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POEMS

by

Robert Southey

1797

GODDESS of the LYRE! with thee comes
Majestic TRUTH; and where TRUTH deigns to come,
Her sister LIBERTY will not be far.

Akenside.

SONNET.

With wayworn feet a Pilgrim woe-begone
Life's upward road I journeyed many a day,
And hymning many a sad yet soothing lay
Beguil'd my wandering with the charms of song.
Lonely my heart and rugged was my way,
Yet often pluck'd I as I past along
The wild and simple flowers of Poesy,
And as beseem'd the wayward Fancy's child
Entwin'd each random weed that pleas'd mine eye.
Accept the wreath, BELOVED! it is wild
And rudely garlanded; yet scorn not thou
The humble offering, where the sad rue weaves
'Mid gayer flowers its intermingled leaves,
And I have twin'd the myrtle for thy brow.

I have collected in this Volume the productions of very distant periods. The lyric pieces were written in earlier youth; I now think the Ode the most worthless species of composition as well as the most difficult, and should never again attempt it, even if my future pursuits were such as allowed leisure for poetry. The poems addressed to the heart and the understanding are those of my maturer judgment. The Inscriptions will be found to differ from the Greek simplicity of Akenside's in the point that generally concludes them. The Sonnets were written first, or I would have adopted a different title, and avoided the shackle of rhyme and the confinement to fourteen lines.

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ERRORS

p.151 - in the last line but one, for nosal, read nasal.

p.192 - line 8, for wild, read mild.

p. 203 - in the note, for Complicces, read Complices.

THE TRIUMPH OF WOMAN

[Greek (transliterated):

Ou gar thaeluierais demas opasen aemiielesion
Morphaen, ophra xai allaperi chroi technaesainio.

NATMACHIOS.]

TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

The lilly cheek, the "purple light of love,"
 The liquid lustre of the melting eye,--
 Mary! of these the Poet sung, for these
 Did Woman triumph! with no angry frown
 View this degrading conquest. At that age
 No MAID OF ARC had snatch'd from coward man
 The heaven-blest sword of Liberty; thy sex
 Could boast no female ROLAND'S martyrdom;
 No CORDE'S angel and avenging arm
 Had sanctified again the Murderer's name
 As erst when Caesar perish'd: yet some strains
 May even adorn this theme, befitting me
 To offer, nor unworthy thy regard.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

The Subject of the following Poem may be found in the Third and Fourth Chapters of the first Book of Esdras.

THE TRIUMPH of WOMAN.

Glad as the weary traveller tempest-tost
To reach secure at length his native coast,
Who wandering long o'er distant lands has sped,
The night-blast wildly howling round his head,
Known all the woes of want, and felt the storm
Of the bleak winter parch his shivering form;
The journey o'er and every peril past
Beholds his little cottage-home at last,
And as he sees afar the smoke curl slow,
Feels his full eyes with transport overflow:
So from the scene where Death and Anguish reign,
And Vice and Folly drench with blood the plain,
Joyful I turn, to sing how Woman's praise
Avail'd again Jerusalem to raise,
Call'd forth the sanction of the Despot's nod,
And freed the nation best-belov'd of God.

Darius gives the feast: to Persia's court,
Awed by his will, the obedient throng resort,
Attending Satraps swell the Prince's pride,
And vanquish'd Monarchs grace their Conqueror's side.
No more the Warrior wears the garb of war,
Sharps the strong steel, or mounts the scythed car;
No more Judaea's sons dejected go,
And hang the head and heave the sigh of woe.
From Persia's rugged hills descend the train.
From where Orontes foams along the plain,
From where Choaspes rolls his royal waves,
And India sends her sons, submissive slaves.
Thy daughters Babylon to grace the feast
Weave the loose robe, and paint the flowery vest,
With roseate wreaths they braid the glossy hair.
They tinge the cheek which Nature form'd so fair,
Learn the soft step, the soul-subduing glance,
Melt in the song, and swim adown the dance.
Exalted on the Monarch's golden throne
In royal state the fair Apame shone;

Her form of majesty, her eyes of fire
Chill with respect, or kindle with desire.
The admiring multitude her charms adore,
And own her worthy of the crown she wore.

Now on his couch reclin'd Darius lay,

Tir'd with the toilsome pleasures of the day;
Without Judaea's watchful sons await
To guard the sleeping pageant of the state.
Three youths were these of Judah's royal race,
Three youths whom Nature dower'd with every grace,
To each the form of symmetry she gave,
And haughty Genius curs'd each favorite slave;
These fill'd the cup, around the Monarch kept,
Serv'd as he spake, and guarded whilst he slept.

Yet oft for Salem's hallowed towers laid low
The sigh would heave, the unbidden tear would flow;
And when the dull and wearying round of Power
Allowed Zorobabel one vacant hour,
He lov'd on Babylon's high wall to roam,
And stretch the gaze towards his distant home,
Or on Euphrates' willowy banks reclin'd
Hear the sad harp moan fitful to the wind.

As now the perfum'd lamps stream wide their light,
And social converse cheers the livelong night,
Thus spake Zorobabel, "too long in vain
"For Sion desolate her sons complain;
"In anguish worn the joyless years lag slow,
"And these proud conquerors mock their captive's woe.
"Whilst Cyrus triumph'd here in victor state
"A brighter prospect cheer'd our exil'd fate,
"Our sacred walls again he bade us raise,
"And to Jehovah rear the pile of praise.
"Quickly these fond hopes faded from our eyes,
"As the frail sun that gilds the wintry skies,
"And spreads a moment's radiance o'er the plain,
"Soon hid by clouds that dim the scene again.

"Opprest by Artaxerxes' jealous reign
"We vainly pleaded here, and wept in vain.
"Now when Darius, chief of mild command,
"Bids joy and pleasure fill the festive land,
"Still shall we droop the head in sullen grief,
"And sternly silent shun to seek relief?
"What if amid the Monarch's mirthful throng
"Our harps should echo to the cheerful song?

"Fair is the occasion," thus the one replied,
"And now let all our tuneful skill be tried.
"Whilst the gay courtiers quaff the smiling bowl,
"And wine's strong fumes inspire the madden'd soul,
"Where all around is merriment, be mine
"To strike the lute, and praise the power of Wine.

"And whilst" his friend replied in state alone
"Lord of the earth Darius fills the throne,
"Be yours the mighty power of Wine to sing,

"My lute shall sound the praise of Persia's King."

To them Zorobabel, on themes like these
"Seek ye the Monarch of Mankind to please;
"To Wine superior or to Power's strong arms,
"Be mine to sing resistless Woman's charms.
"To him victorious in the rival lays
"Shall just Darius give the meed of praise;
"The purple robe his honor'd frame shall fold,
"The beverage sparkle in his cup of gold;
"A golden couch support his bed of rest,
"The chain of honor grace his favor'd breast;
"His the soft turban, his the car's array
"O'er Babylon's high wall to wheel its way;
"And for his wisdom seated on the throne,
"For the KING'S COUSIN shall the Bard be known."

Intent they meditate the future lay,
And watch impatient for the dawn of day.
The morn rose clear, and shrill were heard the flute,
The cornet, sackbut, dulcimer, and lute;
To Babylon's gay streets the throng resort,
Swarm thro' the gates, and fill the festive court.
High on his throne Darius tower'd in pride,
The fair Apame grac'd the Sovereign's side;
And now she smil'd, and now with mimic frown
Placed on her brow the Monarch's sacred crown.
In transport o'er her faultless form he bends,
Loves every look, and every act commends.

And now Darius bids the herald call
Judaea's Bard to grace the thronging hall.
Hush'd is each sound--the attending crowd are mute,
The Hebrew lightly strikes the chearful lute:

When the Traveller on his way,
Who has toil'd the livelong day,
Feels around on every side
The chilly mists of eventide,
Fatigued and faint his wearied mind
Rekurs to all he leaves behind;
He thinks upon the well-trimm'd hearth,
The evening hour of social mirth,
And her who at departing day
Weeps for her husband far away.
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,
Bid it renovate his soul;
Then shall sorrow sink to sleep,
And he who wept, no more shall weep;
For his care-clouded brow shall clear,
And his glad eye shall sparkle thro' the tear.

When the poor man heart-opprest

Betakes him to his evening rest,
And worn with labour thinks in sorrow
Of the labor of to-morrow;
When sadly musing on his lot
He hies him to his joyless cot,
And loathes to meet his children there,
The rivals for his scanty fare:
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,
Bid it renovate his soul;
The generous juice with magic power
Shall cheat with happiness the hour,
And with each warm affection fill
The heart by want and wretchedness made chill.

When, at the dim close of day,
The Captive loves alone to stray
Along the haunts recluse and rude
Of sorrow and of solitude;
When he sits with moveless eye
To mark the lingering radiance die,
And lets distemper'd Fancy roam
Amid the ruins of his home,--
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,
Bid it renovate his soul;
The bowl shall better thoughts bestow,
And lull to rest his wakeful woe,
And Joy shall bless the evening hour,
And make the Captive Fortune's conqueror.

When the wearying cares of state
Oppress the Monarch with their weight,
When from his pomp retir'd alone
He feels the duties of the throne,
Feels that the multitude below
Depend on him for weal or woe;
When his powerful will may bless
A realm with peace and happiness,
Or with desolating breath
Breathe ruin round, and woe, and death:
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,
Bid it humanize his soul;
He shall not feel the empire's weight,
He shall not feel the cares of state,
The bowl shall each dark thought beguile,
And Nations live and prosper from his smile.

Husht was the lute, the Hebrew ceas'd the song;
Long peals of plaudits echoed from the throng;
Each tongue the liberal words of praise repaid,
On every cheek a smile applauding play'd;
The rival Bard advanced, he struck the string,
And pour'd the loftier song to Persia's King.

Why should the wearying cares of state
Oppress the Monarch with their weight?
Alike to him if Peace shall bless
The multitude with happiness;
Alike to him if frenzied War
Careers triumphant on the embattled plain,
And rolling on o'er myriads slain,
With gore and wounds shall clog his scythed car.
What tho' the tempest rage! no sound
Of the deep thunder shakes his distant throne,
And the red flash that spreads destruction round,
Reflects a glorious splendour on the Crown.

Where is the Man who with ennobling pride
Beholds not his own nature? where is he
Who but with deep amazement awe allied
Must muse the mysteries of the human mind,
The miniature of Deity.
For Man the vernal clouds descending
Shower down their fertilizing rain,
For Man the ripen'd harvest bending
Waves with soft murmur o'er the plenteous plain.
He spreads the sail on high,
The rude gale wafts him o'er the main;
For him the winds of Heaven subservient blow,
Earth teems for him, for him the waters flow,
He thinks, and wills, and acts, a Deity below!

Where is the King who with elating pride
Sees not this Man--this godlike Man his Slave?
Mean are the mighty by the Monarch's side,
Alike the wife, alike the brave
With timid step and pale, advance,
And tremble at the royal glance;
Suspended millions watch his breath
Whose smile is happiness, whose frown is death.

Why goes the Peasant from that little cot,
Where PEACE and LOVE have blest his humble life?
In vain his agonizing wife
With tears bedews her husband's face,
And clasps him in a long and last embrace;
In vain his children round his bosom creep,
And weep to see their mother weep,
Fettering their father with their little arms;
What are to him the wars alarms?
What are to him the distant foes?
He at the earliest dawn of day
To daily labor went his way;
And when he saw the sun decline,
He sat in peace beneath his vine:--
The king commands, the peasant goes,
From all he lov'd on earth he flies,

And for his monarch toils, and fights, and bleeds, and dies.

What tho' yon City's castled wall
Casts o'er the darken'd plain its crested shade?
What tho' their Priests in earnest terror call
On all their host of Gods to aid?
Vain is the bulwark, vain the tower;
In vain her gallant youths expose
Their breasts, a bulwark, to the foes.
In vain at that tremendous hour,
Clasp'd in the savage soldier's reeking arms,
Shrieks to tame Heaven the violated Maid.
By the rude hand of Ruin scatter'd round
Their moss-grown towers shall spread the desart ground.
Low shall the mouldering palace lie,
Amid the princely halls the grass wave high,
And thro' the shatter'd roof descend the inclement sky.

Gay o'er the embattled plain
Moves yonder warrior train,
Their banners wanton on the morning gale!
Full on their bucklers beams the rising ray,
Their glittering helmets flash a brighter day,
The shout of war rings echoing o'er the vale:
Far reaches as the aching eye can strain
The splendid horror of their wide array.
Ah! not in vain expectant, o'er
Their glorious pomp the Vultures soar!
Amid the Conqueror's palace high
Shall sound the song of victory:
Long after journeying o'er the plain
The Traveller shall with startled eye
See their white bones then blanched by many a winter sky.

Lord of the Earth! we will not raise
The Temple to thy bounded praise.
For thee no victim need expire,
For thee no altar blaze with hallowed fire!
The burning city flames for thee--
Thine altar is the field of victory!
Thy sacred Majesty to bless
Man a self-offer'd victim freely flies;
To thee he sacrifices Happiness,
And Peace, and Love's endearing ties,
To thee a Slave he lives, to thee a Slave he dies.

Husht was the lute, the Hebrew ceas'd to sing;
The shout rush'd forth--for ever live the King!
Loud was the uproar, as when Rome's decree
Pronounc'd Achaia once again was free;
Assembled Greece enrapt with fond belief
Heard the false boon, and bless'd the villain Chief;

Each breast with Freedom's holy ardor glows,
From every voice the cry of rapture rose;
Their thundering clamors burst the astonish'd sky,
And birds o'erpassing hear, and drop, and die.
Thus o'er the Persian dome their plaudits ring,
And the high hall re-echoed--live the King!
The Mutes bow'd reverent down before their Lord,
The assembled Satraps envied and ador'd,
Joy sparkled in the Monarch's conscious eyes,
And his pleas'd pride already doom'd the prize.

Silent they saw Zorobabel advance:
Quick on Apame shot his timid glance,
With downward eye he paus'd a moment mute,
And with light finger touch'd the softer lute.
Apame knew the Hebrew's grateful cause,
And bent her head and sweetly smil'd applause.

Why is the Warrior's cheek so red?
Why downward droops his musing head?
Why that slow step, that faint advance,
That keen yet quick-retreating glance?
That crested head in war tower'd high,
No backward glance disgrac'd that eye,
No flushing fear that cheek o'erspread
When stern he strode o'er heaps of dead;
Strange tumult now his bosom moves--
The Warrior fears because he loves.

Why does the Youth delight to rove
Amid the dark and lonely grove?
Why in the throng where all are gay,
His wandering eye with meaning fraught,
Sits he alone in silent thought?
Silent he sits; for far away
His passion'd soul delights to stray;
Recluse he roves and strives to shun
All human-kind because he loves but One!

Yes, King of Persia, thou art blest;
But not because the sparkling bowl
To rapture lifts thy waken'd soul [1]
But not because of Power possest,
Not that the Nations dread thy nod,
And Princes reverence thee their earthly God,
Even on a Monarch's solitude
Care the black Spectre will intrude,
The bowl brief pleasure can bestow,
The Purple cannot shield from Woe.
But King of Persia thou art blest,
For Heaven who rais'd thee thus the world above
Has made thee happy in Apame's love!

Oh! I have seen his fond looks trace
Each angel feature of her face,
Rove o'er her form with eager eye,
And sigh and gaze, and gaze and sigh.
Lo! from his brow with mimic frown,
Apame takes the sacred crown;
Her faultless form, her lovely face
Add to the diadem new grace
And subject to a Woman's laws
Darius sees and smiles applause!

He ceas'd, and silent still remain'd the throng
Whilst rapt attention own'd the power of song.
Then loud as when the wintry whirlwinds blow
From ev'ry voice the thundering plaudits flow;
Darius smil'd, Apame's sparkling eyes
Glanc'd on the King, and Woman won the prize.

Now silent sat the expectant crowd, alone
The victor Hebrew gaz'd not on the throne;
With deeper hue his cheek distemper'd glows,
With statelier stature, loftier now he rose;
Heavenward he gaz'd, regardless of the throng,
And pour'd with awful voice sublimer song.

Ancient of Days! Eternal Truth! one hymn
One holier strain the Bard shall raise to thee,
Thee Powerful! Thee Benevolent! Thee Just!
Friend! Father! All in All! the Vines rich blood,
The Monarch's might, and Woman's conquering charms,--
These shall we praise alone? Oh ye who sit
Beneath your vine, and quaff at evening hour
The healthful bowl, remember him whose dews,
Whose rains, whose sun, matur'd the growing fruit,
Creator and Preserver! Reverence Him,
O thou who from thy throne dispensest life
And death, for He has delegated power.
And thou shalt one day at the throne of God
Render most strict account! O ye who gaze
Enrapt on Beauty's fascinating form,
Gaze on with love, and loving Beauty, learn
To shun abhorrent all the mental eye
Beholds deform'd and foul; for so shall Love
Climb to the Source of Virtue. God of Truth!
All-Just! All-Mighty! I should ill deserve
Thy noblest gift, the gift divine of song,
If, so content with ear-deep melodies [2]
To please all profitless, I did not pour
Severer strains; of Truth--eternal Truth,
Unchanging Justice, universal Love.
Such strains awake the soul to loftiest thoughts,
Such strains the Blessed Spirits of the Good
Waft, grateful incense, to the Halls of Heaven.

The dying notes still murmur'd on the string,
When from his throne arose the raptur'd King.
About to speak he stood, and wav'd his hand,
And all expectant sat the obedient band.

Then just and gen'rous, thus the Monarch cries,
"Be thine Zorobabel the well earned prize.
"The purple robe of state thy form shall fold,
"The beverage sparkle in thy cup of gold;
"The golden couch, the car, and honor'd chain,
"Requite the merits of thy favor'd strain,
"And rais'd supreme the ennobled race among
"Be call'd MY COUSIN for the victor song.
"Nor these alone the victor song shall bless,
"Ask what thou wilt, and what thou wilt, possess."
"Fall'n is Jerusalem!" the Hebrew cries.
And patriot anguish fills his streaming eyes,
"Hurl'd to the earth by Rapine's vengeful rod,
"Polluted lies the temple of our God,
"Far in a foreign land her sons remain,
"Hear the keen taunt, and drag the captive chain:
"In fruitless woe they wear the wearying years,
"And steep the bread of bitterness in tears.
"O Monarch, greatest, mildest, best of men,
"Restore us to those ruin'd walls again!
"Allow our race to rear that sacred dome,
"To live in liberty, and die at Home."

So spake Zorobabel--thus Woman's praise
Avail'd again Jerusalem to raise,
Call'd forth the sanction of the Despot's nod,
And freed the Nation best belov'd of God.

[Footnote 1: text showed "foul" which we think was a long s transferred
to the modern edition by mistake. Gutenberg Proofreading.]

[Footnote 2: This expression is from OWEN FELLTHAM.]

POEMS

on the

SLAVE TRADE.

I am Innocent of this Blood, SEE YE TO IT!

PREFACE.

When first the Abolition of the SLAVE-TRADE was agitated in England, the friends of humanity endeavoured by two means to accomplish it.--To destroy the Trade immediately by the interference of Government or by the disuse of West-Indian productions: a slow but certain method. For a while Government held the language of justice, and individuals with enthusiasm banished sugar from their tables. This enthusiasm soon cooled; the majority of those who had made this sacrifice (I prostitute the word, but they thought it a sacrifice) persuaded themselves that Parliament would do all, and that individual efforts were no longer necessary. Thus ended the one attempt; and the duplicity with which Mr. Wilberforce has been amused, and the Slave-Merchants satisfied, has now effectually destroyed the other.

There are yet two other methods remaining, by which this traffic will probably be abolished. By the introduction of East-Indian or Maple Sugar, or by the just and general rebellion of the Negroes: by the vindictive justice of the Africans, or by the civilized Christians finding it their interest to be humane.

To these past and present prospects the following Poems occasionally allude: to the English custom of exciting wars upon the Slave Coast that they may purchase prisoners, and to the punishment sometimes inflicted upon a Negro for murder, of which Hector St. John was an eye-witness.

SONNET I

Hold your mad hands! for ever on your plain
Must the gorged vulture clog his beak with blood?
For ever must your Nigers tainted flood
Roll to the ravenous shark his banquet slain?
Hold your mad hands! what daemon prompts to rear
The arm of Slaughter? on your savage shore
Can hell-sprung Glory claim the feast of gore,
With laurels water'd by the widow's tear
Wreathing his helmet crown? lift high the spear!
And like the desolating whirlwinds sweep,
Plunge ye yon bark of anguish in the deep;
For the pale fiend, cold-hearted Commerce there
Breathes his gold-gender'd pestilence afar,
And calls to share the prey his kindred Daemon War.

SONNET II

Why dost thou beat thy breast and rend thine hair,
And to the deaf sea pour thy frantic cries?
Before the gale the laden vessel flies;

The Heavens all-favoring smile, the breeze is fair;
Hark to the clamors of the exulting crew!
Hark how their thunders mock the patient skies!
Why dost thou shriek and strain thy red-swoln eyes
As the white sail dim lessens from thy view?
Go pine in want and anguish and despair,
There is no mercy found in human-kind--
Go Widow to thy grave and rest thee there!
But may the God of Justice bid the wind
Whelm that curst bark beneath the mountain wave,
And bless with Liberty and Death the Slave!

SONNET III

Oh he is worn with toil! the big drops run
Down his dark cheek; hold--hold thy merciless hand,
Pale tyrant! for beneath thy hard command
O'erwearied Nature sinks. The scorching Sun,
As pityless as proud Prosperity,
Darts on him his full beams; gasping he lies
Arraigning with his looks the patient skies,
While that inhuman trader lifts on high
The mangling scourge. Oh ye who at your ease
Sip the blood-sweeten'd beverage! thoughts like these
Haply ye scorn: I thank thee Gracious God!
That I do feel upon my cheek the glow
Of indignation, when beneath the rod
A sable brother writhes in silent woe.

SONNET IV

'Tis night; the mercenary tyrants sleep
As undisturb'd as Justice! but no more
The wretched Slave, as on his native shore,
Rests on his reedy couch: he wakes to weep!
Tho' thro' the toil and anguish of the day
No tear escap'd him, not one suffering groan
Beneath the twisted thong, he weeps alone
In bitterness; thinking that far away
Tho' the gay negroes join the midnight song,
Tho' merriment resounds on Niger's shore,
She whom he loves far from the chearful throng
Stands sad, and gazes from her lowly door
With dim grown eye, silent and woe-begone,
And weeps for him who will return no more.

SONNET V

Did then the bold Slave rear at last the Sword
Of Vengeance? drench'd he deep its thirsty blade
In the cold bosom of his tyrant lord?
Oh! who shall blame him? thro' the midnight shade
Still o'er his tortur'd memory rush'd the thought
Of every past delight; his native grove,
Friendship's best joys, and Liberty and Love,
All lost for ever! then Remembrance wrought
His soul to madness; round his restless bed
Freedom's pale spectre stalk'd, with a stern smile
Pointing the wounds of slavery, the while
She shook her chains and hung her sullen head:
No more on Heaven he calls with fruitless breath,
But sweetens with revenge, the draught of death.

SONNET VI

High in the air expos'd the Slave is hung
To all the birds of Heaven, their living food!
He groans not, tho' awak'd by that fierce Sun
New torturers live to drink their parent blood!
He groans not, tho' the gorging Vulture tear
The quivering fibre! hither gaze O ye
Who tore this Man from Peace and Liberty!
Gaze hither ye who weigh with scrupulous care
The right and prudent; for beyond the grave
There is another world! and call to mind,
Ere your decrees proclaim to all mankind
Murder is legalized, that there the Slave
Before the Eternal, "thunder-tongued shall plead
"Against the deep damnation of your deed."

TO THE GENIUS OF AFRICA

O thou who from the mountain's height
Roll'st down thy clouds with all their weight
Of waters to old Niles majestic tide;
Or o'er the dark sepulchral plain
Recallest thy Palmyra's ancient pride,
Amid whose desolated domes
Secure the savage chacal roams,
Where from the fragments of the hallow'd fane
The Arabs rear their miserable homes!

Hear Genius hear thy children's cry!
Not always should'st thou love to brood
Stern o'er the desert solitude
Where seas of sand toss their hot surges high;

Nor Genius should the midnight song
Detain thee in some milder mood
The palmy plains among
Where Gambia to the torches light
Flows radiant thro' the awaken'd night.

Ah, linger not to hear the song!
Genius avenge thy children's wrong!
The Daemon COMMERCE on your shore
Pours all the horrors of his train,
And hark! where from the field of gore
Howls the hyena o'er the slain!
Lo! where the flaming village fires the skies!
Avenging Power awake--arise!

Arise thy children's wrong redress!
Ah heed the mother's wretchedness
When in the hot infectious air
O'er her sick babe she bows opprest--
Ah hear her when the Christians tear
The drooping infant from her breast!
Whelm'd in the waters he shall rest!
Hear thou the wretched mother's cries,
Avenging Power awake! arise!

By the rank infected air
That taints those dungeons of despair,
By those who there imprison'd die
Where the black herd promiscuous lie,
By the scourges blacken'd o'er
And stiff and hard with human gore,
By every groan of deep distress
By every curse of wretchedness,
By all the train of Crimes that flow
From the hopelessness of Woe,
By every drop of blood bespilt,
By Afric's wrongs and Europe's guilt,
Awake! arise! avenge!

And thou hast heard! and o'er their blood-fed plains
Swept thine avenging hurricanes;
And bade thy storms with whirlwind roar
Dash their proud navies on the shore;
And where their armies claim'd the fight
Wither'd the warrior's might;
And o'er the unholy host with baneful breath
There Genius thou hast breath'd the gales of Death.

So perish still the robbers of mankind!
What tho' from Justice bound and blind
Inhuman Power has snatch'd the sword!
What tho' thro' many an ignominious age
That Fiend with desolating rage

The tide of carnage pour'd!
Justice shall yet unclothe her eyes,
Terrific yet in wrath arise,
And trample on the tyrant's breast,
And make Oppression groan opprest.

To my own
MINIATURE PICTURE
taken at two years of age.

And I was once like this! that glowing cheek
Was mine, those pleasure-sparkling eyes, that brow
Smooth as the level lake, when not a breeze
Dies o'er the sleeping surface! twenty years
Have wrought strange alteration! Of the friends
Who once so dearly prized this miniature,
And loved it for its likeness, some are gone
To their last home; and some, estranged in heart,
Beholding me with quick-averted glance
Pass on the other side! But still these hues
Remain unalter'd, and these features wear
The look of Infancy and Innocence.
I search myself in vain, and find no trace
Of what I was: those lightly-arching lines
Dark and o'erhanging now; and that mild face
Settled in these strong lineaments!--There were
Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee
Young Robert! for thine eye was quick to speak
Each opening feeling: should they not have known
When the rich rainbow on the morning cloud
Reflects its radiant dyes, the husbandman
Beholds the ominous glory sad, and fears
Impending storms? they augur'd happily,
For thou didst love each wild and wonderous tale
Of faery fiction, and thine infant tongue
Lisp'd with delight the godlike deeds of Greece
And rising Rome; therefore they deem'd forsooth
That thou shouldst tread PREFERMENT'S pleasant path.
Ill-judging ones! they let thy little feet
Stray in the pleasant paths of POESY,
And when thou shouldst have prest amid the crowd
There didst thou love to linger out the day
Loitering beneath the laurels barren shade.
SPIRIT of SPENSER! was the wanderer wrong?
This little picture was for ornament
Design'd, to shine amid the motley mob
Of Fashion and of Folly,--is it not
More honour'd by this solitary song?

THE PAUPER'S FUNERAL

What! and not one to heave the pious sigh!
Not one whose sorrow-swoln and aching eye
For social scenes, for life's endearments fled,
Shall drop a tear and dwell upon the dead!
Poor wretched Outcast! I will weep for thee,
And sorrow for forlorn humanity.
Yes I will weep, but not that thou art come
To the stern Sabbath of the silent tomb:
For squalid Want, and the black scorpion Care,
Heart-withering fiends! shall never enter there.
I sorrow for the ills thy life has known
As thro' the world's long pilgrimage, alone,
Haunted by Poverty and woe-begone,
Unloved, unfriended, thou didst journey on:
Thy youth in ignorance and labour past,
And thine old age all barrenness and blast!
Hard was thy Fate, which, while it doom'd to woe,
Denied thee wisdom to support the blow;
And robb'd of all its energy thy mind,
Ere yet it cast thee on thy fellow-kind,
Abject of thought, the victim of distress,
To wander in the world's wide wilderness.

Poor Outcast sleep in peace! the wintry storm
Blows bleak no more on thine unshelter'd form;
Thy woes are past; thou restest in the tomb;--
I pause--and ponder on the days to come.

ODE

written on the first of January, 1794

Come melancholy Moralizer--come!
Gather with me the dark and wintry wreath;
With me engarland now
The SEPULCHRE OF TIME!

Come Moralizer to the funeral song!
I pour the dirge of the Departed Days,
For well the funeral song
Befits this solemn hour.

But hark! even now the merry bells ring round
With clamorous joy to welcome in this day,
This consecrated day,
To Mirth and Indolence.

Mortal! whilst Fortune with benignant hand
Fills to the brim thy cup of happiness,

Whilst her unclouded sun
Illumes thy summer day,

Canst thou rejoice--rejoice that Time flies fast?
That Night shall shadow soon thy summer sun?
That swift the stream of Years
Rolls to Eternity?

If thou hast wealth to gratify each wish,
If Power be thine, remember what thou art--
Remember thou art Man,
And Death thine heritage!

Hast thou known Love? does Beauty's better sun
Cheer thy fond heart with no capricious smile,
Her eye all eloquence,
Her voice all harmony?

Oh state of happiness! hark how the gale
Moans deep and hollow o'er the leafless grove!
Winter is dark and cold--
Where now the charms of Spring?

Sayst thou that Fancy paints the future scene
In hues too sombrous? that the dark-stol'd Maid
With stern and frowning front
Appals the shuddering soul?

And would'st thou bid me court her faery form
When, as she sports her in some happier mood,
Her many-colour'd robes
Dance varying to the Sun?

Ah vainly does the Pilgrim, whose long road
Leads o'er the barren mountain's storm-vext height,
With anxious gaze survey
The fruitful far-off vale.

Oh there are those who love the pensive song
To whom all sounds of Mirth are dissonant!
There are who at this hour
Will love to contemplate!

For hopeless Sorrow hails the lapse of Time,
Rejoicing when the fading orb of day
Is sunk again in night,
That one day more is gone.

And he who bears Affliction's heavy load
With patient piety, well pleas'd he knows
The World a pilgrimage,
The Grave the inn of rest.

Inscriptions

The three Utilitise of Poetry: the praise of Virtue and Goodness, the Memory of things remarkable, and to invigorate the affections.

Welsh Triad.

INSCRIPTION I.

For a TABLET at GODSTOW NUNNERY.

Here Stranger rest thee! from the neighbouring towers
Of Oxford, haply thou hast forced thy bark
Up this strong stream, whose broken waters here
Send pleasant murmurs to the listening sense:
Rest thee beneath this hazel; its green boughs
Afford a grateful shade, and to the eye
Fair is its fruit: Stranger! the seemly fruit
Is worthless, all^[1] is hollowness within,
For on the grave of ROSAMUND it grows!
Young lovely and beloved she fell seduced,
And here retir'd to wear her wretched age
In earnest prayer and bitter penitence,
Despis'd and self-despising: think of her
Young Man! and learn to reverence Womankind!

[Footnote 1: I have often seen this hazel: its nuts are apparently very fine, but always without a kernel.]

INSCRIPTION II.

For a COLUMN at NEWBURY.

Art thou a Patriot Traveller? on this field
Did FALKLAND fall the blameless and the brave
Beneath a Tyrant's banners: dost thou boast
Of loyal ardor? HAMB DEN perish'd here,
The rebel HAMB DEN, at whose glorious name
The heart of every honest Englishman
Beats high with conscious pride. Both uncorrupt,
Friends to their common country both, they fought,
They died in adverse armies. Traveller!

If with thy neighbour thou should'st not accord,
In charity remember these good men,
And quell each angry and injurious thought.

INSCRIPTION III.

For a CAVERN that overlooks the River AVON.

Enter this cavern Stranger! the ascent
Is long and steep and toilsome; here awhile
Thou mayest repose thee, from the noontide heat
O'er-canopied by this arch'd rock that strikes
A grateful coolness: clasping its rough arms
Round the rude portal, the old ivy hangs
Its dark green branches down, and the wild Bees,
O'er its grey blossoms murmuring ceaseless, make
Most pleasant melody. No common spot
Receives thee, for the Power who prompts the song,
Loves this secluded haunt. The tide below
Scarce sends the sound of waters to thine ear;
And this high-hanging forest to the wind
Varies its many hues. Gaze Stranger here!
And let thy soften'd heart intensely feel
How good, how lovely, Nature! When from hence
Departing to the City's crowded streets,
Thy sickening eye at every step revolts
From scenes of vice and wretchedness; reflect
That Man creates the evil he endures.

INSCRIPTION IV.

For the Apartment in CHEPSTOW-CASTLE where HENRY MARTEN the Regicide was
imprisoned Thirty Years.

For thirty years secluded from mankind,
Here Marten linger'd. Often have these walls
Echoed his footsteps, as with even tread
He paced around his prison: not to him
Did Nature's fair varieties exist;
He never saw the Sun's delightful beams,
Save when thro' yon high bars it pour'd a sad
And broken splendor. Dost thou ask his crime?
He had rebell'd against the King, and sat
In judgment on him; for his ardent mind
Shaped goodliest plans of happiness on earth,
And peace and liberty. Wild dreams! But such
As PLATO lov'd; such as with holy zeal
Our MILTON worshipp'd. Blessed hopes! awhile
From man withheld, even to the latter days,

When CHRIST shall come and all things be fulfill'd.

INSCRIPTION V.

For a MONUMENT at SILBURY-HILL.

This mound in some remote and dateless day
Rear'd o'er a Chieftain of the Age [1] of Hills,
May here detain thee Traveller! from thy road
Not idly lingering. In his narrow house
Some Warrior sleeps below: his gallant deeds
Haply at many a solemn festival
The Bard has harp'd, but perish'd is the song
Of praise, as o'er these bleak and barren downs
The wind that passes and is heard no more.
Go Traveller on thy way, and contemplate
Glory's brief pageant, and remember then
That one good deed was never wrought in vain.

[Footnote 1: The Northern Nations distinguished the two periods when the bodies of the dead were consumed by fire, and when they were buried beneath the tumuli so common in this country, by the Age of Fire and the Age of Hills.]

INSCRIPTION VI.

For a MONUMENT in the NEW FOREST.

This is the place where William's kingly power
Did from their poor and peaceful homes expel,
Unfriended, desolate, and shelterless,
The habitants of all the fertile track
Far as these wilds extend. He levell'd down
Their little cottages, he bade their fields
Lie barren, so that o'er the forest waste
He might most royally pursue his sports!
If that thine heart be human, Passenger!
Sure it will swell within thee, and thy lips
Will mutter curses on him. Think thou then
What cities flame, what hosts unsepulchred
Pollute the passing wind, when raging Power
Drives on his blood-hounds to the chase of Man;
And as thy thoughts anticipate that day
When God shall judge aright, in charity
Pray for the wicked rulers of mankind.

INSCRIPTION VII.

For a TABLET on the Banks of a Stream.

Stranger! awhile upon this mossy bank
Recline thee. If the Sun rides high, the breeze,
That loves to ripple o'er the rivulet,
Will play around thy brow, and the cool sound
Of running waters soothe thee. Mark how clear
It sparkles o'er the shallows, and behold
Where o'er its surface wheels with restless speed
Yon glossy insect, on the sand below
How the swift shadow flies. The stream is pure
In solitude, and many a healthful herb
Bends o'er its course and drinks the vital wave:
But passing on amid the haunts of man,
It finds pollution there, and rolls from thence
A tainted tide. Seek'st thou for HAPPINESS?
Go Stranger, sojourn in the woodland cot
Of INNOCENCE, and thou shalt find her there.

INSCRIPTION VIII.

For the CENOTAPH at ERMENONVILLE.

STRANGER! the MAN OF NATURE lies not here:
Enshrin'd far distant by his [1] rival's side
His relics rest, there by the giddy throng
With blind idolatry alike revered!
Wiselier directed have thy pilgrim feet
Explor'd the scenes of Ermenonville. ROUSSEAU
Loved these calm haunts of Solitude and Peace;
Here he has heard the murmurs of the stream,
And the soft rustling of the poplar grove,
When o'er their bending boughs the passing wind
Swept a grey shade. Here if thy breast be full,
If in thine eye the tear devout should gush,
His SPIRIT shall behold thee, to thine home
From hence returning, purified of heart.

[Footnote 1: Voltaire.]

Birth-Day Odes.

O my faithful Friend!

O early chosen, ever found the same,
And trusted and beloved! once more the verse
Long destin'd, always obvious to thine ear,
Attend indulgent.

AKENSIDE.

BIRTH-DAY ODE,
1793.

Small is the new-born plant scarce seen
Amid the soft encircling green,
Where yonder budding acorn rears,
Just o'er the waving grass, its tender head:
Slow pass along the train of years,
And on the growing plant, their dews and showers they shed.
Anon it rears aloft its giant form,
And spreads its broad-brown arms to meet the storm.
Beneath its boughs far shadowing o'er the plain,
From summer suns, repair the grateful village train.

Nor BEDFORD will my friend survey
The book of Nature with unheeding eye;
For never beams the rising orb of day,
For never dimly dies the refluent ray,
But as the moralizer marks the sky,
He broods with strange delight upon futurity.

And we must muse my friend! maturer years
Arise, and other Hopes and other Fears,
For we have past the pleasant plains of Youth.
Oh pleasant plains! that we might stray
For ever o'er your faery ground--
For ever roam your vales around,
Nor onward tempt the dangerous way--
For oh--what numerous foes assail
The Traveller, from that chearful vale!

With toil and heaviness opprest
Seek not the flowery bank for rest,
Tho' there the bowering woodbine spread
Its fragrant shelter o'er thy head,
Tho' Zephyr there should linger long
To hear the sky-lark's wildly-warbled song,
There heedless Youth shalt thou awake
The vengeance of the coiling snake!

Tho' fairly smiles the vernal mead
To tempt thy pilgrim feet, proceed

Hold on thy steady course aright,
Else shalt thou wandering o'er the pathless plain,
When damp and dark descends the night
Shivering and shelterless, repent in vain.

And yet--tho' Dangers lurk on every side
Receive not **WORLDLY WISDOM** for thy guide!
Beneath his care thou wilt not know
The throb of unavailing woe,
No tear shall tremble in thine eye
Thy breast shall struggle with no sigh,
He will security impart,
But he will apathize thy heart!

Ah no!
Fly Fly that fatal foe,
Virtue shall shrink from his torpedo grasp--
For not more fatal thro' the Wretches veins
Benumb'd in Death's cold pains
Creeps the chill poison of the deadly asp.

Serenely joys my friend await
Maturer manhood's steady state.
The wild brook bursting from its source
Meanders on its early course,
Delighting there with winding way
Amid the vernal vale to stray,
Emerging thence more widely spread
It foams along its craggy bed,
And shatter'd with the mighty shock
Rushes from the giddy rock--
Hurl'd headlong o'er the dangerous steep
On runs the current to the deep,
And gathering waters as it goes
Serene and calm the river flows,
Diffuses plenty o'er the smiling coast,
Rolls on its stately waves and is in ocean lost.

BIRTH-DAY ODE,
1796.

And wouldst thou seek the low abode
Where **PEACE** delights to dwell?
Pause Traveller on thy way of life!
With many a snare and peril rife
Is that long labyrinth of road:
Dark is the vale of years before
Pause Traveller on thy way!
Nor dare the dangerous path explore
Till old **EXPERIENCE** comes to lend his leading ray.

Not he who comes with lanthorn light
Shall guide thy groping pace aright
 With faltering feet and slow;
No! let him rear the torch on high
And every maze shall meet thine eye,
 And every snare and every foe;
Then with steady step and strong,
Traveller, shalt thou march along.

Tho' POWER invite thee to her hall,
Regard not thou her tempting call
 Her splendors meteor glare;
Tho' courteous Flattery there await
And Wealth adorn the dome of State,
 There stalks the midnight spectre CARE;
PEACE, Traveller! does not sojourn there.

If FAME allure thee, climb not thou
To that steep mountain's craggy brow
 Where stands her stately pile;
For far from thence does PEACE abide,
 And thou shall find FAME'S favouring smile
Cold as the feeble Sun on Heclas snow-clad side,

And Traveller! as thou hopest to find
 That low and loved abode,
 Retire thee from the thronging road
And shun the mob of human kind.
Ah I hear how old EXPERIENCE schools,
"Fly fly the crowd of Knaves and Fools
 "And thou shalt fly from woe;
"The one thy heedless heart will greet
"With Judas smile, and thou wilt meet
 "In every Fool a Foe!"

So safely mayest thou pass from these,
And reach secure the home of PEACE,
 And FRIENDSHIP find thee there.
No happier state can mortal know,
No happier lot can Earth bestow
 If LOVE thy lot shall share.
Yet still CONTENT with him may dwell
 Whom HYMEN will not bless,
And VIRTUE sojourn in the cell
 Of HERMIT HAPPINESS.

BOTANY BAY

Eclogues

Where a sight shall shuddering Sorrow find.
Sad as the ruins of the human mind!

BOWLES.

ELINOR.

(Time, Morning. Scene, the Shore.[1])

Once more to daily toil--once more to wear
The weeds of infamy--from every joy
The heart can feel excluded, I arise
Worn out and faint with unremitting woe;
And once again with wearied steps I trace
The hollow-sounding shore. The swelling waves
Gleam to the morning sun, and dazzle o'er
With many a splendid hue the breezy strand.
Oh there was once a time when ELINOR
Gazed on thy opening beam with joyous eye
Undimm'd by guilt and grief! when her full soul
Felt thy mild radiance, and the rising day
Waked but to pleasure! on thy sea-girt verge
Oft England! have my evening steps stole on,
Oft have mine eyes surveyed the blue expanse,
And mark'd the wild wind swell the ruffled surge,
And seen the upheaved billows bosomed rage
Rush on the rock; and then my timid soul
Shrunk at the perils of the boundless deep,
And heaved a sigh for suffering mariners.
Ah! little deeming I myself was doom'd.
To tempt the perils of the boundless deep,
An Outcast--unbeloved and unbewail'd.

Why stern Remembrance! must thine iron hand
Harrow my soul? why calls thy cruel power
The fields of England to my exile'd eyes,
The joys which once were mine? even now I see
The lowly lovely dwelling! even now
Behold the woodbine clasping its white walls
And hear the fearless red-breasts chirp around
To ask their morning meal!--for I was wont
With friendly band to give their morning meal,
Was wont to love their song, when lingering morn
Streak'd o'er the chilly landscape the dim light,
And thro' the open'd lattice hung my head
To view the snow-drop's bud: and thence at eve
When mildly fading sunk the summer sun,
Oft have I loved to mark the rook's slow course
And hear his hollow croak, what time he sought

The church-yard elm, whose wide-embowering boughs
Full foliaged, half conceal'd the house of God.
There, my dead father! often have I heard
Thy hallowed voice explain the wonderous works
Of Heaven to sinful man. Ah! little deem'd
Thy virtuous bosom, that thy shameless child
So soon should spurn the lesson! sink the slave
Of Vice and Infamy! the hireling prey
Of brutal appetite! at length worn out
With famine, and the avenging scourge of guilt,
Should dare dishonesty--yet dread to die!

Welcome ye savage lands, ye barbarous climes,
Where angry England sends her outcast sons--
I hail your joyless shores! my weary bark
Long tempest-tost on Life's inclement sea,
Here hails her haven! welcomes the drear scene,
The marshy plain, the briar-entangled wood,
And all the perils of a world unknown.
For Elinor has nothing new to fear
From fickle Fortune! all her rankling shafts
Barb'd with disgrace, and venom'd with disease.
Have pierced my bosom, and the dart of death
Has lost its terrors to a wretch like me.

Welcome ye marshy heaths! ye pathless woods,
Where the rude native rests his wearied frame
Beneath the sheltering shade; where, when the storm,
As rough and bleak it rolls along the sky,
Benumbs his naked limbs, he flies to seek
The dripping shelter. Welcome ye wild plains
Unbroken by the plough, undelv'd by hand
Of patient rustic; where for lowing herds,
And for the music of the bleating flocks,
Alone is heard the kangaroo's sad note
Deepening in distance. Welcome ye rude climes,
The realm of Nature! for as yet unknown
The crimes and comforts of luxurious life,
Nature benignly gives to all enough,
Denies to all a superfluity,
What tho' the garb of infamy I wear,
Tho' day by day along the echoing beach
I cull the wave-worn shells, yet day by day
I earn in honesty my frugal food,
And lay me down at night to calm repose.
No more condemn'd the mercenary tool
Of brutal lust, while heaves the indignant heart
With Virtue's stifled sigh, to fold my arms
Round the rank felon, and for daily bread
To hug contagion to my poison'd breast;
On these wild shores Repentance' saviour hand
Shall probe my secret soul, shall cleanse its wounds
And fit the faithful penitent for Heaven.

[Footnote 1: The female convicts are frequently employed in collecting shells for the purpose of making lime.]

HUMPHREY and WILLIAM.

(Time, Noon.)

HUMPHREY:

See'st thou not William that the scorching Sun
By this time half his daily race has run?
The savage thrusts his light canoe to shore
And hurries homeward with his fishy store.
Suppose we leave awhile this stubborn soil
To eat our dinner and to rest from toil!

WILLIAM:

Agreed. Yon tree whose purple gum bestows
A ready medicine for the sick-man's woes,
Forms with its shadowy boughs a cool retreat
To shield us from the noontide's sultry heat.
Ah Humphrey! now upon old England's shore
The weary labourer's morning work is o'er:
The woodman now rests from his measur'd stroke
Flings down his axe and sits beneath the oak,
Savour'd with hunger there he eats his food,
There drinks the cooling streamlet of the wood.
To us no cooling streamlet winds its way,
No joys domestic crown for us the day,
The felon's name, the outcast's garb we wear,
Toil all the day, and all the night despair.

HUMPHREY:

Ah William! labouring up the furrowed ground
I used to love the village clock's dull sound,
Rejoice to hear my morning toil was done,
And trudge it homewards when the clock went one.
'Twas ere I turn'd a soldier and a sinner!
Pshaw! curse this whining--let us fall to dinner.

WILLIAM:

I too have loved this hour, nor yet forgot
Each joy domestic of my little cot.
For at this hour my wife with watchful care
Was wont each humbler dainty to prepare,
The keenest sauce by hunger was supplied
And my poor children prattled at my side.
Methinks I see the old oak table spread,
The clean white trencher and the good brown bread,
The cheese my daily food which Mary made,
For Mary knew full well the housewife's trade:
The jug of cyder,--cyder I could make,
And then the knives--I won 'em at the wake.
Another has them now! I toiling here
Look backward like a child and drop a tear.

HUMPHREY:

I love a dismal story, tell me thine,
Meantime, good Will, I'll listen as I dine.
I too my friend can tell a piteous story
When I turn'd hero how I purchas'd glory.

WILLIAM:

But Humphrey, sure thou never canst have known
The comforts of a little home thine own:
A home so snug, So chearful too as mine,
'Twas always clean, and we could make it fine;
For there King Charles's golden rules were seen,
And there--God bless 'em both--the King and Queen.
The pewter plates our garnish'd chimney grace
So nicely scour'd, you might have seen your face;
And over all, to frighten thieves, was hung
Well clean'd, altho' but seldom us'd, my gun.
Ah! that damn'd gun! I took it down one morn--
A desperate deal of harm they did my corn!
Our testy Squire too loved to save the breed,
So covey upon covey eat my seed.
I mark'd the mischievous rogues, and took my aim,
I fir'd, they fell, and--up the keeper came.
That cursed morning brought on my undoing,
I went to prison and my farm to ruin.
Poor Mary! for her grave the parish paid,
No tomb-stone tells where her cold corpse is laid!
My children--my dear boys--

HUMPHREY:

Come--Grief is dry--

You to your dinner--to my story I.
To you my friend who happier days have known
And each calm comfort of a home your own,
This is bad living: I have spent my life
In hardest toil and unavailing strife,
And here (from forest ambush safe at least)
To me this scanty pittance seems a feast.
I was a plough-boy once; as free from woes
And blithesome as the lark with whom I rose.
Each evening at return a meal I found
And, tho' my bed was hard, my sleep was sound.
One Whitsuntide, to go to fair, I drest
Like a great bumkin in my Sunday's best;
A primrose posey in my hat I stuck
And to the revel went to try my luck.
From show to show, from booth to booth I stray,
See stare and wonder all the live-long day.
A Serjeant to the fair recruiting came
Skill'd in man-catching to beat up for game;
Our booth he enter'd and sat down by me;--
Methinks even now the very scene I see!
The canvass roof, the hogshead's running store,
The old blind fiddler seated next the door,
The frothy tankard passing to and fro
And the rude rabble round the puppet-show;
The Serjeant eyed me well--the punch-bowl comes,
And as we laugh'd and drank, up struck the drums--
And now he gives a bumper to his Wench--
God save the King, and then--God damn the French.
Then tells the story of his last campaign.
How many wounded and how many slain,
Flags flying, cannons roaring, drums a-beating,
The English marching on, the French retreating,--
"Push on--push on my lads! they fly before ye,
"March on to riches, happiness and glory!"
At first I wonder'd, by degrees grew bolder,
Then cried--"tis a fine thing to be a soldier!"
"Aye Humphrey!" says the Serjeant--"that's your name?"
"Tis a fine thing to fight the French for fame!
"March to the field--knock out a Mounseer's brains
"And pick the scoundrel's pocket for your pains.
"Come Humphrey come! thou art a lad of spirit!
"Rise to a halbert--as I did--by merit!
"Would'st thou believe it? even I was once
"As thou art now, a plough-boy and a dunce;
"But Courage rais'd me to my rank. How now boy!
"Shall Hero Humphrey still be Numps the plough-boy?
"A proper shaped young fellow! tall and straight!
"Why thou wert made for glory! five feet eight!
"The road to riches is the field of fight,--
"Didst ever see a guinea look so bright?
"Why regimentals Numps would give thee grace,
"A hat and feather would become that face;

"The girls would crowd around thee to be kist--
"Dost love a girl?" "Od Zounds!" I cried "I'll list!"
So past the night: anon the morning came,
And off I set a volunteer for fame.
"Back shoulders, turn out your toes, hold up your head,
"Stand easy!" so I did--till almost dead.
Oh how I long'd to tend the plough again
Trudge up the field and whistle o'er the plain,
When tir'd and sore amid the piteous throng
Hungry and cold and wet I limp'd along,
And growing fainter as I pass'd and colder,
Curs'd that ill hour when I became a soldier!
In town I found the hours more gayly pass
And Time fled swiftly with my girl and glass;
The girls were wonderous kind and wonderous fair,
They soon transferred me to the Doctor's care,
The Doctor undertook to cure the evil,
And he almost transferred me to the Devil.
'Twere tedious to relate the dismal story
Of fighting, fasting, wretchedness and glory.
At last discharg'd, to England's shores I came
Paid for my wounds with want instead of fame,
Found my fair friends and plunder'd as they bade me,
They kist me, coax'd me, robb'd me and betray'd me.
Tried and condemn'd his Majesty transports me,
And here in peace, I thank him, he supports me,
So ends my dismal and heroic story
And Humphrey gets more good from guilt than glory.

JOHN, SAMUEL, & RICHARD.

(Time, Evening.)

JOHN.

'Tis a calm pleasant evening, the light fades away,
And the Sun going down has done watch for the day.
To my mind we live wonderous well when transported,
It is but to work and we must be supported.
Fill the cann, Dick! success here to Botany Bay!

RICHARD.

Success if you will,--but God send me away.

JOHN.

Ah! you lubberly landsmen don't know when you're well;
Hadst thou known half the hardships of which I can tell!
The sailor has no place of safety in store--
From the tempest at sea, to the press-gang on shore!
When Roguery rules all the rest of the earth,
God be thanked in this corner I've got a good birth.
Talk of hardships! what these are the sailor don't know!
'Tis the soldier my friend that's acquainted with woe,
Long journeys, short halting, hard work and small pay,
To be popt at like pidgeons for sixpence a day!--
Thank God! I'm safe quarter'd at Botany Bay.

JOHN:

Ah! you know but little! I'll wager a pot
I have suffer'd more evils than fell to your lot.
Come we'll have it all fairly and properly tried,
Tell story for story, and Dick shall decide.

SAMUEL:

Done.

JOHN:

Done. 'Tis a wager and I shall be winner;
Thou wilt go without grog Sam to-morrow at dinner.

SAMUEL:

I was trapp'd by the Serjeant's palavering pretences,
He listed me when I was out of my senses.
So I took leave to-day of all care and all sorrow
And was drill'd to repentance and reason to-morrow.

JOHN:

I would be a sailor and plough the wide ocean,
And was soon sick and sad with the billow's commotion.
So the Captain he sent me aloft on the mast,
And curs'd me, and bid me cry there--and hold fast!

SAMUEL:

After marching all day, faint and hungry and sore,
I have lain down at night on the swamps of the moor,
Unshelter'd and forced by fatigue to remain.

All chill'd by the wind and benumb'd by the rain.

JOHN:

I have rode out the storm when the billows beat high
And the red gleaming lightnings flash'd thro' the dark sky,
When the tempest of night the black sea overcast
Wet and weary I labour'd, yet sung to the blast.

SAMUEL:

I have march'd, trumpets sounding--drums beating--flags flying,
Where the music of war drown'd the shrieks of the dying,
When the shots whizz'd around me all dangers defied,
Push'd on when my comrades fell dead at my side,
Drove the foe from the mouth of the Cannon away,
Fought, conquer'd and bled, all for sixpence a day.

JOHN:

And I too friend Samuel! have heard the shots rattle,
But we seamen rejoice in the play of the battle;
Tho' the chain and the grape-shot roll splintering around,
With the blood of our messmates tho' slippery the ground,
The fiercer the fight, still the fiercer we grow,
We heed not our loss so we conquer the foe.
And the hard battle won, so the prize be not sunk,
The Captain gets rich, and the Sailors get drunk.

SAMUEL:

God help the poor soldier when backward he goes
In disgraceful retreat thro' a country of foes!
No respite from danger by day or by night
He is still forced to fly, still o'ertaken to fight,
Every step that he takes he must battle his way,
He must force his hard meal from the peasant away;
No rest--and no hope, from all succour afar,
God forgive the poor Soldier for going to the war!

JOHN:

But what are these dangers to those I have past
When the dark billows roar'd to the roar of the blast?
When we work'd at the pumps worn with labour and weak
And with dread still beheld the increase of the leak,
Sometimes as we rose on the wave could our sight
From the rocks of the shore catch the light-houses light;

In vain to the beach to assist us they press,
We fire faster and faster our guns of distress,
Still with rage unabating the wind and waves roar--
How the giddy wreck reels--as the billows burst o'er--
Leap--leap--for she yawns--for she sinks in the wave--
Call on God to preserve--for God only can save!

SAMUEL:

There's an end of all troubles however at last!
And when I in the waggon of wounded was cast,
When my wounds with the chilly night-wind smarted sore
And I thought of the friends I should never see more,
No hand to relieve--scarce a morsel of bread--
Sick at heart I have envied the peace of the dead!
Left to rot in a jail till by treaty set free,
Old England's white cliffs with what joy did I see!
I had gain'd enough glory, some wounds, but no good,
And was turn'd on the public to shift how I could.
When I think what I've suffer'd and where I am now
I curse him who snared me away from the plough.

JOHN:

When I was discharged I went home to my wife,
There in comfort to spend all the rest of my life.
My wife was industrious, we earn'd what we spent,
And tho' little we had, were with little content;
And whenever I listen'd and heard the wind roar,
I bless'd God for my little snug cabin on shore.
At midnight they seiz'd me, they dragg'd me away,
They wounded me sore when I would not obey,
And because for my country I'd ventur'd my life,
I was dragg'd like a thief from my home and my wife.
Then the fair wind of Fortune chopp'd round in my face
And Want at length drove me to guilt and disgrace--
But all's for the best;--on the world's wide sea cast,
I am haven'd in peace in this corner at last.

SAMUEL:

Come Dick! we have done--and for judgment we call.

RICHARD:

And in faith I can give ye no judgment at all.
I've been listening to all the hard labours you've past
And think in plain troth, you're two blockheads at last.
My lads where the Deuce was the wit which God gave ye

When you sold yourselves first to the army or navy?
By land and by sea hunting dangers to roam,
When you might have been hang'd so much easier at home!
But you're now snug and settled and safe from foul weather,
So drink up your grog and be merry together.

FREDERIC.

(Time Night. Scene the woods.)

Where shall I turn me? whither shall I bend
My weary way? thus worn with toil and faint
How thro' the thorny mazes of this wood
Attain my distant dwelling? that deep cry
That rings along the forest seems to sound
My parting knell: it is the midnight howl
Of hungry monsters prowling for their prey!
Again! oh save me--save me gracious Heaven!
I am not fit to die!

Thou coward wretch

Why heaves thy trembling heart? why shake thy limbs
Beneath their palsied burden? is there ought
So lovely in existence? would'st thou drain
Even to its dregs the bitter draught of life?
Dash down the loathly bowl! poor outcast slave
Stamp'd with the brand of Vice and Infamy
Why should the villain Frederic shrink from Death?

Death! where the magic in that empty name
That chills my inmost heart? why at the thought
Starts the cold dew of fear on every limb?
There are no terrors to surround the Grave,
When the calm Mind collected in itself
Surveys that narrow house: the ghastly train
That haunt the midnight of delirious Guilt
Then vanish; in that home of endless rest
All sorrows cease.--Would I might slumber there!

Why then this panting of the fearful heart?
This miser love of Life that dreads to lose
Its cherish'd torment? shall the diseased man
Yield up his members to the surgeon's knife,
Doubtful of succour, but to ease his frame
Of fleshly anguish, and the coward wretch,
Whose ulcered soul can know no human help
Shrink from the best Physician's certain aid?
Oh it were better far to lay me down
Here on this cold damp earth, till some wild beast

Seize on his willing victim!

If to die

Were all, it were most sweet to rest my head
On the cold clod, and sleep the sleep of Death.
But if the Archangel's trump at the last hour
Startle the ear of Death and wake the soul
To frenzy!--dreams of infancy! fit tales
For garrulous beldames to affrighten babes!
I have been guilty, yet my mind can bear
The retrospect of guilt, yet in the hour
Of deep contrition to THE ETERNAL look
For mercy! for the child of Poverty,
And "disinherited of happiness,"

What if I warr'd upon the world? the world
Had wrong'd me first: I had endur'd the ills
Of hard injustice; all this goodly earth
Was but to me one wild waste wilderness;
I had no share in Nature's patrimony,
Blasted were all my morning hopes of Youth,
Dark DISAPPOINTMENT follow'd on my ways,
CARE was my bosom inmate, and keen WANT
Gnaw'd at my heart. ETERNAL ONE thou know'st
How that poor heart even in the bitter hour
Of lewdest revelry has inly yearn'd
For peace!

My FATHER! I will call on thee,
Pour to thy mercy seat my earnest prayer,
And wait thy peace in bowedness of soul.
Oh thoughts of comfort! how the afflicted heart,
Tired with the tempest of its passions, rests
On you with holy hope! the hollow howl
Of yonder harmless tenant of the woods
Bursts not with terror on the sober'd sense.
If I have sinn'd against mankind, on them
Be that past sin; they made me what I was.
In these extremest climes can Want no more
Urge to the deeds of darkness, and at length
Here shall I rest. What tho' my hut be poor--
The rains descend not thro' its humble roof:
Would I were there again! the night is cold;
And what if in my wanderings I should rouse
The savage from his thicket!

Hark! the gun!

And lo--the fire of safety! I shall reach
My little hut again! again by toil
Force from the stubborn earth my sustenance,
And quick-ear'd guilt will never start alarm'd
Amid the well-earn'd meal. This felon's garb--
Will it not shield me from the winds of Heaven?

And what could purple more? Oh strengthen me
Eternal One in this serener state!
Cleanse thou mine heart, so PENITENCE and FAITH
Shall heal my soul and my last days be peace.

Sonnets

SONNET I.

Go Valentine and tell that lovely maid
Whom Fancy still will pourtray to my sight,
How her Bard lingers in this sullen shade,
This dreary gloom of dull monastic night.
Say that from every joy of life remote
At evening's closing hour he quits the throng,
Listening alone the ring-dove's plaintive note
Who pours like him her solitary song.
Say that her absence calls the sorrowing sigh,
Say that of all her charms he loves to speak,
In fancy feels the magic of her eye,
In fancy views the smile illumine her cheek,
Courts the lone hour when Silence stills the grove
And heaves the sigh of Memory and of Love.

SONNET II.

Think Valentine, as speeding on thy way
Homeward thou hastest light of heart along,
If heavily creep on one little day
The medley crew of travellers among,
Think on thine absent friend: reflect that here
On Life's sad journey comfortless he roves,
Remote from every scene his heart holds dear,
From him he values, and from her he loves.
And when disgusted with the vain and dull
Whom chance companions of thy way may doom,
Thy mind, of each domestic comfort full,
Turns to itself and meditates on home,
Ah think what Cares must ache within his breast
Who loaths the lingering road, yet has no home of rest!

SONNET III.

Not to thee Bedford mournful is the tale
Of days departed. Time in his career

Arraigns not thee that the neglected year
Has past unheeded onward. To the vale
Of years thou journeyest. May the future road
Be pleasant as the past! and on my friend
Friendship and Love, best blessings! still attend,
'Till full of days he reach the calm abode
Where Nature slumbers. Lovely is the age
Of Virtue. With such reverence we behold
The silver hairs, as some grey oak grown old
That whilome mock'd the rushing tempest's rage
Now like the monument of strength decayed
With rarely-sprinkled leaves casting a trembling shade.

SONNET IV.

What tho' no sculptur'd monument proclaim
Thy fate-yet Albert in my breast I bear
Inshrined the sad remembrance; yet thy name
Will fill my throbbing bosom. When DESPAIR
The child of murdered HOPE, fed on thy heart,
Loved honored friend, I saw thee sink forlorn
Pierced to the soul by cold Neglect's keen dart,
And Penury's hard ills, and pitying Scorn,
And the dark spectre of departed JOY
Inhuman MEMORY. Often on thy grave
Love I the solitary hour to employ
Thinking on other days; and heave the sigh
Responsive, when I mark the high grass wave
Sad sounding as the cold breeze rustles by.

SONNET V.

Hard by the road, where on that little mound
The high grass rustles to the passing breeze,
The child of Misery rests her head in peace.
Pause there in sadness. That unhallowed ground
Inshrines what once was Isabel. Sleep on
Sleep on, poor Outcast! lovely was thy cheek,
And thy mild eye was eloquent to speak
The soul of Pity. Pale and woe-begone
Soon did thy fair cheek fade, and thine eye weep
The tear of anguish for the babe unborn,
The helpless heir of Poverty and Scorn.
She drank the draught that chill'd her soul to sleep.
I pause and wipe the big drop from mine eye,
Whilst the proud Levite scowls and passes by.

SONNET VI

to a brook near the village of Corston.

As thus I bend me o'er thy babbling stream
And watch thy current, Memory's hand pourtrays
The faint form'd scenes of the departed days,
Like the far forest by the moon's pale beam
Dimly descried yet lovely. I have worn
Upon thy banks the live-long hour away,
When sportive Childhood wantoned thro' the day,
Joy'd at the opening splendour of the morn,
Or as the twilight darken'd, heaved the sigh
Thinking of distant home; as down my cheek
At the fond thought slow stealing on, would speak
The silent eloquence of the full eye.
Dim are the long past days, yet still they please
As thy soft sounds half heard, borne on the inconstant breeze.

SONNET VII

to the evening rainbow.

Mild arch of promise! on the evening sky
Thou shinest fair with many a lovely ray
Each in the other melting. Much mine eye
Delights to linger on thee; for the day,
Changeful and many-weather'd, seem'd to smile
Flashing brief splendor thro' its clouds awhile,
That deepen'd dark anon and fell in rain:
But pleasant is it now to pause, and view
Thy various tints of frail and watery hue,
And think the storm shall not return again.
Such is the smile that Piety bestows
On the good man's pale cheek, when he in peace
Departing gently from a world of woes,
Anticipates the realm where sorrows cease.

SONNET VIII.

With many a weary step, at length I gain
Thy summit, Lansdown; and the cool breeze plays,
Gratefully round my brow, as hence the gaze
Returns to dwell upon the journeyed plain.
'Twas a long way and tedious! to the eye
Tho fair the extended vale, and fair to view
The falling leaves of many a faded hue,
That eddy in the wild gust moaning by.
Even so it fared with Life! in discontent
Restless thro' Fortune's mingled scenes I went,
Yet wept to think they would return no more!

But cease fond heart in such sad thoughts to roam,
For surely thou ere long shall reach thy home,
And pleasant is the way that lies before.

SONNET IX.

Fair is the rising morn when o'er the sky
The orient sun expands his roseate ray,
And lovely to the Bard's enthusiast eye
Fades the meek radiance of departing day;
But fairer is the smile of one we love,
Than all the scenes in Nature's ample sway.
And sweeter than the music of the grove,
The voice that bids us welcome. Such delight
EDITH! is mine, escaping to thy sight
From the hard durance of the empty throng.
Too swiftly then towards the silent night
Ye Hours of happiness! ye speed along,
Whilst I, from all the World's cold cares apart,
Pour out the feelings of my burthen'd heart.

SONNET X.

How darkly o'er yon far-off mountain frowns
The gather'd tempest! from that lurid cloud
The deep-voiced thunders roll, awful and loud
Tho' distant; while upon the misty downs
Fast falls in shadowy streaks the pelting rain.
I never saw so terrible a storm!
Perhaps some way-worn traveller in vain
Wraps his torn raiment round his shivering form
Cold even as Hope within him! I the while
Pause me in sadness tho' the sunbeams smile
Cheerily round me. Ah that thus my lot
Might be with Peace and Solitude assign'd,
Where I might from some little quiet cot,
Sigh for the crimes and miseries of mankind!

Sappho.

A MONODRAMA.

Argument.

To leap from the promontory of LEUCADIA was believed by the Greeks to be a remedy for hopeless love, if the self-devoted victim escaped with life. Artemisia lost her life in the dangerous experiment: and Sappho is said thus to have perished, in attempting to cure her passion for Phaon.

SAPPHO

(Scene the promontory of Leucadia.)

This is the spot:--'tis here Tradition says
That hopeless Love from this high towering rock
Leaps headlong to Oblivion or to Death.
Oh 'tis a giddy height! my dizzy head
Swims at the precipice--'tis death to fall!

Lie still, thou coward heart! this is no time
To shake with thy strong throbs the frame convuls'd.
To die,--to be at rest--oh pleasant thought!
Perchance to leap and live; the soul all still,
And the wild tempest of the passions husht
In one deep calm; the heart, no more diseas'd
By the quick ague fits of hope and fear,
Quietly cold!

 Presiding Powers look down!
In vain to you I pour'd my earnest prayers,
In vain I sung your praises: chiefly thou
VENUS! ungrateful Goddess, whom my lyre
Hymn'd with such full devotion! Lesbian groves,
Witness how often at the languid hour
Of summer twilight, to the melting song
Ye gave your choral echoes! Grecian Maids
Who hear with downcast look and flushing cheek
That lay of love bear witness! and ye Youths,
Who hang enraptur'd on the empassion'd strain
Gazing with eloquent eye, even till the heart
Sinks in the deep delirium! and ye too
Shall witness, unborn Ages! to that song
Of warmest zeal; ah witness ye, how hard,
Her fate who hymn'd the votive hymn in vain!
Ungrateful Goddess! I have hung my lute
In yonder holy pile: my hand no more
Shall wake the melodies that fail'd to move
The heart of Phaon--yet when Rumour tells
How from Leucadia Sappho hurl'd her down
A self-devoted victim--he may melt
Too late in pity, obstinate to love.

Oh haunt his midnight dreams, black NEMESIS!
Whom,[1] self-conceiving in the inmost depths
Of CHAOS, blackest NIGHT long-labouring bore,
When the stern DESTINIES, her elder brood.

And shapeless DEATH, from that more monstrous birth
Leapt shuddering! haunt his slumbers, Nemesis,
Scorch with the fires of Phlegethon his heart,
Till helpless, hopeless, heaven-abandon'd wretch
He too shall seek beneath the unfathom'd deep
To hide him from thy fury.

How the sea

Far distant glitters as the sun-beams smile,
And gayly wanton o'er its heaving breast
Phoebus shines forth, nor wears one cloud to mourn
His votary's sorrows! God of Day shine on--
By Man despis'd, forsaken by the Gods,
I supplicate no more.

How many a day,

O pleasant Lesbos! in thy secret streams
Delighted have I plung'd, from the hot sun
Screen'd by the o'er-arching groves delightful shade,
And pillowed on the waters: now the waves
Shall chill me to repose.

Tremendous height!

Scarce to the brink will these rebellious limbs
Support me. Hark! how the rude deep below
Roars round the rugged base, as if it called
Its long-reluctant victim! I will come.
One leap, and all is over! The deep rest
Of Death, or tranquil Apathy's dead calm
Welcome alike to me. Away vain fears!
Phaon is cold, and why should Sappho live?
Phaon is cold, or with some fairer one--
Thought worse than death!

(She throws herself from the precipice.)

[Footnote A: [Greek (transliterated)]:

Ou tini choimaetheisa thea teche NUTH erezennae. HESIOD]

ODE

(Written on the FIRST of DECEMBER, 1793.)

Tho' now no more the musing ear
Delights to listen to the breeze
That lingers o'er the green wood shade,
I love thee Winter! well.

Sweet are the harmonies of Spring,
Sweet is the summer's evening gale,
Pleasant the autumnal winds that shake
The many-colour'd grove.

And pleasant to the sober'd soul
The silence of the wintry scene,
When Nature shrouds her in her trance

Not undelightful now to roam
The wild heath sparkling on the sight;
Not undelightful now to pace
The forest's ample rounds;

And see the spangled branches shine,
And mark the moss of many a hue
That varies the old tree's brown bark,
Or o'er the grey stone spreads.

The cluster'd berries claim the eye
O'er the bright hollies gay green leaves,
The ivy round the leafless oak
Clasps its full foliage close.

So VIRTUE diffident of strength
Clings to RELIGION'S firmer aid,
And by RELIGION'S aid upheld
Endures calamity.

Nor void of beauties now the spring,
Whose waters hid from summer sun
Have sooth'd the thirsty pilgrim's ear
With more than melody.

The green moss shines with icy glare,
The long grass bends its spear-like form,
And lovely is the silvery scene
When faint the sunbeams smile.

Reflection too may love the hour
When Nature, hid in Winter's grave,
No more expands the bursting bud
Or bids the flowret bloom.

For Nature soon in Spring's best charms
Shall rise reviv'd from Winter's grave.
Again expand the bursting bud,
And bid the flowret bloom.

Written on SUNDAY MORNING.

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!
I to the Woodlands wend, and there
In lovely Nature see the GOD OF LOVE.
The swelling organ's peal
Wakes not my soul to zeal,
Like the wild music of the wind-swept grove.
The gorgeous altar and the mystic vest
Rouse not such ardor in my breast,
As where the noon-tide beam
Flash'd from the broken stream,
Quick vibrates on the dazzled sight;
Or where the cloud-suspended rain
Sweeps in shadows o'er the plain;
Or when reclining on the cliff's huge height
I mark the billows burst in silver light.

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!
I to the Woodlands shall repair,
Feed with all Natures charms mine eyes,
And hear all Natures melodies.
The primrose bank shall there dispense
Faint fragrance to the awaken'd sense,
The morning beams that life and joy impart
Shall with their influence warm my heart.
And the full tear that down my cheek will steal,
Shall speak the prayer of praise I feel!

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!
I to the woodlands bend my way
And meet RELIGION there.
She needs not haunt the high-arch'd dome to pray
Where storied windows dim the doubtful day:
With LIBERTY she loves to rove.
Wide o'er the heathy hill or cowslip'd dale;
Or seek the shelter of the embowering grove,
Sweet are these scenes to her, and when the night
Pours in the north her silver streams of light,
She woos Reflexion in the silent gloom,
And ponders on the world to come.

ON THE DEATH
Of a Favourite Old SPANIEL.

And they have drown'd thee then at last! poor Phillis!
The burthen of old age was heavy on thee.
And yet thou should'st have lived! what tho' thine eye
Was dim, and watch'd no more with eager joy
The wonted call that on thy dull sense sunk
With fruitless repetition, the warm Sun

Would still have cheer'd thy slumber, thou didst love
To lick the hand that fed thee, and tho' past
Youth's active season, even Life itself
Was comfort. Poor old friend! most earnestly
Would I have pleaded for thee: thou hadst been
Still the companion of my childish sports,
And, as I roam'd o'er Avon's woody cliffs,
From many a day-dream has thy short quick bark
Recall'd my wandering soul. I have beguil'd
Often the melancholy hours at school,
Sour'd by some little tyrant, with the thought
Of distant home, and I remember'd then
Thy faithful fondness: for not mean the joy,
Returning at the pleasant holydays,
I felt from thy dumb welcome. Pensively
Sometimes have I remark'd thy slow decay,
Feeling myself changed too, and musing much
On many a sad vicissitude of Life!
Ah poor companion! when thou followedst last
Thy master's parting footsteps to the gate
That clos'd for ever on him, thou didst lose
Thy truest friend, and none was left to plead
For the old age of brute fidelity!
But fare thee well! mine is no narrow creed,
And HE who gave thee being did not frame
The mystery of life to be the sport
Of merciless man! there is another world
For all that live and move--a better one!
Where the proud bipeds, who would fain confine
INFINITE GOODNESS to the little bounds
Of their own charity, may envy thee!

To CONTEMPLATION.

[Greek (transliterated):

Kai pagas fileoimi ton enguthen aechon achthein,
A terpei psopheoisa ton agrikon, thchi tarassei.

MOSCHOS.]

Faint gleams the evening radiance thro' the sky,
The sober twilight dimly darkens round;
In short quick circles the shrill bat flits by,
And the slow vapour curls along the ground.

Now the pleas'd eye from yon lone cottage sees
On the green mead the smoke long-shadowing play;
The Red-breast on the blossom'd spray

Warbles wild her latest lay,
And sleeps along the dale the silent breeze.
Calm CONTEMPLATION, 'tis thy favorite hour!
Come fill my bosom, tranquillizing Power.

Meek Power! I view thee on the calmy shore
When Ocean stills his waves to rest;
Or when slow-moving on the surge's hoar
Meet with deep hollow roar
And whiten o'er his breast;
For lo! the Moon with softer radiance gleams,
And lovelier heave the billows in her beams.

When the low gales of evening moan along,
I love with thee to feel the calm cool breeze,
And roam the pathless forest wilds among,
Listening the mellow murmur of the trees
Full-foliaged as they lift their arms on high
And wave their shadowy heads in wildest melody.

Or lead me where amid the tranquil vale
The broken stream flows on in silver light,
And I will linger where the gale
O'er the bank of violets sighs,
Listening to hear its soften'd sounds arise;
And hearken the dull beetle's drowsy flight,
And watch the horn-eyed snail
Creep o'er his long moon-glittering trail,
And mark where radiant thro' the night
Moves in the grass-green hedge the glow-worms living light.

Thee meekest Power! I love to meet,
As oft with even solitary pace
The scatter'd Abbeys hallowed rounds I trace
And listen to the echoings of my feet.
Or on the half demolished tomb,
Whole warning texts anticipate my doom:
Mark the clear orb of night
Cast thro' the storying glass a faintly-varied light.

Nor will I not in some more gloomy hour
Invoke with fearless awe thine holier power,
Wandering beneath the sainted pile
When the blast moans along the darksome aisle,
And clattering patters all around
The midnight shower with dreary sound.

But sweeter 'tis to wander wild
By melancholy dreams beguil'd,
While the summer moon's pale ray
Faintly guides me on my way
To the lone romantic glen
Far from all the haunts of men,

Where no noise of uproar rude
Breaks the calm of solitude.
But soothing Silence sleeps in all
Save the neighbouring waterfall,
Whose hoarse waters falling near
Load with hollow sounds the ear,
And with down-dasht torrent white
Gleam hoary thro' the shades of night.

Thus wandering silent on and slow
I'll nurse Reflection's sacred woe,
And muse upon the perish'd day
When Hope would weave her visions gay,
Ere FANCY chill'd by adverse fate
Left sad REALITY my mate.

O CONTEMPLATION! when to Memory's eyes
The visions of the long-past days arise,
Thy holy power imparts the best relief,
And the calm'd Spirit loves the joy of grief.

To HORROR.

[GREEK (transliterated):

Tin gar potaeisomai
tan chai schuliches tromeonti
Erchomenan nechuon ana t'aeria, chai melan aima.
Theocritos]

Dark HORROR, hear my call!
Stern Genius hear from thy retreat
On some old sepulchre's moss-cankered seat,
Beneath the Abbey's ivied wall
That trembles o'er its shade;
Where wrapt in midnight gloom, alone,
Thou lovest to lie and hear
The roar of waters near,
And listen to the deep dull groan
Of some perturbed sprite
Borne fitful on the heavy gales of night.

Or whether o'er some wide waste hill
Thou mark'st the traveller stray,
Bewilder'd on his lonely way,
When, loud and keen and chill,
The evening winds of winter blow
Drifting deep the dismal snow.

Or if thou followest now on Greenland's shore,
With all thy terrors, on the lonely way
Of some wrecked mariner, when to the roar
Of herded bears the floating ice-hills round
Pour their deep echoing sound,
And by the dim drear Boreal light
Givest half his dangers to the wretches sight.

Or if thy fury form,
When o'er the midnight deep
The dark-wing'd tempests sweep
Watches from some high cliff the encreasing storm,
Listening with strange delight
As the black billows to the thunder rave
When by the lightnings light
Thou seest the tall ship sink beneath the wave.

Dark HORROR! bear me where the field of fight
Scatters contagion on the tainted gale,
When to the Moon's faint beam,
On many a carcass shine the dews of night
And a dead silence stills the vale
Save when at times is heard the gluttoned Raven's scream.

Where some wreck'd army from the Conquerors might
Speed their disastrous flight,
With thee fierce Genius! let me trace their way,
And hear at times the deep heart-groan
Of some poor sufferer left to die alone,
His sore wounds smarting with the winds of night;
And we will pause, where, on the wild,
The [1] Mother to her frozen breast,
On the heap'd snows reclining clasps her child
And with him sleeps, chill'd to eternal rest!

Black HORROR! speed we to the bed of Death,
Where he whose murderous power afar
Blasts with the myriad plagues of war,
Struggles with his last breath,
Then to his wildly-starting eyes
The phantoms of the murder'd rise,
Then on his frenzied ear
Their groans for vengeance and the Demon's yell
In one heart-maddening chorus swell.
Cold on his brow convulsing stands the dew,
And night eternal darkens on his view.

HORROR! I call thee yet once more!
Bear me to that accursed shore
Where round the stake the impaled Negro writhes.
Assume thy sacred terrors then! dispense
The blasting gales of Pestilence!

Arouse the race of Afric! holy Power,
Lead them to vengeance! and in that dread hour
When Ruin rages wide
I will behold and smile by MERCY'S side.

[Footnote 1: I extract the following picture of consummate horror, from the notes to a Poem written in twelve syllable verse upon the campaign of 1794 and 1795; it was during the retreat to Deventer.

"We could not proceed a hundred yards without perceiving the dead bodies of men, women, children and horses in every direction. One scene made an impression upon my memory which time will never be able to efface. Near another cart we perceived a stout looking man, and a beautiful young woman with an infant, about seven months old, at the breast, all three frozen and dead. The mother had most certainly expired in the act of suckling her child, as with one breast exposed, she lay upon the drifted snow, the milk to all appearance in a stream drawn from the nipple by the babe, and instantly congealed. The infant seemed as if its lips had but just then been disengaged, and it reposed its little head upon the mother's bosom, with, an overflow of milk, frozen as it trickled from the mouth; their countenances were perfectly composed and fresh, resembling those of persons in a sound and tranquil slumber."]

The SOLDIER'S WIFE.

DACTYLICS.

Weary way-wanderer languid and sick at heart
Travelling painfully over the rugged road,
Wild-visag'd Wanderer! ah for thy heavy chance!

Sorely thy little one drags by thee bare-footed,
Cold is the baby that hangs at thy bending back
Meagre and livid and screaming its wretchedness.

[1] Woe-begone mother, half anger, half agony,
As over thy shoulder thou lookest to hush the babe,
Bleakly the blinding snow beats in thy hagged face.

Thy husband will never return from the war again,
Cold is thy hopeless heart even as Charity--
Cold are thy famish'd babes--God help thee, widow'd One!

[Footnote 1: This stanza was supplied by S.T. COLERIDGE.]

The WIDOW.

SAPPHICS.

Cold was the night wind, drifting fast the snows fell,
Wide were the downs and shelterless and naked,
When a poor Wanderer struggled on her journey
 Weary and way-sore.

Drear were the downs, more dreary her reflexions;
Cold was the night wind, colder was her bosom!
She had no home, the world was all before her,
 She had no shelter.

Fast o'er the bleak heath rattling drove a chariot,
"Pity me!" feebly cried the poor night wanderer.
"Pity me Strangers! lest with cold and hunger
 Here I should perish.

"Once I had friends,--but they have all forsook me!
"Once I had parents,--they are now in Heaven!
"I had a home once--I had once a husband--
 "Pity me Strangers!

"I had a home once--I had once a husband--
"I am a Widow poor and broken-hearted!"
Loud blew the wind, unheard was her complaining.
 On drove the chariot.

On the cold snows she laid her down to rest her;
She heard a horseman, "pity me!" she groan'd out;
Loud blew the wind, unheard was her complaining,
 On went the horseman.

Worn out with anguish, toil and cold and hunger,
Down sunk the Wanderer, sleep had seiz'd her senses;
There, did the Traveller find her in the morning,
 GOD had releas't her.

To the CHAPEL BELL.

"Lo I, the man who erst the Muse did ask
Her deepest notes to swell the Patriot's meeds,
Am now enforst a far unfitter task
For cap and gown to leave my minstrel weeds,"
For yon dull noise that tinkles on the air
Bids me lay by the lyre and go to morning prayer.

Oh how I hate the sound! it is the Knell,
That still a requiem tolls to Comfort's hour;
And loth am I, at Superstition's bell,
To quit or Morpheus or the Muses bower.
Better to lie and dose, than gape amain,
Hearing still mumbled o'er, the same eternal strain.

Thou tedious herald of more tedious prayers
Say hast thou ever summoned from his rest,
One being awakening to religious awe?
Or rous'd one pious transport in the breast?
Or rather, do not all reluctant creep
To linger out the hour, in listlessness or sleep?

I love the bell, that calls the poor to pray
Chiming from village church its chearful sound,
When the sun smiles on Labour's holy day,
And all the rustic train are gathered round,
Each deftly dizen'd in his Sunday's best
And pleas'd to hail the day of piety and rest.

Or when, dim-shadowing o'er the face of day,
The mantling mists of even-tide rise slow,
As thro' the forest gloom I wend my way,
The minster curfew's sullen roar I know;
I pause and love its solemn toll to hear,
As made by distance soft, it dies upon the ear.

Nor not to me the unfrequent midnight knell
Tolls sternly harmonizing; on mine ear
As the deep death-fraught sounds long lingering dwell
Sick to the heart of Love and Hope and Fear
Soul-jaundiced, I do loathe Life's upland steep
And with strange envy muse the dead man's dreamless sleep.

But thou, memorial of monastic gall!
What Fancy sad or lightsome hast thou given?
Thy vision-scaring sounds alone recall
The prayer that trembles on a yawn to heaven;
And this Dean's gape, and that Dean's nasal tone,
And Roman rites retain'd, tho' Roman faith be flown.

The RACE of BANQUO.

Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly!
Leave thy guilty sire to die.
O'er the heath the stripling fled,
The wild storm howling round his head.
Fear mightier thro' the shades of night

Urged his feet, and wing'd his flight;
And still he heard his father cry
Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly.

Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly
Leave thy guilty sire to die.
On every blast was heard the moan
The anguish'd shriek, the death-fraught groan;
Loathly night-hags join the yell
And see--the midnight rites of Hell.

Forms of magic! spare my life!
Shield me from the murderer's knife!
Before me dim in lurid light
Float the phantoms of the night--
Behind I hear my Father cry,
Fly, son of Banquo--Fleance, fly!

Parent of the sceptred race,
Fearless tread the circled space:
Fearless Fleance venture near--
Sire of monarchs--spurn at fear.

Sisters with prophetic breath
Pour we now the dirge of Death!

MUSINGS on a LANDSCAPE

of

GASPAR POUSSIN.

Poussin! most pleasantly thy pictur'd scenes
Beguile the lonely hour; I sit and gaze
With lingering eye, till charmed FANCY makes
The lovely landscape live, and the rapt soul
From the foul haunts of herded humankind
Flies far away with spirit speed, and tastes
The untainted air, that with the lively hue
Of health and happiness illumines the cheek
Of mountain LIBERTY. My willing soul
All eager follows on thy faery flights
FANCY! best friend; whose blessed witcheries
With loveliest prospects cheat the traveller
O'er the long wearying desart of the world.
Nor dost thou FANCY with such magic mock
My heart, as, demon-born, old Merlin knew,
Or Alquif, or Zarzafiel's sister sage,
Whose vengeful anguish for so many a year
Held in the jacinth sepulchre entranced

Lisvart and Perion, pride of chivalry.
Friend of my lonely hours! thou leadest me
To such calm joys as Nature wise and good
Proffers in vain to all her wretched sons;
Her wretched sons who pine with want amid
The abundant earth, and blindly bow them down
Before the Moloch shrines of WEALTH and POWER,
AUTHORS of EVIL. Oh it is most sweet
To medicine with thy wiles the wearied heart,
Sick of reality. The little pile
That tops the summit of that craggy hill
Shall be my dwelling; craggy is the hill
And steep, yet thro' yon hazels upward leads
The easy path, along whose winding way
Now close embowered I hear the unseen stream
Dash down, anon behold its sparkling foam
Gleam thro' the thicket; and ascending on
Now pause me to survey the goodly vale
That opens on my vision. Half way up
Pleasant it were upon some broad smooth rock
To sit and sun me, and look down below
And watch the goatherd down that high-bank'd path
Urging his flock grotesque; and bidding now
His lean rough dog from some near cliff to drive
The straggler; while his barkings loud and quick
Amid their trembling bleat arising oft,
Fainter and fainter from the hollow road
Send their far echoes, till the waterfall,
Hoarse bursting from the cavern'd cliff beneath,
Their dying murmurs drown. A little yet
Onward, and I have gain'd the upmost height.
Fair spreads the vale below: I see the stream
Stream radiant on beneath the noontide sky.
Where the town-spires behind the castle towers
Rise graceful; brown the mountain in its shade,
Whose circling grandeur, part by mists conceal'd,
Part with white rocks resplendant in the sun,
Should bound mine eyes; aye and my wishes too,
For I would have no hope or fear beyond.
The empty turmoil of the worthless world,
Its vanities and vices would not vex
My quiet heart. The traveller, who beheld
The low tower of the little pile, might deem
It were the house of GOD: nor would he err
So deeming, for that home would be the home
Of PEACE and LOVE, and they would hallow it
To HIM. Oh life of blessedness! to reap
The fruit of honorable toil, and bound
Our wishes with our wants! delightful Thoughts
That sooth the solitude of maniac HOPE,
Ye leave her to reality awak'd,
Like the poor captive, from some fleeting dream
Of friends and liberty and home restor'd,

Startled, and listening as the midnight storm
Beats hard and heavy thro' his dungeon bars.

Mary.

The story of the following ballad was related to me, when a school boy,
as a fact which had really happened in the North of England. I have
adopted the metre of Mr. Lewis's Alonzo and Imogene--a poem deservedly
popular.

MARY.

I.

Who is she, the poor Maniac, whose wildly-fix'd eyes
Seem a heart overcharged to express?
She weeps not, yet often and deeply she sighs,
She never complains, but her silence implies
The composure of settled distress.

II.

No aid, no compassion the Maniac will seek,
Cold and hunger awake not her care:
Thro' her rags do the winds of the winter blow bleak
On her poor withered bosom half bare, and her cheek
Has the deathly pale hue of despair.

III.

Yet chearful and happy, nor distant the day,
Poor Mary the Maniac has been;
The Traveller remembers who journeyed this way
No damsel so lovely, no damsel so gay
As Mary the Maid of the Inn.

IV.

Her chearful address fill'd the guests with delight
As she welcomed them in with a smile:
Her heart was a stranger to childish affright,
And Mary would walk by the Abbey at night
When the wind whistled down the dark aisle.

V.

She loved, and young Richard had settled the day,
And she hoped to be happy for life;
But Richard was idle and worthless, and they
Who knew him would pity poor Mary and say
That she was too good for his wife.

VI.

'Twas in autumn, and stormy and dark was the night,
And fast were the windows and door;
Two guests sat enjoying the fire that burnt bright,
And smoking in silence with tranquil delight
They listen'd to hear the wind roar.

VII.

"Tis pleasant," cried one, "seated by the fire side
"To hear the wind whistle without."
"A fine night for the Abbey!" his comrade replied,
"Methinks a man's courage would now be well tried
"Who should wander the ruins about.

VIII.

"I myself, like a school-boy, should tremble to hear
"The hoarse ivy shake over my head;
"And could fancy I saw, half persuaded by fear,
"Some ugly old Abbot's white spirit appear,
"For this wind might awaken the dead!"

IX.

"I'll wager a dinner," the other one cried,
"That Mary would venture there now."
"Then wager and lose!" with a sneer he replied,
"I'll warrant she'd fancy a ghost by her side,
"And faint if she saw a white cow."

X.

"Will Mary this charge on her courage allow?"
His companion exclaim'd with a smile;
"I shall win, for I know she will venture there now,
"And earn a new bonnet by bringing a bough
"From the elder that grows in the aisle."

XI.

With fearless good humour did Mary comply,
And her way to the Abbey she bent;
The night it was dark, and the wind it was high
And as hollowly howling it swept thro' the sky
She shiver'd with cold as she went.

XII.

O'er the path so well known still proceeded the Maid
Where the Abbey rose dim on the sight,
Thro' the gate-way she entered, she felt not afraid
Yet the ruins were lonely and wild, and their shade
Seem'd to deepen the gloom of the night.

XIII.

All around her was silent, save when the rude blast
Howl'd dismally round the old pile;
Over weed-cover'd fragments still fearless she past,
And arrived in the innermost ruin at last
Where the elder tree grew in the aisle.

XIV.

Well-pleas'd did she reach it, and quickly drew near
And hastily gather'd the bough:
When the sound of a voice seem'd to rise on her ear,
She paus'd, and she listen'd, all eager to hear,
Aud her heart panted fearfully now.

XV.

The wind blew, the hoarse ivy shook over her head,
She listen'd,--nought else could she hear.
The wind ceas'd, her heart sunk in her bosom with dread
For she heard in the ruins distinctly the tread
Of footsteps approaching her near.

XVI.

Behind a wide column half breathless with fear
She crept to conceal herself there:
That instant the moon o'er a dark cloud shone clear,
And she saw in the moon-light two ruffians appear
And between them a corpse did they bear.

XVII.

Then Mary could feel her heart-blood curdle cold!
Again the rough wind hurried by,--
It blew off the hat of the one, and behold
Even close to the feet of poor Mary it roll'd,--
She felt, and expected to die.

XVIII.

"Curse the hat!" he exclaims. "Nay come on and first hide
"The dead body," his comrade replies.
She beheld them in safety pass on by her side,
She seizes the hat, fear her courage supplied,
And fast thro' the Abbey she flies.

XIX.

She ran with wild speed, she rush'd in at the door,
She gazed horribly eager around,
Then her limbs could support their faint burthen no more,
And exhausted and breathless she sunk on the floor
Unable to utter a sound.

XX.

Ere yet her pale lips could the story impart,
For a moment the hat met her view;--
Her eyes from that object convulsively start,
For--oh God what cold horror then thrill'd thro' her heart,
When the name of her Richard she knew!

XXI.

Where the old Abbey stands, on the common hard by
His gibbet is now to be seen.
Not far from the road it engages the eye,
The Traveller beholds it, and thinks with a sigh
Of poor Mary the Maid of the Inn.

Donica.

In Finland there is a Castle which is called the New Rock, moated about with a river of unfounded depth, the water black and the fish therein very distasteful to the palate. In this are spectres often seen, which foreshew either the death of the Governor, or some prime officer belonging to the place; and most commonly it appeareth in the shape of an harper, sweetly singing and dallying and playing under the water.

It is reported of one Donica, that after she was dead, the Devil walked in her body for the space of two years, so that none suspected but that she was still alive; for she did both speak and eat, though very sparingly; only she had a deep paleness on her countenance, which was the only sign of death. At length a Magician coming by where she was then in the company of many other virgins, as soon as he beheld her he said, "fair Maids, why keep you company with the dead Virgin whom you suppose to be alive?" when taking away the magic charm which was tied under her arm, the body fell down lifeless and without motion.

The following Ballad is founded on these stories. They are to be found in the notes to The Hierarchies of the blessed Angels; a Poem by Thomas Heywood, printed in folio by Adam Islip, 1635.

DONICA.

High on a rock, whose castled shade
Darken'd the lake below,
In ancient strength majestic stood
The towers of Arlinkow.

The fisher in the lake below
Durst never cast his net,
Nor ever swallow in its waves
Her passing wings would wet.

The cattle from its ominous banks
In wild alarm would run,
Tho' parched with thirst and faint beneath
The summer's scorching sun.

For sometimes when no passing breeze
The long lank sedges waved,
All white with foam and heaving high
Its deafening billows raved;

And when the tempest from its base
The rooted pine would shake,
The powerless storm unruffling swept
Across the calm dead lake.

And ever then when Death drew near
The house of Arlinkow,
Its dark unfathom'd depths did send
Strange music from below.

The Lord of Arlinkow was old,
One only child had he,
Donica was the Maiden's name
As fair as fair might be.

A bloom as bright as opening morn
Flush'd o'er her clear white cheek,
The music of her voice was mild,
Her full dark eyes were meek.

Far was her beauty known, for none
So fair could Finland boast,
Her parents loved the Maiden much,
Young EBERHARD loved her most.

Together did they hope to tread
The pleasant path of life,
For now the day drew near to make
Donica Eberhard's wife.

The eve was fair and mild the air,
Along the lake they stray;
The eastern hill reflected bright
The fading tints of day.

And brightly o'er the water stream'd
The liquid radiance wide;
Donica's little dog ran on
And gambol'd at her side.

Youth, Health, and Love bloom'd on her cheek,
Her full dark eyes express
In many a glance to Eberhard
Her soul's meek tenderness.

Nor sound was heard, nor passing gale
Sigh'd thro' the long lank sedge,
The air was hushed, no little wave
Dimpled the water's edge.

Sudden the unfathom'd lake sent forth
Strange music from beneath,
And slowly o'er the waters sail'd
The solemn sounds of Death.

As the deep sounds of Death arose,
Donica's cheek grew pale,
And in the arms of Eberhard
The senseless Maiden fell.

Loudly the youth in terror shriek'd,
And loud he call'd for aid,

And with a wild and eager look
Gaz'd on the death-pale Maid.

But soon again did better thoughts
In Eberhard arise,
And he with trembling hope beheld
The Maiden raise her eyes.

And on his arm reclin'd she moved
With feeble pace and slow,
And soon with strength recover'd reach'd

Yet never to Donica's cheek
Return'd the lively hue,
Her cheeks were deathly, white, and wan,
Her lips a livid blue.

Her eyes so bright and black of yore
Were now more black and bright,
And beam'd strange lustre in her face
So deadly wan and white.

The dog that gambol'd by her side,
And lov'd with her to stray,
Now at his alter'd mistress howl'd
And fled in fear away.

Yet did the faithful Eberhard
Not love the Maid the less;
He gaz'd with sorrow, but he gaz'd
With deeper tenderness.

And when he found her health unharm'd
He would not brook delay,
But press'd the not unwilling Maid
To fix the bridal day.

And when at length it came, with joy
They hail'd the bridal day,
And onward to the house of God
They went their willing way.

And as they at the altar stood
And heard the sacred rite,
The hallowed tapers dimly stream'd
A pale sulphureous light.

And as the Youth with holy warmth
Her hand in his did hold,
Sudden he felt Donica's hand
Grow deadly damp and cold.

And loudly did he shriek, for lo!

A Spirit met his view,
And Eberhard in the angel form
His own Donica knew.

That instant from her earthly frame
Howling the Daemon fled,
And at the side of Eberhard
The livid form fell dead.

Rudiger.

Divers Princes and Noblemen being assembled in a beautiful and fair Palace, which was situate upon the river Rhine, they beheld a boat or small barge make toward the shore, drawn by a Swan in a silver chain, the one end fastened about her neck, the other to the vessel; and in it an unknown soldier, a man of a comely personage and graceful presence, who stept upon the shore; which done, the boat guided by the Swan left him, and floated down the river. This man fell afterward in league with a fair gentlewoman, married her, and by her had many children. After some years, the same Swan came with the same barge into the same place; the soldier entering into it, was carried thence the way he came, left wife, children and family, and was never seen amongst them after.

Now who can judge this to be other than one of those spirits that are named Incubi? says Thomas Heywood. I have adopted his story, but not his solution, making the unknown soldier not an evil spirit, but one who had purchased happiness of a malevolent being, by the promised sacrifice of his first-born child.

RUDIGER.

Bright on the mountain's heathy slope
The day's last splendors shine
And rich with many a radiant hue
Gleam gayly on the Rhine.

And many a one from Waldhurst's walls
Along the river stroll'd,
As ruffling o'er the pleasant stream
The evening gales came cold.

So as they stray'd a swan they saw
Sail stately up and strong,
And by a silver chain she drew
A little boat along,

Whose streamer to the gentle breeze
Long floating fluttered light,
Beneath whose crimson canopy

There lay reclin'd a knight.

With arching crest and swelling breast
On sail'd the stately swan
And lightly up the parting tide
The little boat came on.

And onward to the shore they drew
And leapt to land the knight,
And down the stream the swan-drawn boat
Fell soon beyond the sight.

Was never a Maid in Waldhurst's walls
Might match with Margaret,
Her cheek was fair, her eyes were dark,
Her silken locks like jet.

And many a rich and noble youth
Had strove to win the fair,
But never a rich or noble youth
Could rival Rudiger.

At every tilt and turney he
Still bore away the prize,
For knightly feats superior still
And knightly courtesies.

His gallant feats, his looks, his love,
Soon won the willing fair,
And soon did Margaret become
The wife of Rudiger.

Like morning dreams of happiness
Fast roll'd the months away,
For he was kind and she was kind
And who so blest as they?

Yet Rudiger would sometimes sit
Absorb'd in silent thought
And his dark downward eye would seem
With anxious meaning fraught;

But soon he rais'd his looks again
And smil'd his cares away,
And mid the hall of gaiety
Was none like him so gay.

And onward roll'd the waning months,
The hour appointed came,
And Margaret her Rudiger
Hail'd with a father's name.

But silently did Rudiger

The little infant see,
And darkly on the babe he gaz'd
And very sad was he.

And when to bless the little babe
The holy Father came,
To cleanse the stains of sin away
In Christ's redeeming name,

Then did the cheek of Rudiger
Assume a death-pale hue,
And on his clammy forehead stood
The cold convulsive dew;

And faltering in his speech he bade
The Priest the rites delay,
Till he could, to right health restor'd,
Enjoy the festive day.

When o'er the many-tinted sky
He saw the day decline,
He called upon his Margaret
To walk beside the Rhine.

"And we will take the little babe,
"For soft the breeze that blows,
"And the wild murmurs of the stream
"Will lull him to repose."

So forth together did they go,
The evening breeze was mild,
And Rudiger upon his arm
Did pillow the sweet child.

And many a one from Waldhurst's walls
Along the banks did roam,
But soon the evening wind came cold,
And all betook them home.

Yet Rudiger in silent mood
Along the banks would roam,
Nor aught could Margaret prevail
To turn his footsteps home.

"Oh turn thee--turn thee Rudiger,
"The rising mists behold,
"The evening wind is damp and chill,
"The little babe is cold!"

"Now hush thee--hush thee Margaret,
"The mists will do no harm,
"And from the wind the little babe
"Lies sheltered on my arm."

"Oh turn thee--turn thee Rudiger,
"Why onward wilt thou roam?
"The moon is up, the night is cold,
"And we are far from home."

He answered not, for now he saw
A Swan come sailing strong,
And by a silver chain she drew
A little boat along.

To shore they came, and to the boat
Fast leapt he with the child,
And in leapt Margaret--breathless now
And pale with fear and wild.

With arching crest and swelling breast
On sail'd the stately swan,
And lightly down the rapid tide
The little boat went on.

The full-orb'd moon that beam'd around
Pale splendor thro' the night,
Cast through the crimson canopy
A dim-discoloured light.

And swiftly down the hurrying stream
In silence still they sail,
And the long streamer fluttering fast
Flapp'd to the heavy gale.

And he was mute in sullen thought
And she was mute with fear,
Nor sound but of the parting tide
Broke on the listening ear.

The little babe began to cry
And waked his mother's care,
"Now give to me the little babe
"For God's sake, Rudiger!"

"Now hush thee, hush thee Margaret!
"Nor my poor heart distress--
"I do but pay perforce the price
"Of former happiness.

"And hush thee too my little babe,
"Thy cries so feeble cease:
"Lie still, lie still;--a little while
"And thou shalt be at peace."

So as he spake to land they drew,
And swift he stept on shore,

And him behind did Margaret
Close follow evermore.

It was a place all desolate,
Nor house nor tree was there,
And there a rocky mountain rose
Barren, and bleak, and bare.

And at its base a cavern yawn'd,
No eye its depth might view,
For in the moon-beam shining round
That darkness darker grew.

Cold Horror crept thro' Margaret's blood,
Her heart it paus'd with fear,
When Rudiger approach'd the cave
And cried, "lo I am here!"

A deep sepulchral sound the cave
Return'd "lo I am here!"
And black from out the cavern gloom
Two giant arms appear.

And Rudiger approach'd and held
The little infant nigh;
Then Margaret shriek'd, and gather'd then
New powers from agony.

And round the baby fast and firm
Her trembling arms she folds,
And with a strong convulsive grasp
The little infant holds.

"Now help me, Jesus!" loud she cries.
And loud on God she calls;
Then from the grasp of Rudiger
The little infant falls.

And now he shriek'd, for now his frame
The huge black arms clasp'd round,
And dragg'd the wretched Rudiger
Adown the dark profound.

Hymn

TO THE

Penates.

Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with food convenient for me.

The words of Agur.

The Title of the following Poem will probably remind the Reader of
Akenside's Hymn to the Naiads, but the manner in which I have treated
the subject fortunately precludes comparison.

HYMN to the PENATES.

Yet one Song more! one high and solemn strain
Ere PAEAN! on thy temple's ruined wall
I hang the silent harp: there may its strings,
When the rude tempest shakes the aged pile,
Make melancholy music. One Song more!
PENATES! hear me! for to you I hymn
The votive lay. Whether, as sages deem,
Ye dwell in the [1]inmost Heaven, the [2]COUNSELLORS
Of JOVE; or if, SUPREME OF DEITIES,
All things are yours, and in your holy train
JOVE proudly ranks, and JUNO, white arm'd Queen.

And wisest of Immortals, awful Maid
ATHENIAN PALLAS. Venerable Powers!
Hearken your hymn of praise! tho' from your rites
Estranged, and exiled from your altars long,
I have not ceased to love you, HOUSEHOLD GODS!
In many a long and melancholy hour
Of solitude and sorrow, has my heart
With earnest longings prayed to rest at length
Beside your hallowed hearth--for PEACE is there!

Yes I have loved you long. I call on you
Yourselves to witness with what holy joy,
Shunning the polished mob of human kind,
I have retired to watch your lonely fires
And commune with myself. Delightful hours
That gave mysterious pleasure, made me know
All the recesses of my wayward heart,
Taught me to cherish with devoutest care
Its strange unworldly feelings, taught me too
The best of lessons--to respect myself!

Nor have I ever ceas'd to reverence you
DOMESTIC DEITIES! from the first dawn
Of reason, thro' the adventurous paths of youth
Even to this better day, when on mine ear
The uproar of contending nations sounds,
But like the passing wind--and wakes no pulse

To tumult. When a child--(for still I love
To dwell with fondness on my childish years,
Even as that Persian favorite would retire
From the court's dangerous pageantry and pomp,
To gaze upon his shepherd garb, and weep,
Rememb'ring humble happiness.) When first
A little one, I left my father's home,
I can remember the first grief I felt,
And the first painful smile that cloathed my front
With feelings not its own: sadly at night
I sat me down beside a stranger's hearth;
And when the lingering hour of rest was come,
First wet with tears my pillow. As I grew
In years and knowledge, and the course of Time
Developed the young feelings of my heart,
When most I loved in solitude to rove
Amid the woodland gloom; or where the rocks
Darken'd old Avon's stream, in the ivied cave
Recluse to sit and brood the future song,
Yet not the less, PENATES, loved I then
Your altars, not the less at evening hour
Delighted by the well-trimm'd fire to sit,
Absorbed in many a dear deceitful dream
Of visionary joys: deceitful dreams--
Not wholly vain--for painting purest joys,
They form'd to Fancy's mould her votary's heart.

By Cherwell's sedgey side, and in the meads
Where Isis in her calm clear stream reflects
The willow's bending boughs, at earliest dawn
In the noon-tide hour, and when the night-mists rose,
I have remembered you: and when the noise
Of loud intemperance on my lonely ear
Burst with loud tumult, as recluse I sat,
Pondering on loftiest themes of man redeemed
From servitude, and vice, and wretchedness,
I blest you, HOUSEHOLD GODS! because I loved
Your peaceful altars and serener rites.
Nor did I cease to reverence you, when driven
Amid the jarring crowd, an unfit man
To mingle with the world; still, still my heart
Sighed for your sanctuary, and inly pined;
And loathing human converse, I have strayed
Where o'er the sea-beach chilly howl'd the blast,
And gaz'd upon the world of waves, and wished
That I were far beyond the Atlantic deep,
In woodland haunts--a sojourner with PEACE.

Not idly fabled they the Bards inspired,
Who peopled Earth with Deities. They trod
The wood with reverence where the DRYADS dwelt;
At day's dim dawn or evening's misty hour
They saw the OREADS on their mountain haunts.

And felt their holy influence, nor impure
Of thought--or ever with polluted hands
Touched they without a prayer the NAIAD'S spring;
Yet was their influence transient; such brief awe
Inspiring as the thunder's long loud peal
Strikes to the feeble spirit. HOUSEHOLD GODS,
Not such your empire! in your votaries' breasts
No momentary impulse ye awake--
Nor fleeting like their local energies,
The deep devotion that your fanes impart.
O ye whom YOUTH has wilder'd on your way,
Or VICE with fair-mask'd foulness, or the lure
Of FAME that calls ye to her crowded paths
With FOLLY's rattle, to your HOUSEHOLD GODS
Return! for not in VICE's gay abodes,
Not in the unquiet unsafe halls of FAME
Does HAPPINESS abide! O ye who weep
Much for the many miseries of Mankind,
More for their vices, ye whose honest eyes
Frown on OPPRESSION,--ye whose honest hearts
Beat high when FREEDOM sounds her dread tocsin;--
O ye who quit the path of peaceful life
Crusading for mankind--a spaniel race
That lick the hand that beats them, or tear all
Alike in frenzy--to your HOUSEHOLD GODS
Return, for by their altars VIRTUE dwells
And HAPPINESS with her; for by their fires
TRANQUILLITY in no unsocial mood
Sits silent, listening to the pattering shower;
For, so [3]SUSPICION sleep not at the gate
Of WISDOM,--FALSEHOOD shall not enter there.

As on the height of some huge eminence,
Reach'd with long labour, the way-faring man
Pauses awhile, and gazing o'er the plain
With many a sore step travelled, turns him then
Serious to contemplate the onward road,
And calls to mind the comforts of his home,
And sighs that he has left them, and resolves
To stray no more: I on my way of life
Muse thus PENATES, and with firmest faith
Devote myself to you. I will not quit
To mingle with the mob your calm abodes,
Where, by the evening hearth CONTENTMENT sits
And hears the cricket chirp; where LOVE delights
To dwell, and on your altars lays his torch
That burns with no extinguishable flame.

Hear me ye POWERS benignant! there is one
Must be mine inmate--for I may not chuse
But love him. He is one whom many wrongs
Have sicken'd of the world. There was a time
When he would weep to hear of wickedness

And wonder at the tale; when for the opprest
He felt a brother's pity, to the oppressor
A good man's honest anger. His quick eye
Betray'd each rising feeling, every thought
Leapt to his tongue. When first among mankind
He mingled, by himself he judged of them,
And loved and trusted them, to Wisdom deaf,
And took them to his bosom. FALSEHOOD met
Her unsuspecting victim, fair of front,
And lovely as [4]Apega's sculptured form,
Like that false image caught his warm embrace
And gored his open breast. The reptile race
Clung round his bosom, and with viper folds
Encircling, stung the fool who fostered them.
His mother was SIMPLICITY, his sire
BENEVOLENCE; in earlier days he bore
His father's name; the world who injured him
Call him MISANTHROPY. I may not chuse
But love him, HOUSEHOLD GODS! for we were nurst
In the same school.

PENATES! some there are
Who say, that not in the inmost heaven ye dwell,
Gazing with eye remote on all the ways
Of man, his GUARDIAN GODS; wiselier they deem
A dearer interest to the human race
Links you, yourselves the SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.
No mortal eye may pierce the invisible world,
No light of human reason penetrate
That depth where Truth lies hid. Yet to this faith
My heart with instant sympathy assents;
And I would judge all systems and all faiths
By that best touchstone, from whose test DECEIT
Shrinks like the Arch-Fiend at Ithuriel's spear,
And SOPHISTRY'S gay glittering bubble bursts,
As at the spousals of the Nereid's son,
When that false [5] Florimel, by her prototype
Display'd in rivalry, with all her charms
Dissolved away.

Nor can the halls of Heaven
Give to the human soul such kindred joy,
As hovering o'er its earthly haunts it feels,
When with the breeze it wantons round the brow
Of one beloved on earth; or when at night
In dreams it comes, and brings with it the DAYS
And JOYS that are no more, Or when, perchance
With power permitted to alleviate ill
And fit the sufferer for the coming woe,
Some strange presage the SPIRIT breathes, and fills
The breast with ominous fear, and disciplines
For sorrow, pours into the afflicted heart
The balm of resignation, and inspires

With heavenly hope. Even as a Child delights
To visit day by day the favorite plant
His hand has sown, to mark its gradual growth,
And watch all anxious for the promised flower;
Thus to the blessed spirit, in innocence
And pure affections like a little child,
Sweet will it be to hover o'er the friends
Beloved; then sweetest if, as Duty prompts,
With earthly care we in their breasts have sown
The seeds of Truth and Virtue, holy flowers
Whose odour reacheth Heaven.

When my sick Heart,
(Sick [6] with hope long delayed, than, which no care
Presses the crush'd heart heavier;) from itself
Seeks the best comfort, often have I deemed
That thou didst witness every inmost thought
SEWARD! my dear dead friend! for not in vain,
Oh early summon'd in thy heavenly course!
Was thy brief sojourn here: me didst thou leave
With strengthen'd step to follow the right path
Till we shall meet again. Meantime I soothe
The deep regret of Nature, with belief,
My EDMUND! that thine eye's celestial ken
Pervades me now, marking no mean joy
The movements of the heart that loved thee well!

Such feelings Nature prompts, and hence your rites
DOMESTIC GODS! arose. When for his son
With ceaseless grief Syrophanes bewail'd,
Mourning his age left childless, and his wealth
Heapt for an alien, he with fixed eye
Still on the imaged marble of the dead
Dwelt, pampering sorrow. Thither from his wrath
A safe asylum, fled the offending slave,
And garlanded the statue and implored
His young lost Lord to save: Remembrance then
Softened the father, and he loved to see
The votive wreath renewed, and the rich smoke
Curl from the costly censer slow and sweet.
From Egypt soon the sorrow-soothing rites
Divulging spread; before your [7] idol forms
By every hearth the blinded Pagan knelt,
Pouring his prayers to these, and offering there
Vain sacrifice or impious, and sometimes
With human blood your sanctuary defil'd:
Till the first BRUTUS, tyrant-conquering chief,
Arose; he first the impious rites put down,
He fittest, who for FREEDOM lived and died,
The friend of humankind. Then did your feasts
Frequent recur and blameless; and when came
The solemn [8] festival, whose happiest rites
Emblem'd EQUALITY, the holiest truth!

Crown'd with gay garlands were your statues seen,
To you the fragrant censer smok'd, to you
The rich libation flow'd: vain sacrifice!
For nor the poppy wreath nor fruits nor wine.
Ye ask, PENATES! nor the altar cleans'd
With many a mystic form; ye ask the heart
Made pure, and by domestic Peace and Love
Hallowed to you.

Hearken your hymn of praise,
PENATES! to your shrines I come for rest,
There only to be found. Often at eve,
Amid my wanderings I have seen far off
The lonely light that spake of comfort there,
It told my heart of many a joy of home,
And my poor heart was sad. When I have gazed
From some high eminence on goodly vales
And cots and villages embower'd below,
The thought would rise that all to me was strange
Amid the scene so fair, nor one small spot
Where my tir'd mind might rest and call it home,
There is a magic in that little word;
It is a mystic circle that surrounds
Comforts and Virtues never known beyond
The hallowed limit. Often has my heart
Ached for that quiet haven; haven'd now,
I think of those in this world's wilderness
Who wander on and find no home of rest
Till to the grave they go! them POVERTY
Hollow-eyed fiend, the child of WEALTH and POWER,
Bad offspring of worse parents, aye afflicts,
Cankering with her foul mildews the chill'd heart--
Them WANT with scorpion scourge drives to the den
Of GUILT--them SLAUGHTER with the price of death
Buys for her raven brood. Oh not on them
GOD OF ETERNAL JUSTICE! not on them
Let fall thy thunder!

HOUSEHOLD DEITIES!

Then only shall be Happiness on earth
When Man shall feel your sacred power, and love
Your tranquil joys; then shall the city stand
A huge void sepulchre, and rising fair
Amid the ruins of the palace pile
The Olive grow, there shall the TREE OF PEACE
Strike its roots deep and flourish. This the state
Shall bless the race redeemed of Man, when WEALTH
And POWER and all their hideous progeny
Shall sink annihilate, and all mankind
Live in the equal brotherhood of LOVE.
Heart-calming hope and sure! for hitherward
Tend all the tumults of the troubled world,
Its woes, its wisdom, and its wickedness

Alike: so he hath will'd whose will is just.

Meantime, all hoping and expecting all
In patient faith, to you, DOMESTIC GODS!
I come, studious of other lore than song,
Of my past years the solace and support:
Yet shall my Heart remember the past years
With honest pride, trusting that not in vain
Lives the pure song of LIBERTY and TRUTH.

[Footnote 1: Hence one explanation of the name Penates, because they were supposed to reign in the inmost Heavens.]

[Footnote 2:
This was the belief of the ancient Hetrusci, who called them Consentes and Complicces]

[Footnote 3:

Of, tho' Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

MILTON.]

[Footnote 4: One of the Ways and Means of the Tyrant Nabis. If one of his Subjects refused to lend him money, he commanded him to embrace his Apega; the statue of a beautiful Woman so formed as to clasp the victim to her breast, in which a pointed dagger was concealed.]

[Footnote 5:

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint beside the image set,
Of both their beauties to make paragone
And trial whether should the honour get:
Streightway so soone as both together met,
The enchanted damzell vanish'd into nought;
Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought
But the emptie girdle which about her wast was wrought.

SPENCER.]

[Footnote 6: Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. PROVERBS.

Qua non gravior mortalibus addita cura,
SPES ubi longa venit.

STATIUS.]

[Footnote 7: It is not certainly known under what form the Penates were

worshipped. Some assert, as wooden or brazen rods shaped like trumpets: others, that they were represented as young men.]

[Footnote 8: The Saturnalia.]

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