:—
Watch with unerring eye the passing scene,
And bend her ear to mark the feeblest groan;
Lest due Authority be overthrown,
And they that ruled perceive (too late confest!)
Permitted Power might still have been their own,
Had they but watched that none should be opprest—
No just complaint despised—no **WRONG** left unredrest.

LVIII.

Nor should we, Christians in a Christian land,
Forget who smiled on helpless infancy,
And blest them with divinely gentle hand.—
"Suffer that little children come to me:"
Such were His words to whom we bow the knee!
These to our care the Saviour did commend;
And shall we His bequest treat carelessly,
Who yet our full protection would extend
To the lone Orphan child left by an Earthly Friend?

LIX.

No! rather what the Inspired Law imparts
To guide our ways, and make our path more sure;
Blending with Pity (native to our hearts),
Let us to these, who patiently endure
Neglect, and penury, and toil, secure
The innocent hopes that to their age belong:
So, honouring Him, the Merciful and Pure,
Who watches when the Oppressor's arm grows strong,—
And helpeth them to right—the Weak—who suffer wrong!