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THE ENGLISH POETS

T. H WARD

VOL. III.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:

ADDISON TO BLAKE.



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THE

ENGLISH POETS

SELECTIONS

WITH CRITICAL INTRODUCTIONS

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

AND A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDITED BY

THOMAS HUMPHRY WARD, M.A

Late Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford

VOL. III

ADDISON to BLAKE

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JOSEPH ADDISON.

[Joseph Addison was born on the 1st of May, 1672. His first English poem was an address to Dryden on the publication of the latter's Translations of Ovid. This was written in his twenty-second year. In 1694 he published, in one of Dryden's Miscellanies, his *Account of the Principal English Poets*; in 1695 appeared his *Address to King William*. Having obtained a pension of £300 to enable him to travel, he visited the continent, and in 1701 wrote his *Letter from Italy* to Lord Halifax. When Godolphin in 1704 was in search of a poet to celebrate in an adequate manner the victory of Blenheim, Halifax directed him to Addison, who in answer to the Treasurer's application produced *The Campaign*, and obtained as a reward the post of Under-Secretary of State. His opera *Rosamond* was performed in 1706. In 1709 *The Tatler* began to appear, and *The Spectator* in 1711. Addison's tragedy of *Cato* was brought out in 1713. He also wrote Prologues and Epilogues to various plays; among others the Prologue to *The Tender Husband* and the Epilogue to Lord Lansdowne's *British Enchanters*. He died on the 17th of June, 1719.]

No English poet illustrates more vividly than Addison the truth of the principle, 'Poeta nascitur non fit.' Possessed of an inimitable prose style, which makes him the most graceful of all social satirists, the creator of Sir Roger de Coverley rarely succeeds, as a poet, in impressing us with the sense—the true touchstone of poetical art—that what he is saying is expressed better in verse than it could be expressed in prose. Nor is this to be attributed to the comparatively prosaic nature of the subjects he undertakes. Dryden, Pope, and Goldsmith write on themes which seem unpropitious when compared with the materials of the Elizabethan poets; but the best work of these three poets is, in its class, first-rate; Addison's work is never more than second-rate. His *Account of the Principal English Poets* is just but tame; he probably wrote it in metre merely because Roscommon had done something of the same kind before him; at any rate, by the side of the animated judgments of Pope in his *Epistle to Augustus*, his historical survey of English poetry seems flat and languid. His

Letter from Italy is certainly his most successful composition; but those who compare it with Goldsmith's *Traveller* will be chiefly struck with the different degrees of fertility a somewhat barren subject may exhibit when treated by an ordinary versifier and a master of poetical design. The same is true of Addison's complimentary verse compared with that of Pope. Poems of this kind are seldom very sincere; but some of Pope's noblest lines of praise were addressed to the not very noble Earl of Oxford. Whether or no Pope really felt as he pretended, he seemed at least to write with ardour, but the style of Addison's panegyrics on King William III is as artificial as the sentiments by which they were prompted. His sole conception of poetical compliment is hyperbole. When, for instance, he wishes to excuse himself for an inadequate celebration of William's heroic prowess, he says that, as Troy had perished long before Homer appeared, so perhaps some mighty bard may lie hid in futurity to write an Iliad on the Battle of the Boyne, when that river shall have ceased to flow. If he seeks to represent the terrors of Algiers and Tunis under the British attack, he says—

> 'Fain from the neighbouring dangers would they run,
> And wish themselves much nearer to the sun.'

We see in such a conceit the evil influence of Dryden; but the large opulence of thought and the noble diction with which Dryden atoned for his extravagances are wanting in his pupil.

Yet with all Addison's deficiencies in poetical genius, his fine taste and blameless character were not without their effect on the course of our poetry. He never, like Dryden, prostituted his Muse to utterly unworthy objects; if his poetry is not free from 'courtly stains,' it is at least animated by a genuine love of freedom; and his lines on Liberty are a fine expression of the Whig spirit of the times. *The Campaign* was called by Warton, not unjustly, a 'gazette in rhyme'; the epic style however seems to have been considered indispensable to the subject; and allowing for this preliminary condition, Addison deserves credit for having depicted the character of his hero with some loftiness and dignity

Addison's versification is pure though not vigorous; his treatment of the heroic couplet, in its antithesis and careful selection of epithet, marks the period of transition between the large and flowing style of Dryden and the compressed energy of Pope.

W. J. COURTHOPE.

THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY.

[From the *Letter from Italy*.]

Oh Liberty, thou goddess heav'nly bright,
Profuse of bliss and pregnant with delight!
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling Plenty leads thy wanton train:
Eas'd of her load, Subjection grows more light,
And Poverty looks cheerful in thy sight;
Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun and pleasure to the day.
Thee, goddess, thee Britannia's isle adores:
How has she oft exhausted all her stores,
How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,
Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought!
On foreign mountains may the sun refine
The grape's soft juice and mellow it to wine,
With citron groves adorn a distant soil,
And the fat olive swell with floods of oil:
We envy not the warmer clime, that lies
In ten degrees of more indulgent skies,
Nor at the coarseness of our heav'n repine,
Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine:
'Tis Liberty that crowns Britannia's isle
And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.
Others with tow'ring piles may please the sight
And in their proud aspiring domes delight:
A nicer touch to the stretch'd canvass give,
Or teach their animated rocks to live:
'Tis Britain's care to watch o'er Europe's fate
And hold in balance each contending state,

To threaten bold presumptuous kings with war,
And answer her afflicted neighbours' pray'r.
The Dane and Swede rous'd up by fierce alarms,
Bless the wise conduct of her pious arms:
Soon as her fleets appear their terrors cease,
And all the northern world lies hush'd in peace.

MARLBOROUGH AT BLENHEIM

[From *The Campaign.*]

Behold, in awful march and dread array
The long extended squadrons shape their way!
Death, in approaching terrible, imparts
An anxious horror to the bravest hearts;
Yet do their beating breasts demand the strife,
And thirst of glory quells the love of life.
No vulgar fears can British minds control:
Heat of revenge, and noble pride of soul,
O'erlook the foe, advantag'd by his post,
Lessen his numbers, and contract his host:
Though fens and floods possess'd the middle space,
That unprovok'd they would have fear'd to pass,
Nor fens nor floods can stop Britannia's bands,
When her proud foe rang'd on their borders stands.
But O, my muse, what numbers wilt thou find
To sing the furious troops in battle join'd!
Methinks I hear the drum's tumultuous sound,
The victor's shouts and dying groans confound,
The dreadful burst of cannon rend the skies,
And all the thunder of the battle rise.
'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was prov'd,
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmov'd,
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of war;
In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,

Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
So when an angel by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm

WILLIAM WALSH.

[William Walsh was born at Aberley in Worcestershire, in 1663. He died in 1708. His principal works are *A Defence of the Fair Sex*, 1690, and *Poems*, 1691.]

The praise of Dryden first recommended to the public a poet who has since his death been solely immortalised by the praise of Pope. The lines of the latter, written in 1709, are familiar to most readers, but may be quoted here:

> 'To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
> And every author's merit, but his own;
> Such late was Walsh—the Muse's judge and friend,
> Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
> To failings mild, but zealous to desert,
> The clearest head and the sincerest heart.'

The qualities which Pope attributes to the person of Walsh are found in his writings, which have certainly been unduly neglected. The Propertius of the Restoration, he alone among the writers of his age understood the passion of love in an honourable and chivalric sense. Dryden, however, was almost the only person who perceived the moral beauty of Walsh's verse, and certainly was alone in praising his very remarkable *Defence of the Fair Sex*, in which the young poet, in an age given up to selfish gallantry, recommended the honourable equality of the sexes and the views now understood as the extension of women's rights. He possessed little versatility, but much sweetness in the use of the heroic measure, and a certain delicate insight into emotion. His poem entitled 'Jealousy' cannot be quoted here; but it is by far the most powerful of his productions, and a marvellously true picture of a heart tossed in an agony of jealousy and love. In studying the

versification of Pope, the influence of Walsh upon the style of the younger and greater man should not be overlooked, and there will be found in Walsh couplets such as this—

> 'Embalmed in verse, through distant times they come,
> Preserved, like bees within an amber tomb.'

which Pope did not disdain to re-work on his own anvil into brighter shapes. It should be noted that Walsh is the author of the only sonnet written in English between Milton's, in 1658, and Warton's, about 1750.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

TO HIS BOOK (1691).

Go, little Book, and to the world impart
The faithful image of an amorous heart;
Those who love's dear, deluding pains have known,
May in my fatal stories read their own;
Those who have lived from all its torments free,
May find the thing they never felt, from me;
Perhaps, advised, avoid the gilded bait,
And, warned by my example, shun my fate:
While with calm joy, safe landed on the coast,
I view the waves on which I once was tost.
Love is a medley of endearments, jars,
Suspicions, quarrels, reconcilements, wars,
Then peace again. O would it not be best
To chase the fatal passion from our breast?
But since so few can live from passion free,
Happy the man, and only happy he,
Who with such lucky stars begins his love,
That his cool judgment does his choice approve.
Ill-grounded passions quickly wear away;
What's built upon esteem, can ne'er decay.

SONNET.

What has this bugbear death that's worth our care?
After a life of pain and sorrow past,
After deluding hopes and dire despair,
Death only gives us quiet at the last;
How strangely are our love and hate misplaced!
Freedom we seek, and yet from freedom flee,
Courting those tyrant-sins that chain us fast,
And shunning death that only sets us free.
'Tis not a foolish fear of future pains,—
Why should they fear who keep their souls from stains?—
That makes me dread thy terrors, Death, to see;
'Tis not the loss of riches or of fame,
Or the vain toys the vulgar pleasures name,
'Tis nothing, Celia, but the losing thee!

THE DESPAIRING LOVER.

Distracted with care
For Phyllis the fair,
Since nothing could move her,
Poor Damon, her lover,
Resolves in despair
  No longer to languish,
  Nor bear so much anguish,
But, mad with his love,
  To a precipice goes,
Where a leap from above
  Would finish his woes.

When in rage he came there,
  Beholding how steep
The sides did appear,
  And the bottom how deep.
His torments projecting,
And sadly reflecting
That a lover forsaken
  A new love may get,
But a neck when once broken
  Can never be set,
And, that he could die
  Whenever he would,
Whereas he could live
  But as long as he could,
How grievous soever
  The torment might grow,
He scorned to endeavour
  To finish it so,
But, bold, unconcerned
  At thoughts of the pain,
He calmly returned
  To his cottage again.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

[WILLIAM CONGREVE was born in 1670. His first comedy, *The Old Bachelor*, was acted in 1693. In 1694 and 1695 respectively appeared two others, *The Double Dealer* and *Love for Love*. These were followed in 1697 by the tragedy of *The Mourning Bride*. His last and best comedy, *The Way of the World*, conspicuous for its all-conquering character of 'Millamant,' so admirably interpreted by the beautiful Mrs. Bracegirdle, was produced in 1700. After this he practically retired from literature. His works, which include a volume of miscellaneous poems, were published in 1710. He died in 1729.]

The poetical remains of Congreve, especially when considered in connection with those remarkable dramatic works which achieved for him so swift and splendid a reputation, have but a slender claim to vitality. His brilliant and audacious Muse seems to have required the glitter of the foot-lights and the artificial atmosphere of the stage as conditions of success; in the study he is, as a rule, either trivial or frigidly conventional. A translation of the third book of Ovid's *Art of Love* has the merit of being still readable; but his *Pindaric Odes* and *Pastorals*, such as that to the King on the taking of Namur, and *The Mourning Muse of Alexis*, can now only detain those who are curious in the class of poetry which flourishes under the patronage of royalty. The opening stanza of the lines *On Mrs. Arabella Hunt singing* has a suave and delicate movement:—

'Let all be hushed, each softest motion cease.
Be every loud tumultuous thought at peace,
And every ruder gasp of breath
Be calm, as in the arms of Death:
And thou, most fickle, most uneasy part,
Thou restless wanderer, my Heart,

Be still; gently, ah! gently leave,
Thou busy, idle thing, to heave:
Stir not a pulse; and let my blood,
That turbulent, unruly flood,
Be softly staid;
Let me be all, but my attention, dead.
Go, rest, unnecessary springs of life,
Leave your officious toil and strife;
For I would hear her voice, and try
If it be possible to die.'

This is beautifully and musically said. The second stanza is not so good; and in the third the charm is altogether loosed by the absurd appearance of Silence, draped in 'a melancholy Thought,' and insecurely seated upon 'an ancient Sigh,'—an intrusion from which the reader barely recovers in time to recognise a strange, and we think hitherto unnoticed, anticipation of the last lines of Keats' famous 'last sonnet' in the concluding couplet of the whole:—

'Wishing for ever in that state to lie,
For ever to be dying so, yet never die.'

In his songs and minor pieces Congreve is more successful, though he never reaches the level of his contemporary Prior. 'Amoret,' which we quote, sets a tune which has often since been heard in familiar verse; and the little song 'False though she be to me and love' has almost a note of genuine regret.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

AMORET.

Fair Amoret is gone astray;
Pursue and seek her every lover;
I'll tell the signs by which you may
The wandering shepherdess discover.

Coquet and coy at once her air,
Both studied, though both seem neglected:
Careless she is with artful care,
Affecting to seem unaffected.

With skill her eyes dart every glance,
Yet change so soon you'd ne'er suspect 'em:
For she'd persuade they wound by chance,
Though certain aim and art direct 'em.

She likes herself, yet others hates
For that which in herself she prizes;
And, while she laughs at them, forgets
She is the thing that she despises.

SONG.

False though she be to me and love,
I'll ne'er pursue revenge;
For still the charmer I approve,
Though I deplore her change.

In hours of bliss we oft have met,
They could not always last;
And though the present I regret
I'm grateful for the past.

SIR SAMUEL GARTH.

[SAMUEL GARTH was born at Bolam in Durham about the year 1660. He was knighted at the accession of George I, and died on Jan. 18, 1718. *The Dispensary* appeared in 1699, and quickly ran through numerous editions. The short poem on *Claremont* came out in 1715, and in 1717 Garth edited a translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, in which Dryden's versions were completed by a great number of hands, he himself contributing the fourteenth book and parts of others.]

Garth is mainly interesting at the present day because he was the first writer who took the couplet, as Dryden had fashioned it, from Dryden's hands, and displayed it in the form it maintained throughout the eighteenth century. In some respects it may be said that no advance in this peculiar model was ever made on *The Dispensary*. Its best lines are equal to any of Pope's in mere fashion, and in it appear clearly enough the inherent defects of the form when once Dryden's 'energy divine' and his cunning admixture of what looked like roughness had been lost or rejected. The monotony, the mannerism, and the other defects, emerge side by side with the polish and smoothness which are its great merits. Except for its versification, which not only long preceded Pope, but also anticipated Addison's happiest effort by some years, *The Dispensary* is not now an interesting poem. The dispute on which it is based is long forgotten, its mock heroic plan looks threadbare to our eyes, and the machinery and imagery have lost all the charm that they may at one time have had. But as a versifier Garth must always deserve a place in the story of English literature. *Claremont* and his other minor works display the same faculty, but at their date it was already common enough. We therefore here give extracts from *The Dispensary* only, reminding the reader that the poem gives a burlesque account of the opposition made by some physicians and apothecaries to the plan of giving gratuitous advice and medicine to the poor. We may add that our selections form part of the 'descriptions and episodes' added by the author in the edition of 1703.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

From 'The Dispensary.'

[Dr. Horoscope flies to consult Fortune at Teneriffe.]

The wondering sage pursues his airy flight,
And braves the chill unwholesome damps of night:
He views the tracts where luminaries rove,
To settle seasons here, and fates above;
The bleak Arcturus still forbid the seas,
The stormy Kids, the weeping Hyades;
The shining lyre with strains attracting more
Heaven's glittering mansions now than Hell's before;
Glad Cassiopeia circling in the sky,
And each fair Churchill of the galaxy.

Aurora, on Etesian breezes borne,
With blushing lips breathes out the sprightly morn:
Each flower in dew their short-liv'd empire weeps,
And Cynthia with her lov'd Endymion sleeps.
As through the gloom the magus cuts his way
Imperfect objects tell the doubtful day:
Dim he discerns majestic Atlas rise,
And bend beneath the burden of the skies;
His towering brows aloft no tempests know,
Whilst lightning flies, and thunder rolls below.
Distant from hence beyond a waste of plains,
Proud Teneriff, his giant brother, reigns;
With breathing fire his pitchy nostrils glow,
As from his sides he shakes the fleecy snow.
Around this hoary prince, from watery beds,
His subject islands raise their verdant heads;
The waves so gently wash each rising hill,
The land seems floating, and the ocean still.
Eternal spring with smiling verdure here
Warms the mild air, and crowns the youthful year.
From crystal rocks transparent rivulets flow;
The tuberose ever breathes, and violets blow;

The vine undressed her swelling clusters bears,
The labouring hind the mellow olive cheers;
Blossoms and fruit at once the citron shows,
And, as she pays, discovers still she owes.
The orange to her sun her pride displays,
And gilds her fragrant apples with his rays.
No blasts e'er discompose the peaceful sky,
The springs but murmur and the winds but sigh.
The tuneful swans on gliding rivers float,
And warbling dirges die on every note.
Where Flora treads, her zephyr garlands flings,
And scatters odours from his purple wings;
Whilst birds from woodbine bowers and jasmine groves
Chant their glad nuptials, and unenvy'd loves.
Mild seasons, rising hills, and silent dales,
Cool grottos, silver brooks, and flowery vales,
Groves fill'd with balmy shrubs, in pomp appear,
And scent with gales of sweets the circling year.
These happy isles, where endless pleasures wait,
Are styl'd by tuneful bards—the Fortunate.
On high, where no hoarse winds nor clouds resort,
The hoodwink'd goddess keeps her partial court.
Upon a wheel of amethyst she sits,
Gives and resumes, and smiles and frowns by fits.
In this still labyrinth, around her lie
Spells, philters, globes, and schemes of palmistry:
A sigil in this hand the gipsy bears,
In th' other a prophetic sieve and shears.

* * * * * *

[Fortune speaks.]

"'Tis I that give, so mighty is my power,
Faith to the Jew, complexion to the Moor,
I am the wretch's wish, the rook's pretence,
The sluggard's ease, the coxcomb's providence.
Sir Scrape-quill, once a supple smiling slave,
Looks lofty now, and insolently grave;
Builds, settles, purchases, and has each hour
Caps from the rich, and curses from the poor.

Spadillio, that at table serv'd of late,
Drinks rich tokay himself and eats in plate;
Has levees, villas, mistresses in store,
And owns the racers which he rubb'd before.
Souls heavenly born my faithless boons defy;
The brave is to himself a deity;
Though blest Astrea's gone, some soil remains
Where Fortune is the slave, and Merit reigns.
The Tiber boasts his Julian progeny,
Thames his Nassau, the Nile his Ptolemy.
Iberia, yet for future sway design'd,
Shall, for a Hesse, a greater Mordaunt find.
Thus Ariadne in proud triumph rode;
She lost a hero, and she found a god.

MATTHEW PRIOR.

[MATTHEW PRIOR was born in 1664 near Wimborne Minster in Dorsetshire. He was educated at Westminster under Dr. Busby, and at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in 1686. In the following year he published, in connection with Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, a caricature of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, under the title of *The Hind and the Panther transvers'd to the story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse.* In 1709 he published a volume of poems, and another with additions in 1718. He died in 1721.]

'Dan Prior next, belov'd by every Muse.'

So sings Gay in that welcome to Pope after his labours of the 'Iliad.' And indeed not every Muse, but all the world seem to have looked kindly on the fortunate young Horatian whom the noble Dorset had taken from the Rummer tavern to be successively a Secretary of Embassy, a Secretary of State, a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, a Member of Parliament, and, to crown all, an Ambassador. Among the subscribers to that stately *folio* of 1718, by which its author, happy man! cleared some £4,000, are numbered most of the illustrious names of the age, from Newton to Beau Nash,—to say nothing of lively maids of honour like 'the Hon^ble^ Mrs. Mary Bellenden,' and bishops like his Right Reverence of Winchester. Bishops and maids of honour would, we imagine, be somewhat embarrassed now-a-days by much of the ingenuous verse which the tall volume contains. But readers under Anna Augusta were either not squeamish, or they confined themselves to the portentous poem of *Solomon on the Vanity of the World* which occupies its latter pages.

When one looks to the general character of Prior's writings it is hard to understand how he could ever have penned this egregious didactic work. Yet he not only wrote it, but he hoped to live by

it, and grew petulant when Pope declined to praise it as a masterpiece.

'Indeed, poor *Solomon* in rhyme
Was much too grave to be sublime,'

exclaimed its disappointed author in his last-published piece of *The Conversation*. Another long poem, the frigid paraphrase of the fine old ballad of *The Not-Browne Maid* to which he gave the title of 'Henry and Emma,' although it contains the oft-quoted (and mis-quoted) 'Fine by degrees, and beautifully less,' is almost equally unendurable. Nor are the official performances of Prior,—the *Carmen Seculare* and the rest, always excepting the clever skit upon Boileau's pompous *Ode sur la prise de Namur*, likely to attract the modern reader. His distinctive and personal note is to be found in one only of his longer pieces, and in his vivacious tales, songs, epigrams and familiar verses. This long poem is *Alma*, written in 1715 and 1716 while the author lay in prison under suspicion of high treason. It is a whimsical and delightfully vagrant dialogue between Mat (Prior) and Dick (his friend Mr. Shelton) upon the various speculations of philosophers as to the relations of the soul and the body, and full of fine caprices and fitful fresh departures. Plan there is little or none; but the wayward turns of the humour lure the reader from page to page with all the fascination of a Will o' the Wisp.

We suspect, however, that in spite of its many good things, *Alma* is more quoted than read. With Prior's minor pieces the case is different. In these he exhibits all the verbal fitness and artful ease of such Latins as Horace and Martial, with both of whom he has considerable affinity. But his continental residence had also made him familiar with their Gallic imitators, and added a French grace and lightness to his already unencumbered muse. In his treatment of love and women he thoroughly follows his masters. However ardent, his adoration of the other sex is always conventional, while his appreciation of their foibles is keen even to malice. He seldom or never writes of them with real respect and deep feeling. What interests him most, it is clear, is not the tender passion in its more refined conditions, but those pretty episodes and accidents at which, they say, Dame Venus laughs,—

'*rident*
Simplices Nymphae, ferus et Cupido
Semper ardentes acuens sagittas
Cote cruenta.'

That is to say, his favourite poetical attitude is rather cynical than enthusiastic—rather material than ideal. Now and then, as in the verses *To a Child of Quality five years old*, he can assume a playful gravity which is altogether charming; but it is in such pieces as *The Merchant, to secure his treasure*, *A Better Answer*, *A Song*, that he shines most equably. As a tale-teller he comes near to La Fontaine for ease of narrative and careless finish; although his themes, like those of his model, are generally more witty than delicate. In his *Epistles* and pieces like *The Secretary* and *A Simile* he is delightful. As an epigrammatist he is unrivalled in English.

But however much one might attempt to define the work of Prior, there would always be a something left undefined,—a something that animates the whole and yet defies the critic, who falls back upon the old threadbare devices for describing the undescribable. His is the 'nameless charm' of Piron's epigram,—that fugitive *je ne sais quoi* of gaiety, of wit, of grace, of audacity, it is impossible to say what, which eludes analysis as the principle of life escapes the anatomist. In the present case it lifts its possessor above any other writer of familiar verse; but it is a something to which we cannot give a name, unless, indeed, we take refuge in paradox, and say that it is .... MATTHEW PRIOR.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

THE SECRETARY.

[Written at the Hague, in the year 1696.]

While with labour assiduous due pleasure I mix,
And in one day atone for the business of six;
In a little Dutch-chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my Horace, a Nymph on my right;
No *Mémoire* to compose and no Post-boy to move
That on Sunday may hinder the softness of love;
For her, neither visits, nor parties at tea,
Nor the long-winded cant of a dull refugee:
This night and the next shall be hers, shall be mine,
To good or ill fortune the third we resign:
Thus scorning the world and superior to fate
I drive on my car in processional state.
So with Phia through Athens Pisistratus rode;
Men thought her Minerva, and him a new God.
But why should I stories of Athens rehearse
Where people knew love, and were partial to verse;
Since none can with justice my pleasures oppose,
In Holland half-drowned in interest and prose?
By Greece and past ages what need I be tried,
When the Hague and the present are both on my side?
And is it enough for the joys of the day
To think what Anacreon or Sappho would say,
When good Vandergoes and his provident Vrouw,
As they gaze on my triumph, do freely allow,
That, search all the province, you'll find no man *dar* is
So blessed as the Englishen Heer Secretar' is.

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY FIVE YEARS OLD.

Lords, knights, and 'squires, the numerous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen among the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obeyed.

Nor quality, nor reputation,
Forbid me yet my flame to tell;
Dear five years old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For, while she makes her silk-worms beds
With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads,
In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,
For, though the strictest prudes should know it,
She 'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too, alas! when she shall tear
The lines some younger rival sends;
She 'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained, (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love,
When she begins to comprehend it.

A Song.

In vain you tell your parting lover,
You wish fair winds may waft him over
Alas! what winds can happy prove,
That bear me far from what I love?
Alas! what dangers on the main
Can equal those that I sustain,
From slighted vows, and cold disdain?

Be gentle, and in pity choose
To wish the wildest tempests loose:
That thrown again upon the coast,
Where first my shipwrecked heart was lost,
I may once more repeat my pain;
Once more in dying notes complain
Of slighted vows, and cold disdain.

To a Lady: *she refusing to continue a dispute with me, and leaving me in the argument.*

Spare, generous Victor, spare the slave,
Who did unequal war pursue;
That more than triumph he might have,
In being overcome by you.

In the dispute whate'er I said,
My heart was by my tongue belied;
And in my looks you might have read
How much I argued on your side.

You, far from danger as from fear,
Might have sustained an open fight:
For seldom your opinions err;
Your eyes are always in the right.

Why, fair one, would you not rely
On Reason's force with Beauty's joined?
Could I their prevalence deny,
I must at once be deaf and blind.

Alas! not hoping to subdue,
I only to the fight aspired:
To keep the beauteous foe in view
Was all the glory I desired.

But she, howe'er of victory sure,
Contemns the wreath too long delayed;
And, armed with more immediate power,
Calls cruel silence to her aid.

Deeper to wound, she shuns the fight:
She drops her arms, to gain the field:
Secures her conquest by her flight;
And triumphs, when she seems to yield.

So when the Parthian turned his steed,
And from the hostile camp withdrew;
With cruel skill the backward reed
He sent; and as he fled, he slew.

AN ODE.

The merchant, to secure his treasure,
Conveys it in a borrowed name:
Euphelia serves to grace my measure;
But Chloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre
Upon Euphelia's toilet lay;
When Chloe noted her desire,
That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise;
But with my numbers mix my sighs:
And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,
I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes.

Fair Chloe blushed: Euphelia frowned:
I sung and gazed: I played and trembled:
And Venus to the Loves around
Remarked, how ill we all dissembled.

CUPID MISTAKEN.

As after noon, one summer's day,
Venus stood bathing in a river;
Cupid a-shooting went that way,
New-strung his bow, new-filled his quiver.

With skill he chose his sharpest dart:
With all his might his bow he drew:
Swift to his beauteous parent's heart
The too-well-guided arrow flew.

I faint! I die! the goddess cried;
O cruel, could'st thou find none other
To wreck thy spleen on? Parricide!
Like Nero, thou hast slain thy mother.

Poor Cupid sobbing scarce could speak;
Indeed, mamma, I did not know ye:
Alas! how easy my mistake!
I took you for your likeness, Chloe.

A BETTER ANSWER[1].

Dear Chloe, how blubbered is that pretty face!
Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all uncurled:
Pr'ythee quit this caprice; and (as old Falstaff says)
Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this world.

How can'st thou presume, thou hast leave to destroy
The beauties, which Venus but lent to thy keeping?
Those looks were designed to inspire love and joy:
More ordinary eyes may serve people for weeping.

[1] I.e. than the 'Answer to Chloe jealous,' which usually precedes it.

To be vexed at a trifle or two that I writ,
Your judgment at once, and my passion you wrong:
You take that for fact, which will scarce be found wit:
Od's life! must one swear to the truth of a song?

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shews
The difference there is betwixt nature and art:
I court others in verse; but I love thee in prose:
And they have my whimsies; but thou hast my heart.

The god of us verse-men (you know Child) the sun,
How after his journeys he sets up his rest:
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run;
At night he reclines on his Thetis's breast.

So when I am wearied with wandering all day;
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way:
They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

Then finish, dear Chloe, this pastoral war;
And let us like Horace and Lydia agree:
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,
As he was a poet sublimer than me.

A SIMILE.

Dear Thomas, did'st thou never pop
Thy head into a tin-man's shop?
There, Thomas, did'st thou never see
('Tis but by way of Simile!)
A squirrel spend his little rage,
In jumping round a rolling cage?
The cage, as either side turned up,
Striking a ring of bells a-top?—
Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs:
But here or there, turn wood or wire,
He never gets two inches higher.

So fares it with those merry blades,
That frisk it under Pindus' shades.
In noble songs, and lofty odes,
They tread on stars, and talk with Gods;
Still dancing in an airy round,
Still pleased with their own verses' sound;
Brought back, how fast soe'er they go,
Always aspiring, always low.

EPIGRAM.

To John I owed great obligation;
But John, unhappily, thought fit
To publish it to all the nation:
Sure John and I are more than quit.

ANOTHER.

Yes, every poet is a fool:
By demonstration Ned can show it:
Happy, could Ned's inverted rule
Prove every fool to be a poet.

FOR MY OWN TOMB-STONE.

To me 'twas given to die: to thee 'tis given
To live: alas! one moment sets us even.
Mark! how impartial is the will of Heaven!

LADY WINCHILSEA.

[ANNE FINCH, Countess of Winchilsea, was born about 1660, at Sidmonton, Hants, the residence of her father, Sir William Kingsmill. She married Heneage Finch, fourth Earl of Winchilsea, who survived her six years. She died on the 5th of August, 1720, leaving no issue. Her works consist of *The Spleen*, a pindaric ode, 1701; *The Prodigy*, 1706; *Miscellany Poems*, 1713; and *Aristomenes*, a tragedy.]

In that invaluable Essay which Wordsworth appended to his *Lyrical Ballads* in 1815, he says that 'excepting the *Nocturnal Reverie* of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost* and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature.' This remark, although rather acute than exact, since the poet forgets both Gay and Parnell, did eminent service in restoring to the list of English poets a name entirely and unworthily forgotten. Since Wordsworth's mention of Lady Winchilsea, the one piece that he cites has been often reprinted in collections of verse, but it cannot be said that any further effort has been made to investigate the claims of the neglected authoress. Her poems have never been edited or described, and we believe that our present selection will reveal to almost all our readers a writer positively unknown to them. Yet she was a poetess of singular originality and excellence; her lines *To the Nightingale* have lyrical qualities which were scarcely approached in her own age, and would do credit to the best, while her odes and more weighty pieces have a strength and accomplishment of style which make the least interesting of them worth reading.

Lady Winchilsea was one of the last pindaric writers of the school of Cowley. Her odes display that species of writing in the

final dissolution out of which it was redeemed by Gray and Collins Such a poem as her *All is Vanity*, full as it is of ingenious thought, and studded with noble and harmonious lines, fails to impress the attention as a vertebrate composition. Her *Ode to the Spleen*, from which Pope borrowed his famous 'aromatic pain,' is still more loose and fragmentary in structure. On the other hand, her less ambitious studies have a singular perfection of form and picturesqueness of manner. She lights upon the right epithet and employs it with precision, and gives a brilliant turn, even to a triviality, by some bright and natural touch. Her *Nocturnal Reverie* is worthy of Wordsworth's commendation; it is simply phenomenal as the creation of a friend of Prior and of Pope, and some of the couplets, especially those which describe the straying horse, and the cries of the birds, are worthy of the closest observers of nature in a naturalistic age. In light verse Lady Winchilsea took Prior as a model, and succeeded respectably; her reply to Pope's complimentary verses to her under the name of Ardelia deserves higher praise.

From her age to this Lady Winchilsea has received nothing but neglect from the English public. Her contemporaries disregarded her writings, as she herself complains, and in 1753 there were still existing two collections of her poems in MS., which no one had taken the trouble to print. To the public of the eighteenth century her delicate observation of nature seemed less important than the didactic lyricism of Mrs. Barber or the frivolity of Lætitia Pilkington. If those unpublished poems, to which reference has been made, are still in the possession of her family, it is highly desirable that they should be given to the world.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Exert thy voice, sweet harbinger of Spring!
This moment is thy time to sing,
This moment I attend to praise,
And set my numbers to thy lays;
Free as thine shall be my song,
As thy music, short or long;
Poets, wild as thou, were born,
Pleasing best when unconfined,
When to please is least designed,
Soothing but their cares to rest;
Cares do still their thoughts molest,
And still the unhappy poet's breast
Like thine, when best he sings, is placed against a thorn.
She begins! Let all be still!
Muse, thy promise now fulfil!
Sweet! oh sweet! still sweeter yet!
Can thy words such accents fit?
Canst thou syllables refine,
Melt a sense that shall retain
Still some spirit of the brain,
Till with sounds like those it join?
'Twill not be! then change thy note,
Let division shake thy throat!
Hark! division now she tries,
Yet as far the Muse outflies!
Cease then, prithee, cease thy tune,
Trifler, wilt thou sing till June?
Till thy business all lies waste
And the time of building's past?
Thus we poets that have speech,—
Unlike what thy forests teach,—
If a fluent vein be shown
That's transcendent to our own,
Criticise, reform or preach,
Censuring what we cannot reach.

THE TREE.

Fair Tree! for thy delightful shade
'Tis just that some return be made;
Sure some return is due from me
To thy cool shadows, and to thee.
When thou to birds dost shelter give
Thou music dost from them receive;
If travellers beneath thee stay
Till storms have worn themselves away,
That time in praising thee they spend,
And thy protecting power commend;
The shepherd here, from scorching freed.
Tunes to thy dancing leaves his reed,
Whilst his loved nymph in thanks bestows
Her flowery chaplets on thy boughs.
Shall I then only silent be,
And no return be made by me?
No! let this wish upon me wait,
And still to flourish be thy fate,
To future ages mayst thou stand
Untouched by the rash workman's hand,
Till that large stock of sap is spent,
Which gives thy summer's ornament;
Till the fierce winds, that vainly strive
To shock thy greatness whilst alive,
Shall on thy lifeless hour attend,
Prevent the axe and grace thy end,
Their scattered strength together call,
And to the clouds proclaim thy fall,
Who then their evening dews may spare,
When thou no longer art their care,
But shalt, like ancient heroes, burn
And some bright hearth be made thy urn.

A NOCTURNAL REVERIE.

In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined,
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings,
Or from some tree, framed for the owl's delight,
She, hollowing clear, directs the wanderer right,—
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face,
When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen,
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence spring the woodbind and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes,
Where scattered glowworms,—but in twilight fine,—
Shew trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine,
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect beauty bright;
When odours, which declined repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric awful in repose;
While sunburned hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;

When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant Man doth sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks and all's confused again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

FROM 'AN ODE TO THE SPLEEN.

Falsely the mortal part we blame
Of our depressed and ponderous frame,
Which, till the first degrading sin
Let thee, its dull attendant, in,
Still with the other did comply,
Nor clogged the active soul, disposed to fly
And range the mansions of its native sky.
Nor, whilst in his own heaven he dwelt,
Whilst Man his paradise possessed,
His fertile garden in the fragrant East,
And all united odours felt,
No armèd sweets, until thy reign,
Could shock the sense, or in the face
A flushed, unhandsome colour place;
But now a jonquil daunts the feeble brain,
We faint beneath the aromatic pain,
Till some offensive scent thy powers appease,
And pleasure we resign for short and nauseous ease.

In Answer to Mr. Pope.

Disarmed with so genteel an air,
The contest I give o'er,
Yet, Alexander, have a care,
And shock the sex no more.
We rule the world our life's whole race,
Men but assume that right,
First slaves to every tempting face,
Then martyrs to our spite.
You of one Orpheus sure have read,
Who would like you have writ,
Had he in London town been bred,
And polished, too, his wit;
But he, poor soul, thought all was well,
And great should be his fame,
When he had left his wife in hell.
And birds and beasts could tame.
Yet venturing then with scoffing rhymes
The women to incense,
Resenting heroines of those times
Soon punished his offence;
And as the Hebrus rolled his skull,
And harp besmeared with blood,
They, clashing as the waves grew full,
Still harmonised the flood.
But you our follies gently treat,
And spin so fine the thread,
You need not fear his awkward fate
The Lock won't cost the Head.
Our admiration you command
For all that 's gone before,
What next we look for at your hand
Can only raise it more.
Yet soothe the ladies, I advise,—
As me, too, pride has wrought,—
We 're born to wit, but to be wise
By admonitions taught

JONATHAN SWIFT.

[JONATHAN SWIFT was born in Hoey's court, Dublin, on the 30th of November 1667. Belonging to a Yorkshire family and directly descended from a vicar in Herefordshire, one of whose younger sons, the poet's father, married a Leicestershire lady, he was of unmixed English blood. A posthumous child, left in indigent circumstances, he was sent to school at Kilkenny, and then to Trinity College, Dublin, by the charity of his uncle Godwin, who died in 1688. Swift seems to have neglected the studies requisite to his degree, and having been plucked at his first examination only obtained it, on a second trial, Feb. 1686, 'speciali gratia.' On the outbreak of the war, 1688, he fled to England, and found his way from Chester on foot to his mother's residence. She obtained for him the patronage of Sir William Temple, to whose wife she was related, and he remained at Moor Park for eleven years in the capacity of secretary to that accomplished statesman, at a salary of £20 a year. This residence, interrupted by a short absence during which he held an Irish country living in the diocese of Connor, brought him into the frequent society of Hester Johnson (Stella), an inmate of the same house, and reputed daughter of Sir William's steward. In 1692 Swift went to Oxford, and was admitted there to a Master's degree. On occasion of this visit he produced his first verses—an indifferent rendering of Horace (Odes ii. 18), followed a little later by his *Pindaric Odes*. A more substantial result of his studies in his master's library was *The Battle of the Books*. In 1694 he took Deacon's, and in 1695 Priest's orders. Ere his death in 1699 Sir William had from the king a promise of promotion for his client—a promise afterwards forgotten. In 1700 Swift accompanied Lord Berkeley to Ireland as chaplain, and obtained the living of Laracor in the county of Meath, at an income of £200 a year, which by the addition of the Prebend of Dunlavin was increased to £350. Initiated into the intrigues of party, he first came before the public as a champion of the Whigs, in his pamphlet entitled *A Discourse on the contests and dissensions of Athens and Rome* (1701). In 1704 appeared the *Tale of a Tub*, perhaps the wittiest of controversial works, and in 1708 the papers ridiculing the astrologer Partridge, under the signature of Isaac Bickerstaff. In 1710, with a change of opinion, quickened by chagrin at patronage deferred, Swift passed to the side of the Tories and became their most effective literary champion. His *Conduct of the Allies*

(1712) brought about in 1713 the Peace of Utrecht, and the gratitude of Harley and Bolinbroke procured for him the Deanery of St. Patrick's. During these years he spent a considerable portion of his time in London, exercised a commanding influence in literary and social circles, and was the leading patron of good and the scourge of bad writers. He maintained a close correspondence with Stella, and unfortunately won the affections of Miss Vanhomrigh (Vanessa), who followed him to Ireland and died there in 1723. In 1714, on the death of the Queen, Swift's hopes of further preferment being closed, he withdrew to his deanery, settled in Dublin and 'commenced Irishman for life.' In 1716 he contracted a formal marriage with Miss Johnson. The *Drapier's Letters* were issued in 1724; they effectually stopped 'Wood's pence,' and made their author for a time the most popular man in Ireland. *Gulliver's Travels* were published in 1727. Swift spent much of the year with Pope, but was recalled by the illness of Stella, who died in 1728 Shortly after this event he wrote to Bolinbroke, 'It is time for me to have done with the world.' To another friend he remarked, gazing at a blasted elm, 'I shall be like that tree, and die first at the top'—a prediction realised in the gradual loss of his memory, sight hearing, speech, and finally his reason. He died in Oct 1745, and left his fortune, of about £10,000, to found a lunatic asylum in Dublin.]

Dryden, then the veteran of our literature, sitting in the dictator's chair left vacant by Ben Jonson and waiting for Samuel Johnson, having perused an ode on the Athenian Society dating from Moor Park, February 14, 1691, hazarded the prediction, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet.' The unforgiven criticism has received from the judgment of posterity an assent qualified by respect for the strongest satirist of England and for an ability which cannot help making itself here and there manifest even in his verse.

Swift's satire is of two kinds: the party polemic of his earlier years, which culminated in 1724 in the *Drapier's Letters*, and the expression of a misanthropy as genuine as that of Shakespeare's Timon, of a rage directed not against Dissent or Church or Whig or Tory, but mankind, finding mature vent in the most terrible libel that has ever been imagined—a libel on the whole of his race—the hideous immortal mockery of the closing voyage of Gulliver. Such a work could only have been written by one born a cynic, doubly soured by some mysterious affliction, and by having had

> 'To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
> To spend, to give, to want, to be undone,'

till he had lost any original capacity he may have had for

becoming a poet. His genius, moreover, was from the first as far removed from that peculiar to poetry as it is possible for any genius of the first rank to be. The power of Swift's prose was the terror of his own, and remains the wonder of after times. With the exception of a few clumsy paragraphs thrown off in haste, he says what he means in the homeliest native English that can be conceived. Disdaining even those refinements or shades of expression to which most writers touching on delicate or dangerous subjects feel compelled to resort, he owes almost nothing to foreign influence. 'I am,' he wrote, 'for every man's working on his own materials, and producing only what he can find within himself': he consistently carved everything he had to set before his readers out of the plain facts with which he professed to deal. In his masterpieces there is scarce a hint from any known source, rarely a quotation: his sentences are self-sufficient, and fit the occasion as a glove the hand. In the *Tale of a Tub* he anticipates Teufelsdrockh in his contempt for trappings of speech as of person; he regarded fine language as leather and prunella. Though Swift's Allegories are abundant, he disdained ordinary metaphor, in the spirit in which Bentham defined poetry as misrepresentation. But towards the close of the seventeenth and during the early years of the 18th century, almost every English writer—apart from those purely scientific—had to pay toll to what he called the Muses. Bunyan seems to have written his bad lines to italicise the distinction between the most highly imaginative prose and poetry. In the next age no one who addressed the general public could escape the trial; and Swift's verses are at least as worthy of preservation as Addison's. In following a fashion he also gratified a talent,—nor Pope nor Byron had a greater,—for fluent rhyme. Generally careless, often harsh, his versification is seldom laboured: his pen may run till it wearies the reader; but we see no reason in fall of energy why Swift's Hudibrastic jingle should cease, any more than why the waves of Spenser's stanza should not roll for ever. The other merits of our author's verse are those of his prose—condensation, pith, always the effect, generally the reality, of sincere purpose, and, with few exceptions, simplicity and directness. The exceptions are in his unhappy Pindaric odes, and some of his later contributions to the pedantry of the age. The former could scarcely be worse, for they have almost the contortions of Cowley, without his occasional flow and elevation. Take the following lines from the *Athenian Ode*:

'Just so the mighty Nile has suffered in its fame
Because 'tis said (and perhaps only said)
We've found a little inconsiderable head
That feeds the huge, unequal stream.'

And again:

'And then how much and nothing is mankind,
Whose reason is weighed down by popular air,
Who by that vainly talks of baffling death:
And hopes to lengthen life by a transfusion of breath,
Which yet whoe'er examines right will find
To be an art as vain as bottling up of wind'

As in Congreve's *Address to Silence*, the force of cacophony can no further go. It may be said that these lines were the products of 'green, unknowing youth,' but during the same years the same writer was maturing the *Tale of a Tub*. Swift had no ear save for the discords of the world, and in such cases a stiff regular measure, which is a sort of rhythmic policeman, is the only safe guard. Pindaric flights, unless under the guidance of the genius that makes music as it runs, invariably result in confusion worse confounded. Not least among our debts to Dryden may be ranked his fencing the ode from his cousin Swift. Of the pseudo-classic efforts of the latter, *Cadenus and Vanessa*, published in 1723, probably written about ten years earlier, may be taken as a type. No selection from his verses would be esteemed satisfactory that did not exhibit a sample of this once celebrated production: but, apart from the tragic interest of the personal warning it conveys, it is, as M. Taine says, 'a threadbare allegory in which the author's prosaic freaks tear his Greek frippery.' The same critic justly remarks that Swift 'wore his mythology like a wig: that his pleading before Venus is like a legal procedure,' and that he habitually 'turns his classic wine to vinegar.' The other writers of the time had turned it into milk and water, but Prior and the rest had a grace to which Swift was a stranger. Their laughter is genuine though light; his was funereal and sardonic. His pleasantry is rarely pleasant, and he is never at heart more gloomy than when he affects to be gay. Most of his occasional verses, written at intervals from 1690 till 1733, are either frigid compliments or thinly veiled invectives, many of which, like the epigrams that disfigure the otherwise exquisite pages of Herrick, have all the coarseness with only half the wit of Martial. His

addresses to women are, as might be expected, singularly unfortunate. He says truly of himself that he

> 'could praise, esteem, approve,
> But understood not what it was to love.'

He can never get out of his satiric pulpit, and while saluting his mistresses as nymphs, he lectures them as school-girls. His verses to Stella, whom he came as near to loving as was for him possible, and whose death certainly hastened his mental ruin, are as unimpassioned as those to Vanessa, with whose affections he merely trifled. Swift's tendency to dwell on the meaner, and even the revolting facts of life, pardonable in his prose, is unpardonable in those tributes to Venus Cloacina, in which he intrudes on a lady's boudoir with the eye of a surgeon fresh from a dissecting-room or an hospital. His society verses are like those of a man writing with his feet, for he delights to trample on what others caress. Often he seems, among singing birds, a vulture screeching over carrion.

Of Swift's graver satiric pieces, the *Rhapsody on Poetry* has the fatal drawback of suggesting a comparison with *The Dunciad*. In *The Beast's Confession*, vivid and trenchant though it be, the author appears occasionally to intrude on the gardens of Prior and Gay. Had he been an artist in verse, he might have written something in English more like the sixth satire of Juvenal than Churchill ever succeeded in doing. But Swift despised art: he rode rough-shod, on his ambling cynic steed, through bad double rhyme and halting rhythm, to his end. War with the cold steel of prose was his business: his poems are the mere side-lights and pastimes of a man too grim to join heartily in any game. Only here and there among them, as in the strange medley of pathos and humour on his own death, there is a flash from the eyes which Pope—good hater and good friend—said were azure as the heavens, a touch of the hand that was never weary of giving gifts to the poor and blows to the powerful, a reflection of the universal *condottiere*, misanthrope and sceptic, who has a claim to our forbearance in that he detested, as Johnson and as Byron detested, cowardice and cant.

J. NICHOL.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MORNING. WRITTEN IN APRIL 1709, AND FIRST PRINTED IN THE TATLER.

Now hardly here and there a hackney-coach
Appearing, show'd the ruddy morn's approach.
* * * * * *
The slip-shod 'prentice from his master's door
Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor
Now Moll had whirl'd her mop with dext'rous airs,
Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.
The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
The kennel's edge, where wheels had worn the place.
The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep:
Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet;
And brickdust Moll had scream'd through half the street
The turnkey now his flock returning sees,
Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

HORACE, BOOK IV. ODE IX. ADDRESSED TO ARCHBISHOP KING. 1718.

Virtue conceal'd within our breast
Is inactivity at best:
But never shall the Muse endure
To let your virtues lie obscure;
Or suffer Envy to conceal
Your labours for the public weal.
Within your breast all wisdom lies,
Either to govern or advise;

Your steady soul preserves her frame,
In good and evil times, the same.
Pale Avarice and lurking Fraud,
Stand in your sacred presence awed;
Your hand alone from gold abstains,
Which drags the slavish world in chains.
Him for a happy man I own,
Whose fortune is not overgrown;
And happy he who wisely knows
To use the gifts that Heaven bestows;
Or, if it please the powers divine,
Can suffer want and not repine.
The man who infamy to shun
Into the arms of death would run;
That man is ready to defend,
With life, his country or his friend.

APOLLO'S EDICT. OCCASIONED BY 'NEWS FROM PARNASSUS.'

Ireland is now our royal care,
We lately fix'd our viceroy there.
How near was she to be undone,
Till pious love inspired her son!
What cannot our vicegerent do,
As poet and as patriot too?
Let his success our subjects sway,
Our inspirations to obey,
And follow where he leads the way:
Then study to correct your taste;
Nor beaten paths be longer traced.
No simile shall be begun,
With rising or with setting sun;
And let the secret head of Nile
Be ever banish'd from your isle.
When wretched lovers live on air,
I beg you 'll the chameleon spare;

And, when you'd make a hero grander,
Forget he's like a salamander[1].
No son of mine shall dare to say,
Aurora usher'd in the day,
Or ever name the milky-way.
You all agree, I make no doubt,
Elijah's mantle is worn out.
The bird of Jove shall toil no more
To teach the humble wren to soar.
Your tragic heroes shall not rant,
Nor shepherds use poetic cant.
Simplicity alone can grace
The manners of the rural race.
Theocritus and Philips be
Your guides to true simplicity.
When Damon's soul shall take its flight,
Though poets have the second-sight,
They shall not see a trail of light.
Nor shall the vapours upwards rise,
Nor a new star adorn the skies:
For who can hope to place one there,
As glorious as Belinda's hair?
Yet, if his name you'd eternize,
And must exalt him to the skies,
Without a star this may be done:
So Tickell mourn'd his Addison.
If Anna's happy reign you praise,
Pray, not a word of halcyon days:
Nor let my votaries show their skill
In aping lines from Cooper's Hill;
For know I cannot bear to hear
The mimicry of deep, yet clear.
Whene'er my viceroy is address'd,
Against the phœnix I protest.
When poets soar in youthful strains,
No Phaeton to hold the reins.

[1] Referring to some verses in which Swift had described Lord Cutts under the form of salamander.

When you describe a lovely girl,
No lips of coral, teeth of pearl.
Cupid shall ne'er mistake another,
However beauteous, for his mother;
Nor shall his darts at random fly
From magazine in Celia's eye.
With woman compounds I am cloy'd,
Which only pleased in Biddy Floyd[1].
For foreign aid what need they roam,
Whom fate has amply blest at home?
Unerring Heaven, with bounteous hand,
Has form'd a model for your land,
Whom Jove endued with every grace;
The glory of the Granard race;
Now destined by the powers divine
The blessing of another line.
Then, would you paint a matchless dame,
Whom you'd consign to endless fame?
Invoke not Cytherea's aid,
Nor borrow from the blue-eyed maid;
Nor need you on the Graces call;
Take qualities from Donegal[2].

From 'Cadenus and Vanessa.'

In a glad hour Lucina's aid
Produced on earth a wondrous maid,
On whom the Queen of Love was bent
To try a new experiment.
She threw her law-books on the shelf,
And thus debated with herself.
Since men allege, they ne'er can find
Those beauties in a female mind
Which raise a flame that will endure
For ever uncorrupt and pure;

[1] A lady whom Swift had praised as a 'happy composition' of innocence, breeding, wit, &c.

[2] The Countess of Donegal, daughter to the first earl of Granard

If 'tis with reason they complain,
This infant shall restore my reign.
I 'll search where every virtue dwells,
From courts inclusive down to cells:
What preachers talk, or sages write;
These will I gather and unite,
And represent them to mankind
Collected in that infant's mind.

This said, she plucks in Heaven's high bowers
A sprig of amaranthine flowers.
In nectar thrice infuses bays,
Three times refined in Titan's rays;
Then calls the Graces to her aid,
And sprinkles thrice the newborn maid:
From whence the tender skin assumes
A sweetness above all perfumes:
From whence a cleanliness remains,
Incapable of outward stains:
From whence that decency of mind,
So lovely in the female kind,
Where not one careless thought intrudes
Less modest than the speech of prudes;
Where never blush was call'd in aid,
That spurious virtue in a maid,
A virtue but at second-hand;
They blush because they understand.

The Graces next would act their part,
And show'd but little of their art;
Their work was half already done,
The child with native beauty shone;
The outward form no help required:
Each, breathing on her thrice, inspired
That gentle, soft, engaging air,
Which in old times adorn'd the fair:
And said, 'Vanessa be the name
By which thou shalt be known to fame:
Vanessa, by the gods enroll'd:
Her name on earth shall not be told.'

THE BEASTS' CONFESSION.

When beasts could speak, (the learned say
They still can do so every day,)
It seems, they had religion then,
As much as now we find in men.
It happen'd, when a plague broke out,
(Which therefore made them more devout,)
The king of brutes (to make it plain,
Of quadrupeds I only mean)
By proclamation gave command,
That every subject in the land
Should to the priest confess their sins;
And thus the pious Wolf begins:—
Good father, I must own with shame.
That often I have been to blame:
I must confess, on Friday last,
Wretch that I was! I broke my fast:
But I defy the basest tongue
To prove I did my neighbour wrong;
Or ever went to seek my food,
By rapine, theft, or thirst of blood.
The Ass approaching next, confess'd,
That in his heart he loved a jest:
A wag he was, he needs must own,
And could not let a dunce alone:
Sometimes his friend he would not spare.
And might perhaps be too severe:
But yet the worst that could be said,
He was a wit both born and bred;
And, if it be a sin and shame,
Nature alone must bear the blame:
One fault he has, is sorry for 't,
His ears are half a foot too short;
Which could he to the standard bring,
He 'd show his face before the king:

Then for his voice, there's none disputes
That he's the nightingale of brutes.
The Swine with contrite heart allow'd,
His shape and beauty made him proud:
In diet was perhaps too nice,
But gluttony was ne'er his vice:
In every turn of life content,
And meekly took what fortune sent:
Inquire through all the parish round,
A better neighbour ne'er was found;
His vigilance might some displease;
'Tis true, he hated sloth like pease.
The mimic Ape began his chatter,
How evil tongues his life bespatter;
Much of the censuring world complain'd,
Who said, his gravity was feign'd:
Indeed, the strictness of his morals
Engaged him in a hundred quarrels:
He saw, and he was grieved to see 't,
His zeal was sometimes indiscreet:
He found his virtues too severe
For our corrupted times to bear;
Yet such a lewd licentious age
Might well excuse a stoic's rage.
The Goat advanced with decent pace,
And first excused his youthful face;
Forgiveness begg'd that he appear'd
('Twas Nature's fault) without a beard.
'Tis true, he was not much inclined
To fondness for the female kind:
Not, as his enemies object,
From chance, or natural defect;
Not by his frigid constitution;
But through a pious resolution:
For he had made a holy vow
Of Chastity, as monks do now:
Which he resolved to keep for ever hence
And strictly too, as doth his reverence.

Apply the tale, and you shall find,
How just it suits with human kind.
Some faults we own; but can you guess?
—Why, virtue's carried to excess,
Wherewith our vanity endows us,
Though neither foe nor friend allows us.
The Lawyer swears (you may rely on't)
He never squeezed a needy client;
And this he makes his constant rule,
For which his brethren call him fool;
His conscience always was so nice,
He freely gave the poor advice;
By which he lost, he may affirm,
A hundred fees last Easter term;
While others of the learned robe,
Would break the patience of a Job.
No pleader at the bar could match
His diligence and quick dispatch;
Ne'er kept a cause, he well may boast,
Above a term or two at most.
The cringing knave, who seeks a place
Without success, thus tells his case:
Why should he longer mince the matter?
He failed, because he could not flatter;
He had not learn'd to turn his coat,
Nor for a party give his vote:
His crime he quickly understood;
Too zealous for the nation's good:
He found the ministers resent it,
Yet could not for his heart repent it.
The Chaplain vows, he cannot fawn,
Though it would raise him to the lawn:
He passed his hours among his books;
You find it in his meagre looks:
He might, if he were worldly wise,
Preferment get, and spare his eyes;
But owns he had a stubborn spirit,
That made him trust alone to merit;

Would rise by merit to promotion;
Alas! a mere chimeric notion.
The Doctor, if you will believe him,
Confess'd a sin; (and God forgive him!)
Call'd up at midnight, ran to save
A blind old beggar from the grave:
But see how Satan spreads his snares;
He quite forgot to say his prayers.
He cannot help it, for his heart,
Sometimes to act the parson's part:
Quotes from the Bible many a sentence,
That moves his patients to repentance;
And, when his medicines do no good,
Supports their minds with heavenly food:
At which, however well intended,
He hears the clergy are offended;
And grown so bold behind his back,
To call him hypocrite and quack.
In his own church he keeps a seat;
Says grace before and after meat;
And calls, without affecting airs,
His household twice a-day to prayers.
He shuns apothecaries' shops,
And hates to cram the sick with slops:
He scorns to make his art a trade;
Nor bribes my lady's favourite maid.
Old nurse-keepers would never hire,
To recommend him to the squire;
Which others, whom he will not name,
Have often practised to their shame.
The Statesman tells you, with a sneer,
His fault is to be too sincere;
And having no sinister ends,
Is apt to disoblige his friends.
The nation's good, his master's glory,
Without regard to Whig or Tory,
Were all the schemes he had in view,
Yet he was seconded by few:

Though some had spread a thousand lies,
'Twas he defeated the excise.
'Twas known, though he had borne aspersion,
That standing troops were his aversion:
His practice was, in every station,
To serve the king, and please the nation.
Though hard to find in every case
The fittest man to fill a place:
His promises he ne'er forgot,
But took memorials on the spot;
His enemies, for want of charity,
Said, he affected popularity:
'Tis true, the people understood,
That all he did was for their good;
Their kind affections he has tried;
No love is lost on either side.
He came to court with fortune clear,
Which now he runs out every year;
Must, at the rate that he goes on,
Inevitably be undone:
O! if his majesty would please
To give him but a writ of ease,
Would grant him license to retire,
As it has long been his desire,
By fair accounts it would be found,
He's poorer by ten thousand pound.
He owns, and hopes it is no sin,
He ne'er was partial to his kin;
He thought it base for men in stations,
To crowd the court with their relations.
His country was his dearest mother,
And every virtuous man his brother;
Through modesty or awkward shame,
(For which he owns himself to blame,)
He found the wisest man he could,
Without respect to friends or blood;
Nor ever acts on private views,
When he has liberty to choose.

The Sharper swore he hated play,
Except to pass an hour away:
And well he might; for, to his cost,
By want of skill, he always lost;
He heard there was a club of cheats,
Who had contrived a thousand feats;
Could change the stock, or cog a die,
And thus deceive the sharpest eye:
Nor wonder how his fortune sunk,
His brothers fleece him when he's drunk.
I own the moral not exact,
Besides, the tale is false, in fact;
And so absurd, that could I raise up,
From fields Elysian, fabling Æsop,
I would accuse him to his face,
For libelling the four-foot race.
Creatures of every kind but ours
Well comprehend their natural powers,
While we, whom reason ought to sway,
Mistake our talents every day.
The Ass was never known so stupid,
To act the part of Tray or Cupid;
Nor leaps upon his master's lap,
There to be stroked, and fed with pap,
As Æsop would the world persuade;
He better understands his trade:
Nor comes whene'er his lady whistles,
But carries loads, and feeds on thistles.
Our author's meaning, I presume, is
A creature *bipes et implumis*;
Wherein the moralist design'd
A compliment on human kind;
For here he owns, that now and then
Beasts may degenerate into men.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

(First printed in a letter from Lord Chesterfield to Voltaire, Aug. 27, 1752.)

With a whirl of thought oppress'd,
I sunk from reverie to rest.
A horrid vision seized my head,
I saw the graves give up their dead!
Jove, arm'd with terrors, bursts the skies,
And thunder roars and lightning flies!
Amazed, confused, its fate unknown,
The world stands trembling at his throne!
While each pale sinner hung his head,
Jove, nodding, shook the heavens, and said:
'Offending race of human kind,
By nature, reason, learning, blind;
You who, through frailty, stepp'd aside;
And you, who never fell from pride:
You who in different sects were shamm'd
And come to see each other damn'd;
(So some folk told you, but they knew
No more of Jove's designs than you;)
—The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more.
—I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools!—Go, go, you're bit.'

FROM 'VERSES ON THE DEATH OF DR. SWIFT.'

Vain human kind! fantastic race!
Thy various follies who can trace?
Self-love, ambition, envy, pride,
Their empire in our hearts divide.
Give others riches, power, and station,
'Tis all on me a usurpation.

I have no title to aspire;
Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher.
In Pope I cannot read a line,
But with a sigh I wish it mine;
When he can in one couplet fix
More sense than I can do in six,
It gives me such a jealous fit,
I cry, 'Pox take him and his wit!'
I grieve to be outdone by Gay
In my own humorous biting way.
Arbuthnot is no more my friend,
Who dares to irony pretend,
Which I was born to introduce,
Refined it first, and show'd its use.
St. John, as well as Pultney, knows
That I had some repute for prose;
And, till they drove me out of date,
Could maul a minister of state.
If they have mortified my pride,
And made me throw my pen aside;
If with such talents Heaven has bless'd 'em,
Have I not reason to detest 'em?

* * * * *

From Dublin soon to London spread,
'Tis told at court, 'the Dean is dead.'
And Lady Suffolk, in the spleen,
Runs laughing up to tell the queen.
The queen, so gracious, mild, and good,
Cries, 'Is he gone! 'tis time he should.
He's dead, you say; then let him rot:
I'm glad the medals were forgot.[1]
I promised him, I own; but when?
I only was the princess then;
But now, as consort of the king,
You know, 'tis quite another thing.'

[1] The Queen had promised Swift a present which she never gave him

Now Chartres, at Sir Robert's[1] levee,
Tells with a sneer the tidings heavy:
'Why, if he died without his shoes,'
Cries Bob, 'I'm sorry for the news:
O, were the wretch but living still,
And in his place my good friend Will![2]
Or had a mitre on his head,
Provided Bolingbroke were dead!'
Now Curll his shop from rubbish drains:
Three genuine tomes of Swift's remains!
And then, to make them pass the glibber,
Revised by Tibbalds, Moore, and Cibber.
He'll treat me as he does my betters,
Publish my will, my life, my letters:
Revive the libels born to die;
Which Pope must bear, as well as I.
Here shift the scene, to represent
How those I love my death lament.
Poor Pope would grieve a month, and Gay
A week, and Arbuthnot a day.
St. John himself will scarce forbear
To bite his pen, and drop a tear.
The rest will give a shrug, and cry,
'I'm sorry—but we all must die!'

* * * * *

Suppose me dead; and then suppose
A club assembled at the Rose;
Where, from discourse of this and that,
I grow the subject of their chat.
And while they toss my name about,
With favour some, and some without,
One, quite indifferent in the cause,
My character impartial draws:
'The Dean, if we believe report,
Was never ill-received at court.

[1] Sir Robert Walpole. The Dublin edition describes Chartres as 'an infamous vile scoundrel, grown from a footboy, or worse, to a prodigious fortune.'

[2] William Pulteney, who went over from Walpole to Bolingbroke.

As for his works in verse and prose,
I own myself no judge of those;
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em:
But this I know, all people bought 'em.
As with a moral view design'd
To cure the vices of mankind:
His vein, ironically grave,
Exposed the fool, and lash'd the knave.
To steal a hint was never known,
But what he writ was all his own.

'He never thought an honour done him,
Because a duke was proud to own him;
Would rather slip aside and choose
To talk with wits in dirty shoes;
Despised the fools with stars and garters,
So often seen caressing Chartres.
He never courted men in station,
Nor persons held in admiration;
Of no man's greatness was afraid,
Because he sought for no man's aid.
Though trusted long in great affairs
He gave himself no haughty airs:
Without regarding private ends,
Spent all his credit for his friends;
And only chose the wise and good;
No flatterers; no allies in blood:
But succour'd virtue in distress,
And seldom fail'd of good success;
As numbers in their hearts must own,
Who, but for him, had been unknown.

* * * * *

'Perhaps I may allow the Dean
Had too much satire in his vein;
And seem'd determined not to starve it,
Because no age could more deserve it.
Yet malice never was his aim;
He lash'd the vice, but spared the name;
No individual could resent,
Where thousands equally were meant;

His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct;
For he abhorr'd that senseless tribe
Who call it humour when they gibe:
He spared a hump, or crooked nose,
Whose owners set not up for beaux.
True genuine dulness moved his pity,
Unless it offer'd to be witty.
Those who their ignorance confest,
He ne'er offended with a jest;
But laugh'd to hear an idiot quote
A verse from Horace learn'd by rote.

'He knew a hundred pleasing stories,
With all the turns of Whigs and Tories:
Was cheerful to his dying day;
And friends would let him have his way

'He gave the little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad;
And show'd by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.'

ALEXANDER POPE.

[ALEXANDER POPE was born in Lombard Street, in the city of London, 1688. His father was a wholesale linen-draper, who, having realised a modest competence, retired to the country to live upon it. Pope's youth was spent at Binfield in the skirts of Windsor Forest. Pope was brought up a Catholic, his father, though the son of a beneficed clergyman of the Established Church, having become a convert to Catholicism during a residence on the continent. On the death of his father, Pope, who had largely increased his inheritance by the profits of his translation of Homer, established himself at Twickenham. Here he resided till his death in 1744, employing himself in writing, in embellishing his grounds, of five acres, and in intercourse with most of the wits, and other famous men and women of his time, among whom Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Lord Bolingbroke were his especial intimates. Pope was deformed, and sickly from childhood, and his constant ill-health made his temper fretful, waspish, and irritable. Notwithstanding these defects of character he secured the warm attachment of his friends. Bolingbroke said of him that he never knew a man who had so tender a heart for his particular friends. Warburton, after spending a fortnight at Twickenham, said of him, 'He is as good a companion as a poet, and, what is more, appears to be as good a man.' Pope's principal works are—*Pastorals*, published in 1709; *Essay on Criticism*, 1711; *Pollio*, 1712; *Rape of the Lock*, 1714; *Translation of Homer's Iliad*, 1715-18; *Edition of Shakspeare*, 1725; *Translation of Homer's Odyssey*, 1726; *Dunciad*, 1st form, 1728; *Epistle to the Earl of Burlington*, 1731; *On the Use of Riches*, 1732; *Essay on Man*, Part 1, 1732; *Horace, Sat.* 2. 1. *imitated*, 1733; *Epistle to Lord Cobham*, 1733; *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 1735; *Horace, Epistle* 1. 1. *imitated*, 1737; *Dunciad*, altered and enlarged, 1742. His works were collected by his literary executor, Bishop Warburton and published in 9 volumes in 1751.]

Pope is not only the foremost literary figure of his age, but the representative man of a system or style of writing which for a hundred years before and after him pervaded English poetry.

The writers in this style are sometimes spoken of as the 'school of Pope.' But the title is a misnomer. A school coexists along with other schools from which it is distinguished by some special characteristics; all the contemporaneous schools taken together bearing the common and more general stamp of their age. During the period now under review, which extends, speaking roughly, from the Restoration to the French Revolution, the whole of English literary effort, but especially poetical effort, has one aim and is governed by one principle. This is the desire to attain perfection of form; a sense of the beauty of literary composition as such. It was the rise within the vernacular language of that idea, which impregnating the Latin language as written and spoken in the fifteenth century had produced the revived, neo-latin literature of the Renaissance. Pope himself (Sat. and Ep. 5), in describing this 'manner,' spoke of it as French, and attributed it to the imitation of French fashions introduced into England at the Restoration.

> 'We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms;
> Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
> Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
> Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow.'

De Quincey (Works, vol. 9) expatiates upon the deficiencies of this explanation of a revolution in literary taste. Certainly the court of Louis XIV exercised a great influence in all matters of taste. But this influence of fashion ceased when the ascendency of France was broken by the war of the Spanish succession, while the direction which had been impressed upon English poetry continued to dominate it till towards the close of the eighteenth century.

A better denomination for the period of our literature which extends from the Restoration to the French Revolution is 'the classical period.' And this is not to be taken to mean that English writers now imitated the Greek and Latin writers, or consciously formed themselves upon classical models, as the Latinists of the Renaissance imitated Cicero and Virgil. English writers had begun to perceive that there was such an art as the art of writing; that it was not enough to put down words upon paper anyhow, provided they conveyed your meaning. They found that sounds were capable of modulation, and that pleasure could be given by the arrangement of words, as well as instruction conveyed by their import. The public ear was touched by this new harmony, and

began imperatively to demand its satisfaction; and from that moment the rude volubility of the older time seemed to it as the gabble of savages. A poem was no longer to be a story told with picturesque imagery, but was to be a composition in symmetry and keeping. A thought or a feeling was not to be blurted out in the first words that came, but was to be matured by reflection and reduced to its simplest expression. Condensation, terseness, neatness, finish—all qualities hitherto unheard of in English—had to be studied. It was found to be possible to please by your manner as well as by your matter. And having been shown to be possible, it became necessary. No writer who neglected the graces of style could gain acceptance by the public.

This fastidiousness of the public ear required on the part of writers greatly increased labour. It was no longer possible to take a sheet of paper, and write out your thoughts as fast as the pen would move. 'The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease' were distanced in the race. It was evident that, under the new standard thus set up, the prize would be to him who should be willing to take most trouble about his style. Pope was willing. As a boy he took as his life's lesson the advice given him by 'knowing Walsh,' who used to tell him 'there was one way left of excelling; for though we had several great poets, we never had any one great poet that was correct; and desired me to make that my study and aim.' De Quincey, misconstruing Walsh's meaning, has been at the pains to show that Pope's verses abound in grammatical incorrectnesses. 'The language,' he says, 'does not realise the idea; it simply suggests or hints it.' That conveyance by suggestion, instead of a perfect and plenary deliverance, is just what Pope aimed at, and what Walsh inculcated, though he may not have chosen the very best word for what he meant.

Pope at once took the lead in the race of writers because he took more pains than they. He laboured day and night to form himself for his purpose, that viz. of becoming a writer of finished verse. To improve his mind, to enlarge his view of the world, to store up knowledge—these were things unknown to him. Any ideas, any thoughts, such as custom, chance, society or sect may suggest, are good enough, but each idea must be turned over till it has been reduced to its neatest and most epigrammatic expression.

If this definition of the literary aim which dominated all writing during the hundred years which followed 1660 be just, it follows from it that the period would be more favourable to prose than to

poetry. What in fact came to pass was that a compromise was effected between poetry and prose, and the leading writers adopted as the most telling form of utterance prosaic verse, metre without poetry. It is by courtesy that the versifiers of this century from Dryden to Churchill are styled poets, seeing that the literature they have bequeathed us wants just that element of inspired feeling, which is present in the feeblest of the Elizabethans.

But if these versifiers are not poets in the noblest sense of the term, it does not follow that what they produced is destitute of value. In the romantic reaction at the beginning of this century, the worthlessness of eighteenth-century poetry was part of the revolutionary creed. Sheer lawlessness was then admired, while labour was disdained as the badge of an unimaginative and artificial school. The sounder judgment of a riper period of criticism can now do justice to the writers of our classical period. What they had *not* got we know well enough. They wanted inspiration, lofty sentiment, the heroic soul, chivalrous devotion, the inner eye of faith—above all, love and sympathy. They could not mean greatly. But such meaning as they had they laboured to express in the neatest, most terse and pointed form which our language is capable of. If not poets they were literary artists. They showed that a couplet can do the work of a page, and a single line produce effects which in the infancy of writing would require sentences.

Of these masters of literary craft Pope is the most consummate. In two directions, in that of condensing and pointing his meaning, and in that of drawing the utmost harmony of sound out of the couplet, Pope carried versification far beyond the point at which it was when he took it up. Historical parallels are proverbially misleading. Yet the analogy between what Virgil did for the Latin hexameter as he received it from Lucretius, and Pope's maturing the ten-syllable couplet which he found as Dryden left it, is sufficiently close to be of use in aiding us to realise Pope's merit. Because, after Pope, his trick of versification became common property, and 'every warbler had his tune by heart,' we are apt to overlook the merit of the first invention.

But epigrammatic force and musical flow are not the sole elements of Pope's reputation. The matter which he worked up into his verse has a permanent value, and is indeed one of the most precious heirlooms which the eighteenth century has bequeathed us. And here we must distinguish between Pope when he attempts general themes, and Pope when he draws that which

he knew, viz. the social life of his own day. When in the *Pastorals* he writes of natural beauty, in the *Essay on Criticism* he lays down the rules of writing, in the *Essay on Man* he versifies Leibnitzian optimism, he does not rise above the herd of eighteenth-century writers, except in so far as his skill of language is more accomplished than theirs. *The Rape of the Lock* and *The Dunciaa* have a little more interest, because they treat of contemporary manners. But even in these poems, because the incidents are trivial and the personages contemptible, Pope is not more than pretty in *The Rape of the Lock*, and forcible, where force is ludicrously misplaced, in *The Dunciad.* It is where he comes to describe the one thing which he knew, and about which he felt sympathy and antipathy, viz. the court and town of his time, in the *Moral Essays*, and the *Satires and Epistles*, that Pope found the proper material on which to lay out his elaborate workmanship. And even in these capital works we must distinguish between Pope's general theorems and his particular portraits. Where he moralises, or deduces general principles, he is superficial, second-hand, and onesided as the veriest scribbler. For example: in the splendid lines on the Duke of Wharton (Mor. Ess. I. 174) we must separate the childish theory of 'the ruling passion' from the telling accumulation of epigram on epigram which follows under that spurious rubric. Or again, we might instance his *Epistle to Augustus* (Ep. 5) sparkling with lines of wit and pregnant sense, and yet offering as our literary history the grotesque theory, that the French style, which came in with the Restoration, was a consequence of the conquest of France in the fifteenth century.

In short, Pope, wherever he recedes from what was immediately close to him, the manners, passions, prejudices, sentiments, of his own day, has only such merit—little enough—which wit divorced from truth can have. He is at his best only where the delicacies and subtle felicities of his diction are employed to embody some transient phase of contemporary feeling. Pope has small knowledge of books. Though he was, as Sir W. Hamilton says, 'a curious reader,' he read for style, not for facts. Of history, of science, of nature, of anything except 'the town' he knows nothing. He just shares the ordinary prejudices of the ordinary 'wit' of his day. He was a Tory-Catholic, like any other Tory-Catholic of George II's day. His sentiments reflect the social medium in which he lived. The complex web of society, with its indefinable shades, its minute personal affinities and repul-

sions, is the world in which Pope lived and moved, and which he has drawn in a few vivid lines, with the keenness and intensity of which there is nothing in our literature that can compare. Clarendon's portraits in his gallery of characters are more complete and discriminating, and infinitely more candid. But they do not flash the personage, or the situation, upon the imagination, and fix it in the memory, as one of Pope's incisive lines does. Like all the greatest poets, Pope is individual and local. He can paint with his full power only what he sees. When he attempts abstract truth, general themes, past history, his want of knowledge makes itself felt in feeble and distorted views.

The first production of Pope to appear in print was his *Pastorals*, published 1709, when the author was twenty-one, but written some years earlier. As the work of a youth of seventeen they are a marvellous feat of melodious versification. In any other respect they are only worthy of mention as already exemplifying the false taste which Pope never got rid of when he attempted any other theme than manners.

Of this false taste his *Messiah* is an elaborate specimen. This poem is an adaptation of Virgil's fourth Eclogue, *Pollio*, to Christ, grafting upon the lines of the Latin poet the images supplied by the prophecies of Isaiah. The ingenuity with which the double imitation is carried through is only surpassed by the mastery shown over the melody of the couplet, and the exhibition of a complete poetical vocabulary. These brilliant qualities carried by storm the admiration of Pope's contemporaries, and continued to command the homage of the eighteenth century down to Johnson. Language experience, enforced by the precept and example of Wordsworth, makes our age too keenly feel that the pathos and sublimity of the Hebrew prophet are destroyed by the artificial embroidery with which Pope has overlaid them. Pope's *Messiah* reads to us like a sickly paraphrase, in which all the majesty of the original is dissipated. 'Righteousness' becomes 'dewy nectar'; 'sheep' are the 'fleecy care'; the call to Jerusalem to 'arise and shine' is turned into an invocation to 'exalt her tow'ry head.' The 'fir-tree and box-tree' of Isaiah are 'the spiry fir and shapely box.' In his translation of the prediction 'the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den,' Pope makes the cockatrice a 'crested basilisk,' and the asp 'a speckled snake'; they have both scales of a 'green lustre,' and a 'forky tongue,' and with this last the 'smiling infant shall inno-

cently play.' 'The leopard,' says Isaiah, 'shall lie down with the kid, and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them'; Pope could not leave this exquisite picture undecorated, and with him 'boys in flowery bands the tiger lead.' The alternative is an example of the justice of De Quincey's observation that 'the Arcadia of Pope's age was the spurious Arcadia of the opera theatre.' (Elwin.)

The *Essay on Criticism* appeared in 1711. This is a didactic poem of which the remote prototype is Horace's *Ars poetica*, and the immediate, Boileau's *Art poétique*. It differs from these models in its subject, which is the Art of Criticism. To Dr. Johnson this production appeared 'to display such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the matured age and the longest experience.' This verdict of Johnson may be cited to show the great advance which criticism has made in England in the course of a century. We should now say that the precepts of Pope's *Essay* are conventional truisms, the ordinary rules of composition which may be found in all school manuals, and which are taught to boys as part of their prosody. 'The Essay,' says De Quincey, 'is a mere versification, like a metrical multiplication table, of commonplaces the most mouldy with which criticism has baited its rat-traps.' It required very little reading of the French text-books to find the maxims which Pope has here strung together. But he has dressed them so neatly, and turned them out with such sparkle and point, that these truisms have acquired a weight not their own, and they circulate as proverbs among us in virtue of their pithy form rather than their truth. They exemplify his own line 'What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.' Pope told Spence that he had 'gone through all the best critics,' specifying Quintilian, Rapin and Le Bossu. But whatever trouble he took in collecting what to say, his main effort is expended upon how to say it. The *Essay on Criticism* abounds in those striking couplets which have lodged in all our memories, and given their last and abiding shape to dicta which have been extant in substance since literature began. A good example of this art is supplied by the couplet which has just been quoted from;

> 'True wit is nature to advantage dressed;
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.'

which is Pope's compressed form of the following prose of Boileau: 'Qu'est-ce qu'une pensée neuve, brillante, extraordinaire? Ce n'est point comme se le persuadent les ignorants, une pensée que personne n'a jamais eue, ni dû avoir. C'est au contraire une pensée qui a dû venir à tout le monde, et que quelqu'un s'avise le premier d'exprimer. Un bon mot n'est bon mot qu'en ce qu'il dit une chose que chacun pensoit, et qu'il la dit d'une manière vive, fine, et nouvelle.'

But though the *Essay* abounds with sparkle and point and memorable lines, it is very far from being composed throughout of nothing but such. Besides the general fault, which pervades all Pope's longer efforts, of want of coherent texture and consecutiveness of argument, the *Essay on Criticism* offers too many weak lines, obscure expressions, and monotonous rhymes. Negligences of versification, such as no piece of Pope's composition is entirely free from, abound in the *Essay*. One instance of this slovenliness is the want of variety in his endings. There are twelve couplets rhyming to *wit*, and ten rhyming to *sense*.

> 'Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
> Atones not for that envy which it brings.'

'Mistaken things' here means 'things wrongly taken by others,' which is not the natural sense of the words; and 'atones' stands for 'compensates.'

> 'But sense survived when merry jests were passed'

It requires explanation that 'were passed' here means 'had passed away.'

> 'Critics . . .
> Form short ideas, and offend in arts
> As most in manners, from a love to parts.'

In this one couplet are three expressions, 'short ideas,' 'offend in arts,' and 'love to parts,' the meaning of which has to be guessed, or gathered from the context; it is not apparent on the face of the words used. In some styles of poetry enigmatical expression is not a fault; in an Aeschylean chorus it is of the essence of the charm that the revelations should be shrouded in clouds. But Pope's verse, like French prose, is constructed on the principle of being immediately intelligible; the moment it is not so, its *raison d'être* is gone.

The Rape of the Lock is a mock-heroic poem, the style of which was suggested to Pope by Boileau's *Lutrin.* Pope followed his model in entitling his work 'An heroicomical poem,' the epithet employed by Boileau in the 1709 edition of his *Lutrin.* It was founded upon an incident which had caused great commotion in the circle of Catholic families in which Pope, though not himself a member of it, had friends. Lord Petre, in a moment of youthful frolic, had cut off a lock of hair from Miss Arabella Fermor's head, a liberty which was keenly resented, and had caused a violent quarrel between the families. Mr. Caryll, a Sussex squire, nephew to the Mr. John Caryll who had been Secretary to Mary, James II's Queen, suggested to Pope to write a poem, which by treating the incident playfully, might induce the offended family to take a more lenient view of what they regarded as an outrage. This was the motive of the first draft of the poem, as it was printed in Tonson's *Miscellany,* 1712, in two cantos, and no more than 330 lines. This first sketch was written off in a fortnight, but its author, pleased with the success of his work, elaborated it afterwards, and enlarged it especially by the introduction of what he calls the 'machinery,' or the agency of supernatural beings of the fairy species, whom he calls 'sylphs.' It is universally admitted that the later additions, and this invention especially, are great improvements, thus forming an exception to the rule that a poet should never recast, or supplement, a piece which he has turned out well in the first instance.

The heroine of the poem, Belinda, is Miss Fermor; the Baron is Lord Petre; Thalestris is Mrs. Morley; Sir Plume is Mrs. Morley's brother, Sir George Brown of Keddington. Pope obtained permission to dedicate the poem to Miss Fermor; but notwithstanding that he takes care to tell her that 'Belinda resembles her in nothing but in beauty,' the lady was more offended than flattered by the representation given of her. Sir George Brown was indignant at being made to talk nothing but nonsense. In bringing about its professed aim, the reconciliation of the two families, the poem was entirely unsuccessful.

But with the public it was otherwise. On its first publication Addison pronounced it a delicious little thing; 'merum sal.' Criticism the most hostile to Pope, of which there has been abundance in the modern reaction against his influence, has agreed to spare the *Rape.* Macaulay pronounces it his best poem. De Quincey, who never spares Pope when he is weak, goes beyond

Macaulay, and declares it 'the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers.' *The Rape of the Lock*, writes Hazlitt, 'is the most exquisite specimen of filigree work ever invented. It is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to everything; to paste, pomatum, billets-doux, and patches. Airs, languid airs breathe around; the atmosphere is perfumed with affectation. A toilet is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the goddess of vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction to set off the meanest things. . . . It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the perfection of the mock-heroic.' And Professor Conington thinks 'there can be little to say about a poem so exquisite in its peculiar style of art as to make the task of searching for faults almost hopeless, that of commending beauties simply impertinent.'

Such warmth of encomium as this is at least testimony to the admiration which the skill of the poet can still excite in the reader. But it is criticism which touches the workmanship rather than the work. Pope's execution is so clever as always to charm us even when his subject is most devoid of interest. The secret of the peculiar fascination of *The Rape of the Lock* lies, I believe, not merely in the art and management, but in the fact that here, for the first time, Pope is writing of that which he knew, of the life he saw and the people he lived with. For Windsor Forest, though he lived in it, he had no eyes; but a drawing-room, a fop, and a belle, these were the objects which had struck his young fancy when he emerged from the linendraper's villa, and he had studied them. About these things he can be real and truthful; when he writes of Abelard and Heloise he is making believe, he is an actor trying to think himself into his part. Only in his *Satires and Epistles* and in the characters of his *Moral Essays* will he again succeed in hitting upon congenial matter on which to lay out his extraordinary power of versification.

Nor is the reflection of social life and manners which the *Rape* offers confined to superficial forms only. The most intimate sentiments of the time find their representation here. As an instance we may point to the mean estimation of women. Contempt veiled under the show of deference, a mockery of chivalry, its form without its spirit,—this is the attitude assumed towards women by the poet in this piece. 'The world of fashion is displayed

in its most gorgeous and attractive hues, and everywhere the emptiness is visible beneath the outward splendour. The beauty of Belinda, the details of her toilet, her troops of admirers, are all set forth with unrivalled grace and fascination, and all bear the impress of vanity and vexation. Nothing can exceed the art with which the satire is blended with the pomp, mocking without disturbing the unsubstantial gewgaw. The double vein is kept up with sustained skill in the picture of the outward charms and the inward frivolity of women.

> 'With varying vanities from every part
> They shift the moving toyshop of their heart';

this is the tone throughout. Their hearts are toyshops. They reverse the relative importance of things; the little with them is great, and the great little.' (Elwin.) This feeling towards women is not the poet's idiosyncrasy; here he is but the representative of his age. The degradation of woman in England does not date from the Restoration. It was complete before the Commonwealth, and is aptly symbolised in the behaviour of James I, who compelled all ladies to kneel on being presented to him. But the combination of the forms of chivalrous devotion with the reality of cynical contempt, was the peculiar tone of manners which came in with the court of Charles II, and gradually spread downwards through the lower social strata. The poem in our literature which gives the most finished representation of this sentiment is *The Rape of the Lock*.

It was to the translation of Homer, undertaken as a commercial speculation, that Pope owed, more than to anything else he produced, the great reputation he attained in his lifetime. The verdict of later times has reversed the decision of an age little versed in Greek, and whose artificial manners were alien from the primitive simplicity and savagery of Homer. Pope translated from the Latin version, from the French of Dacier, from the English of Chapman. But it was less his ignorance of Greek, than his theory of poetical expression, which led him astray. His solicitude is entirely spent upon the words he is using, and not upon the thing he is describing. He introduced ornaments which are not only foreign, but false and out of keeping. He reproduced neither the naiveté nor the dignity of the original. Pope's moonlight scene provoked Wordsworth's remark that 'the eye of the poet had never been steadily fixed upon its object,' and that 'it

shows to what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk.' Yet no selection from Pope would be complete which did not offer a specimen of the Homer. We give the moonlight scene from the 8th Book, partly for the sake of comparison with Chapman's rendering of the same lines, (see above, vol. i. p. 519), and also because it is a striking example of both the faults and excellences of the translation. We have in these few lines more than average infidelity to the original; we have unhomeric embroidery, such as 'refulgent lamp of night'; but we have at the same time twenty-four lines (eleven in the Greek) of finished versification, the rapid, facile, and melodious flow of which, concentrating all the felicities of Pope's higher style, has never been surpassed in English poetry.

The translation of Homer occupied Pope during the ten best years of his life. The *Odyssey* was finished in 1725, and Pope turned to very different work, the composition of *The Dunciad*. *The Dunciad* is a personal satire, or lampoon, directed against the small authors of the day, who are bespattered with much mud and little wit, without any pretence of disguise, and under their own names. *The Dunciad* has been the parent of a numerous progeny, *The Scribleriad*, *The Baviad*, *The Pursuits of Literature*, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, all of which have had much vogue in their day, and lost their savour when the generation they libelled has passed away. It must not be concealed that critics of reputation have spoken with approbation of this amalgam of dirt, ribaldry and petty spite. De Quincey has allowed himself to say that *The Dunciad* is Pope's 'greatest work.' Thackeray, who had no toleration for similar offences when Swift was the offender, thought that the conclusion of *The Dunciad* 'shows the author to be the equal of all poets of all times'; and Conington considers the poem as 'unquestionably a very great satire.' It certainly shows Pope's peculiar skill as an artist in its perfection. He has now (1727) attained a complete mastery over the couplet, and can compel it to do the work he requires of it. To the literary historian the value of *The Dunciad* is great, as a chapter of contemporary life, a record of small celebrities, otherwise lost to fame. But of its absolute merit as a poem, a just taste must agree with Taine (*Litt. Angl.* t. 4), that 'seldom has so much talent been expended to produce so much ennui.' The motive of the satire is not the desire of the moral reformer to improve mankind, but the rancour and malevolence of literary jealousy. And against whom is this

petty irritation felt? Against feeble journalists, brutal pamphleteers, starving rhymesters, a crew of hackney authors, bohemians of ink and paper below literature. To sting and wound these unfortunates gave Pope pleasure as he sate, meditating stabs, in his elegant villa, the resort of the rich and the noble! By attacking these, he lowers himself to their level. The first poet of the age—of the century—chooses to hand himself down to posterity as bandying scurrilities with the meanest scribblers, hired defamers, the banditti of the printing-office, ready at the shortest notice to deliver half a crown's worth of slander. To be even with these miserable outcasts Pope condescended to employ one of the worst of them, Savage, as a spy and informer to bring him gossip from their haunts. When every other taunt fails him Pope can gibbet the poverty of these unsuccessful authors as a crime, and turn them into ridicule for wanting a dinner. The superfluous vehemence with which he rails against these insignificant enemies betrays the hollowness of the pretence that the satire was aimed not at individuals, but at the spirit of dullness or stupid conservatism. Of Pope's ignorance of everything, except society and the art of versifying, *The Dunciad* offers one signal instance. The first scholar in Europe, one possessing a genius for criticism to which philologians of all countries still pay admiring homage, was an Englishman, and a contemporary of Pope. Pope looked on Richard Bentley but knew him not. The lines (included in our selection) in which the great critic is quizzed, are a typical specimen of the fatal flaw in Pope's writings, viz. that the workmanship is not supported by the matter; a palpable falsehood is enshrined in immortal lines.

The composition of *The Dunciad* had revealed to Pope where his true strength lay, in blending personalities with moral reflection. During the next decade, 1730-40, he confined himself to the one style of composition upon which his reputation as an English poet must rest, and in which he has never had a rival. The pieces which appear in his collected works under the various titles of *Moral Essays*, *Essay on Man*, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, *Imitations of Horace*, *Epilogue to the Satires*, were brought out singly at various times during these ten years.

The most celebrated of these poems are the four epistles addressed to Lord Bolingbroke, and known by the collective title of the *Essay on Man*. It is a didactic or argumentative poem, not on Man, as the title bears, but a théodicée or vindi-

cation of the ways of Providence. The view attempted to be presented is that of Leibnitzian optimism; the end of the universe is the general good of the whole; it was impossible to realise this without admitting partial evil. Man is not the end of creation, but only one in a graduated scale of beings; it is his pride which leads him to complain when he finds that everything has not been ordered for his benefit. The reasoning of the *Essay on Man* is feeble, the philosophy either trite or inconsistent, or obscure. But the less the intrinsic value of the argument, the more is our admiration excited by the literary skill and brilliant execution displayed in the management. The particular illustrations, the episodes and side-lights, always sparkle with wit, and are sometimes warm with feeling, when the main thesis is jejune and frigid. 'Whilst Pope frequently wastes his skill in gilding refuse, he is really most sensitive to the noblest sentiments of his contemporaries, and when he has good materials to work upon, his verse glows with unusual fervour.' (Leslie Stephen.) Ruskin points to the couplet

> 'Never elated, while one man's oppressed;
> Never dejected whilst another's blessed'

as 'the most complete, concise, and lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words.' 'If the *Essay on Man* were shivered into fragments, it would not lose its value; for it is precisely its details which constitute its moral as well as literary beauties.' (A. W. Ward.)

The *Moral Essays*, from which our next specimen is taken, consist of five epistles composed at different times, and placed in the works under a common title. Of these the same may be said as of the *Essay on Man*, that the ethical doctrine is not worthy of the exquisite workmanship. Our extract is from the first epistle, and includes the celebrated character of Philip Lord Wharton, a piece of portraiture which ranks with those of Addison, the Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Hervey, and the death-bed of Villiers Duke of Buckingham. They are masterpieces of English versification, medals cut with such sharp outlines and such vigour of hand that they have lost none of their freshness by lapse of time. 'When the poet engraves one of these figures, his compendious imagery, the surprises of his juxtaposition, the sustained and multiplied antitheses, the terse texture of each line, the incessant shocks from the play of his eloquence directed and concentrated continually upon one point, from these things the memory receives an impression which it never loses.' (Taine.)

Pope's peculiar powers found their most perfect development in the pieces, which in the collected works are entitled *Satires and Epistles of Horace imitated.* Casually suggested by Bolingbroke in the course of conversation, and calling themselves an imitation, these 'satires and epistles' are the most original of Pope's writings, and the most natural and spontaneous outcome of his genius. These pieces, nine in number, including a Prologue, and two Epilogues, form a total of some 2000 lines, and were the product of the four years 1735–8, and therefore of Pope's meridian period between his fortieth and fiftieth year. The ferocity of Pope's invective and the malice of his antipathies are here subdued, and though the coarser horse-laugh of the old time breaks out every now and then, yet on the whole the finer play of sarcasm and witty inuendo has taken the place of hard names and slander.

The *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, or *Prologue to the Satires* may be singled out as Pope's most characteristic piece. We give it entire in our selections. It contains the two famous portraits, that of Lord Hervey (Sporus) and that of Addison (Atticus). The libel, for such it is, on Lord Hervey cannot be excused even by the rancour of political party. This accomplished nobleman was Vice-Chamberlain in the court of George II, a position easy enough to a mere fribble, but which was sure to mark out a man of parts and wit such as Lord Hervey, as the object of hatred to the tory and jacobite opposition. Even as art, Pope must be considered in this sketch to have failed from overcharging his canvas with odious and disgusting images. Yet 'it is impossible not to admire, however we may condemn, the art by which acknowledged wit, beauty and gentle manners, the Queen's favour, and even a valetudinary diet are travestied into the most odious defects and offences.' (Croker.) The satire on Addison, in a more refined style, but not less unjust in fact, had been written twenty years before, during Addison's lifetime. Pope regarded the piece with the affection with which an author regards the product of much time and labour; and he had meditated each stab in this finished lampoon for years. Having printed it separately in 1727, he now finally adapted it into this *Prologue to the Satires*, only suppressing the real name, but not concealing it under the thin disguise of 'Atticus.' The art of these malignant lines is much greater than that of those on Lord Hervey. Pope here not only avoids any images which were in themselves offensive, but allows his victim many virtues and accomplishments.

MARK PATTISON.

FROM THE 'ESSAY ON CRITICISM.'

Some to Conceit alone their taste confine,
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring Chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets, like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is nature to advantage dress'd;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;
Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.
Others for Language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still,—the style is excellent;
The sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found:
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on ev'ry place;
The face of nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like th' unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon;
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words expressed
Is like a clown in regal purple dressed:

For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,
As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learn'd smile,
Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets drest.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are try'd,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

But most by numbers judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:
In the bright muse, tho' thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep,'
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with 'sleep':
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What 's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;

And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow:
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus' vary'd lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While at each change, the son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love;
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdu'd by sound!
The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.

Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.
At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense:
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is apply'd
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.

Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Tho' each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not, then, if wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the Town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of author's names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with Quality.
A constant critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.
What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the stile refines!
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

CANTO II.

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-drest youths around her shone,
But every eye was fix'd on her alone.

On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slave detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admir'd:
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray:
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love—to Love an Altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:

The Powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,
The rest the winds dispers'd in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay,
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts oppress,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,
That seemed but Zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes;
While every beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd;
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He rais'd his azure wand, and thus begun.
Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear,
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons hear!
Ye know the spheres, and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aerial kind.
Some in the fields of purest æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,

Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.

Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.

This day, black omens threat the brightest Fair
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or flight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether heaven has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops and arm'd with ribs of whale,

Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stop'd in vials, or transfixed with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clog'd he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivel'd flower:
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!
He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend,
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear:
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III.

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;

A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.
Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous knights,
At ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a matadore,
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
Behold, four Kings in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a flower,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And particolour'd troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful nymph reviews her force with care:
Let Spades be trumps! she said, and trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forc'd to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant field.

Him Basto follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd,
The rest, his many-colour'd robe conceal'd.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Lu,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barbarous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with pow'rs combin'd
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierc'd battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;

She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now (as oft in some distemper'd state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate.
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee, (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate!
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:

So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retir'd.

The peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide,
T' inclose the lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd,
A wretched sylph too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urg'd the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs, breathe their last,
Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!

Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,
(The victor cried) the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,

While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What time would spare, from steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel,
The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel?

FROM THE ILIAD. BOOK VIII.

The troops exulting sat in order round,
And beaming fires illumin'd all the ground.
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night!
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies:
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays:
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms, by fits, thick flashes send.
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY.

What beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis she;—but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword!
Oh, ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it, in heaven, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?
Why bade ye else, ye pow'rs! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes;
The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods:
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of kings and heroes glows
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
Dull sullen prisoners in the body's cage:
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
Like eastern kings a lazy state they keep,
And, close confin'd to their own palace, sleep.
From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky.
As into the air the purer spirits flow,
And separate from their kindred dregs below;
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.
But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death;
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.

Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball,
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall:
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates;
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say
(While the long fun'rals blacken all the way),
Lo! these were they, whose souls the Furies steel'd,
And curs'd with hearts unknowing how to yield.
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow
For others good, or melt at others woe.

What can atone (oh ever-injur'd shade!)
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or grac'd thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs compos'd,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By strangers honour'd and by strangers mourn'd!
What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What tho' no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face,
What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb,
Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of thy year shall blow;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy relics made.

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot;

A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays;
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

FROM THE 'ESSAY ON MAN.'

BOOK I.

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall.
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher death, and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.
The soul (uneasy, and confin'd) from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such,
Say, Here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the God of God.
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be Gods.
Aspiring to be Gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers "'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew,
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;

For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies.'
But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
'No ('tis replied) the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?—Why then Man?'
If the great end be human happiness,
Then nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows but He, whose hand the light'ning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
Why charge we heav'n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.
Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.
What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angels, would be more;

Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say, what their use, had he the pow'rs of all;
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate,
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all?
The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonise at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that heav'n had left him still
The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?
Far as Creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:

Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood?
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier?
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection, how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide?
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?
  See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide, how deep extend below!
Vast chain of Being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to Nothing.—On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
  And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.

Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and stars run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—oh madness! pride! impiety!

What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph, that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, heaven bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony not understood ;
All partial evil, universal good :
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

BOOK IV.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe !
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best,
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.
But fools, the good alone unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.
See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just !
See godlike Turenne prostrate on the dust !
See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife !
Was this their virtue, or contempt of life ?
Say, was it virtue, more tho' heaven ne'er gave,
Lamented Digby ! sunk thee to the grave ?
Tell me, if virtue made the son expire,
Why, full of days and honour, lives the sire ?
Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,
When nature sicken'd, and each gale was death ?
Or why so long (in life if long can be)
Lent Heaven a parent to the poor and me ?
What makes all physical or moral ill ?
There deviates nature, and here wanders will.
God sends not ill ; if rightly understood,
Or partial ill is universal good,
Or change admits, or nature lets it fall,
Short, and but rare, till man improv'd it all.
We just as wisely might of Heaven complain
That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
As that the virtuous son is ill at ease,
When his lewd father gave the dire disease.
Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause,
Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws ?

Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?
On air or sea new motions be imprest,
Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease, if you go by?
Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?
But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better shall we have?
A kingdom of the just then let it be:
But first consider how those just agree.
The good must merit God's peculiar care;
But who, but God, can tell us who they are?
One thinks on Calvin heaven's own spirit fell;
Another deems him instrument of hell;
If Calvin feel heaven's blessing, or its rod,
This cries, there is, and that, there is no God.
What shocks one part will edify the rest,
Nor with one system can they all be blest.
The very best will variously incline,
And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
Whatever is, is right.—This world 'tis true,
Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too:
And which more blest? who chain'd his country, say,
Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day?
'But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed,'
What then? Is the reward of virtue bread?
That, vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,
The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
The good man may be weak, be indolent:
Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
But grant him riches, your demand is o'er;
'No—shall the good want health, the good want power?'
Add health, and power, and ev'ry earthly thing.
'Why bounded power? why private? why no king?'

Nay, why external for internal giv'n?
Why is not man a god, and earth a heaven?
Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
God gives enough, while he has more to give:
Immense the power, immense were the demand;
Say, at what part of nature will they stand?
What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
Is virtue's prize: A better would you fix?
Then give humility a coach and six,
Justice a conqu'ror's sword, or truth a gown,
Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.
Weak, foolish man! will Heaven reward us there
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
The boy and man an individual makes,
Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?
Go, like the Indian, in another life
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,
As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
As toys and empires, for a god-like mind.
Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
No joy, or be destructive of the thing:
How oft by these at sixty are undone
The virtues of a saint at twenty-one!
To whom can riches give repute, or trust,
Content, or pleasure, but the good and just?
Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
Esteem and love were never to be sold.
Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human-kind,
Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.
Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made,
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.

'What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl?'
I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool.
You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings,
That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings,
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:
But by your father's worth if yours you rate,
Count me those only who were good and great.
Go! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,
Go! and pretend your family is young,
Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness: say where greatness lies,
Where, but among the heroes and the wise?
Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede;
The whole strange purpose of their lives to find,
Or make, an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.
No less alike the politic and wise;
All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes:
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat;
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great:
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What's fame, a fancied life in other's breath,
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
The same (my lord) if Tully's, or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside as much an empty shade,
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead:
Alike or when, or where, they shone, or shine,
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest man's the noblest work of God.
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
As justice tears his body from the grave;
When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
All fame is foreign, but of true desert;
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.
One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantage lies?
Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise?
'Tis but to know how little can be known;
To see all others' faults, and feel our own:
Condemn'd in business or in arts to drudge,
Without a second, or without a judge:
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land?
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
Painful preeminence! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account:
Make fair deductions; see to what they mount;
How much of other each is sure to cost;
How each for other oft is wholly lost:
How inconsistent greater goods with these;
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease;

Think, and if still the things thy envy call,
Say, would'st thou be the man to whom they fall?
To sigh for ribands if thou art so silly,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife.
If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:
Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
See Cromwell damn'd to everlasting fame!
If all, united, thy ambition call,
From ancient story learn to scorn them all.
There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of happiness complete!
In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,
How happy! those to ruin, these betray.
Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose;
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
And all that rais'd the hero, sunk the man:
Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,
But stain'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for gold:
Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame!
What greater bliss attends their close of life?
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
The trophied arches, storied halls invade,
And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
Alas! not dazzled with their noontide ray,
Compute the morn and evening to the day?
The whole amount of that enormous fame,
A tale that blends their glory with their shame!
Know then this truth (enough for man to know)
'Virtue alone is happiness below.'
The only point where human bliss stands still,
And tastes the good without the fall to ill;

Where only merit constant pay receives,
Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives;
The joy unequall'd if its end it gain,
And if it lose, attended with no pain:
Without satiety, though e'er so bless'd,
And but more relish'd as the more distress'd:
The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears:
Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd;
Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;
Never dejected, while another's bless'd:
And where no wants, no wishes can remain,
Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

FROM 'MORAL ESSAYS.'

I.

Yes, you despise the man to books confin'd,
Who from his study rails at human kind;
Tho' what he learns he speaks, and may advance
Some gen'ral maxims, or be right by chance.
The coxcomb bird, so talkative and grave,
That from his cage cries cuckold, whore, and knave,
Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,
You hold him no philosopher at all.
And yet the fate of all extremes is such,
Men may be read, as well as books, too much.
To observations which ourselves we make,
We grow more partial for th' observer's sake;
To written wisdom, as another's, less:
Maxims are drawn from notions, those from guess.
There's some peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vein:
Shall only man be taken in the gross?
Grant but as many sorts of mind as moss.

That each from other differs, first confess;
Next, that he varies from himself no less:
Add nature's, custom's, reason's, passion's strife,
And all opinion's colours cast on life.
Our depths who fathoms, or our shallows finds,
Quick whirls, and shifting eddies, of our minds?
On human actions reason tho' you can,
It may be reason, but it is not man:
His principle of action once explore,
That instant 'tis his principle no more.
Like following life through creatures you dissect,
You lose it in the moment you detect.
Yet more; the diff'rence is as great between
The optics seeing, as the objects seen.
All manners take a tincture from our own;
Or come discolour'd through our passions shown.
Or fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dies.
Nor will life's stream for observation stay,
It hurries all too fast to mark their way:
In vain sedate reflections we would make,
When half our knowledge we must snatch, not take.
Oft, in the passions' wide rotation tost,
Our spring of action to ourselves is lost:
Tir'd, not determin'd, to the last we yield,
And what comes then is master of the field.
As the last image of that troubled heap,
When sense subsides, and fancy sports in sleep,
(Tho' past the recollection of the thought,)
Becomes the stuff of which our dream is wrought:
Something as dim to our internal view,
Is thus, perhaps, the cause of most we do.
True some are open, and to all men known;
Others so very close they're hid from none;
(So darkness strikes the sense no less than light;)
Thus gracious Chandos is belov'd at sight;
And ev'ry child hates Shylock, tho' his soul
Still sits at squat, and peeps not from its hole.

At half mankind when gen'rous Manly raves,
All know 'tis virtue, for he thinks them knaves:
When universal homage Umbra pays,
All see 'tis vice, and itch of vulgar praise.
When flatt'ry glares, all hate it in a queen.
While one there is who charms us with his spleen.

But these plain characters we rarely find;
Tho' strong the bent, yet quick the turns of mind:
Or puzzling contraries confound the whole;
Or affectations quite reverse the soul.
The dull, flat falsehood serves for policy;
And in the cunning, truth itself's a lie;
Unthought-of frailties cheat us in the wise;
The fool lies hid in inconsistencies.

See the same man, in vigour, in the gout;
Alone, in company; in place, or out;
Early at bus'ness, and at hazard late;
Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate;
Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball;
Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.

Catius is ever moral, ever grave,
Thinks who endures a knave, is next a knave,
Save just at dinner—then prefers, no doubt,
A rogue with ven'son to a saint without.
Who would not praise Patritio's high desert,
His hand unstain'd, his uncorrupted heart,
His comprehensive head! all interests weigh'd,
All Europe sav'd, yet Britain not betray'd.
He thanks you not, his pride is in picquet,
Newmarket fame, and judgment at a bet.

What made (say Montaigne, or more sage Charron!)
Otho a warrior, Cromwell a buffoon?
A perjur'd prince a leaden saint revere,
A godless regent tremble at a star?
The throne a bigot keep, a genius quit,
Faithless through piety, and dup'd through wit?
Europe a woman, child, or dotard rule,
And just her wisest monarch made a fool?

Know, God and Nature only are the same:
In man, the judgment shoots at flying game;
A bird of passage! gone as soon as found;
Now in the moon perhaps, now under ground.

In vain the sage, with retrospective eye,
Would from th' apparent What conclude the Why,
Infer the motive from the deed, and show,
That what we chanc'd was what we meant to do.
Behold! if fortune or a mistress frowns,
Some plunge in bus'ness, others shave their crowns.
To ease the soul of one oppressive weight,
This quits an empire, that embroils a state:
The same adust complexion has impell'd
Charles to the convent, Philip to the field.

Not always actions show the man: we find
Who does a kindness, is not therefore kind;
Perhaps prosperity becalm'd his breast;
Perhaps the wind, just shifted from the east:
Not therefore humble he who seeks retreat,
Pride guides his steps, and bids him shun the great:
Who combats bravely, is not therefore brave,
He dreads a death-bed like the meanest slave;
Who reasons wisely is not therefore wise,
His pride in reas'ning, not in acting lies.

But grant that actions best discover man;
Take the most strong, and sort them as you can.
The few that glare each character must mark,
You balance not the many in the dark.
What will you do with such as disagree?
Suppress them, or miscall them policy?
Must then at once (the character to save)
The plain rough hero turn a crafty knave?
Alas! in truth the man but chang'd his mind,
Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not din'd.
Ask why from Britain Cæsar would retreat?
Cæsar himself might whisper he was beat.
Why risk the world's great empire for a punk?
Cæsar perhaps might answer he was drunk.

But, sage historians! 'tis your task to prove
One action conduct; one, heroic love.
'Tis from high life, high characters are drawn;
A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn;
A judge is just, a chanc'lor juster still;
A gownman, learn'd; a bishop, what you will;
Wise, if a minister; but, if a king,
More wise, more learn'd, more just, more ev'ry thing
Court-virtues bear, like gems, the highest rate,
Born where heaven's influence scarce can penetrate:
In life's low vale, the soil the virtues like,
They please as beauties, here as wonders strike.
Though the same sun with all-diffusive rays
Blush in the rose, and in the diamond blaze,
We prize the stronger effort of his pow'r,
And justly set the gem above the flower.
'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd.
Boastful and rough, your first son is a squire;
The next a tradesman, meek, and much a liar;
Tom struts a soldier, open, bold, and brave;
Will sneaks a scriv'ner, an exceeding knave:
Is he a churchman? then he's fond of power:
A quaker? sly: a presbyterian? sour:
A smart free-th'nker? all things in an hour.
Ask men's opinions: Scoto now shall tell
How trade increases, and the world goes well;
Strike off his pension, by the setting sun,
And Britain, if not Europe, is undone.
That gay free-thinker, a fine talker once,
What turns him now a stupid silent dunce?
Some god, or spirit he has lately found;
Or chanc'd to meet a minister that frown'd.
Judge we by nature? habit can efface,
Interest o'ercome, or policy take place:
By actions? those uncertainty divides:
By passions? these dissimulation hides:
Opinions? they still take a wider range:
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.

Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
Tenets with books, and principles with times.
Search then the ruling passion: there, alone,
The wild are constant, and the cunning known;
The fool consistent, and the false sincere;
Priests, princes, women, no dissemblers here.
This clue once found, unravels all the rest,
The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest.
Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise:
Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
Women and fools must like him, or he dies;
Tho' wond'ring senates hung on all he spoke,
The Club must hail him master of the joke.
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too;
Then turns repentant, and his God adores
With the same spirit that he drinks and whores:
Enough, if all around him but admire,
And now the punk applaud, and now the friar
Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt;
And most contemptible to shun contempt;
His passion still to covet general praise,
His life to forfeit it a thousand ways;
A constant bounty which no friend has made;
An angel tongue, which no man can persuade!
A fool, with more of wit than half mankind,
Too rash for thought, for action too refin'd:
A tyrant to the wife his heart approves;
A rebel to the very king he loves;
He dies, sad outcast of each church and state,
And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great.
Ask you why Wharton broke thro' ev'ry rule?
'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool.
Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
Comets are regular, and Wharton plain.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT.

P. Shut, shut the door, good John! fatig'ed I said,
Tie up the knocker, say I 'm sick, I 'm dead.
The dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walks can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy! to catch me, just at dinner-time.
Is there a parson much be-mus'd in beer,
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza, when he should engross?
Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause.
Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my life; (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)
What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love?
A dire dilemma! either way I 'm sped,
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seiz'd and tied down to judge, how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie:

To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave, exceeds all pow'r of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years.'
Nine years: cries he, who high in Drury-lane,
Lull'd by soft Zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,
Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends:
'The piece, you think is incorrect? why take it,
I 'm all submission, what you 'd have it, make it.'
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.
Pitholeon sends to me: 'you know his grace,
I want a patron; ask him for a place.'
Pitholeon libell'd me—'but here 's a letter
Informs you, sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll invites to dine,
He 'll write a journal, or he 'll turn divine.'
Bless me! a packet—''tis a stranger sues,
A virgin tragedy, an orphan muse.'
If I dislike it, 'furies, death, and rage!'
If I approve, 'commend it to the stage.'
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The play'rs and I are, luckily, no friends.
Fir'd that the house reject him, ''sdeath, I 'll print it,
And shame the fools—your int'rest, sir, with Lintot.'
Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much:
'Not, sir, if you revise it, and retouch.'
All my demurs but double his attacks:
At last he whispers, 'Do, and we go snacks.'
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,
Sir, let me see your works and you no more.
'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to spring,
(Midas, a sacred person and a king,)
His very minister who spied them first,
(Some say his queen,) was forc'd to speak, or burst.

And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?
A. Good friend, forbear: you deal in dang'rous things.
I 'd never name queens, ministers, or kings;
Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick,
'Tis nothing—*P.* Nothing, if they bite and kick?
Out with it, Dunciad! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he 's an ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack!
Pit, box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb thro'.
He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
Destroy his fib, or sophistry, in vain,
The creature 's at his dirty work again,
Thron'd in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer,
Lost the arch'd eye-brow, or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley still his lord and whore?
His butchers Henley, his free-masons Moore?
Does not one table Bavius still admit?
Still to one bishop Philips seem a wit?
Still Sappho—*A.* Hold! for God sake—you 'll offend.
No names—be calm—learn prudence of a friend.
I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these—*P.* One flatt'rer 's worse than all.
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas: 'tis ten times worse when they repent.
One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:

One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.
This prints my letters, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, 'subscribe, subscribe.'
There are, who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace, and, tho' lean, am short;
Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high,
Such Ovid's nose, and 'sir! you have an eye.'—
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see,
All that disgrac'd my betters, met in me.
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
'Just so immortal Maro held his head:'
And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd;
The muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease, my life,
To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care,
And teach the being you preserv'd to bear.
A. But why then publish? *P.* Granville the polite
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth inflam'd with early praise,
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms receiv'd one poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence
While pure description held the place of sense?

Like gentle Fanny's was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd; I was not in debt.
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober critic come abroad;
If wrong, I smiled; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley down to piddling Tibalds:
Each wight who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each word-catcher that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespeare's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excused them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?
The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year;
He, who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:

And he, whose fustian 's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear, not Addison himself was safe,

Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

What tho' my name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaister'd posts, with claps, in capitals?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the race that write;
I kept, like Asian monarchs, from their sight:
Poems I heeded (now be-rhym'd so long)
No more than thou, great George! a birth-day song;
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;

Nor like a puppy, daggled through the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cried,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry and prate,
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sate full-blown Bufo puff'd by ev'ry quill;
Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His library (where busts of poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.
May some choice patron bless each grey goose quill!
May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,
Or envy holds a whole week's war with sense,
Or simple pride for flattery makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Bless'd be the great, for those they take away,
And those they left me, for they left me Gay;
Left me to see neglected genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My verse, and Queensberry weeping o'er thy urn!
Oh let me live my own, and die so too!
(To live and die is all I have to do:)

Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please:
Above a patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.
Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heavens! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
'I found him close with Swift—indeed? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus) something will come out.'
'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will;
'No, such a genius never can lie still;'
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will, or Bubo makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile
When every coxcomb knows me by my style?
Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-ey'd virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or beauty in distress,
Who loves a lie, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out:
That fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame:
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray:
Who to the Dean, and silver bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there;

Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie;
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus tremble—*A.* What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's temper thus the rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.
Not fortune's worshipper, nor fashion's fool,
Not lucre's madman, nor ambition's tool,
Not proud, nor servile; be one poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways:
That flattery, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in verse or prose the same.

That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song:
That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half-approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laughed at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
The tale reviv'd, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,
The libell'd person, and the pictur'd shape;
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead:
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his sovereign's ear—
Welcome for thee, fair virtue! all the past:
For thee, fair virtue! welcome ev'n the last!

A. But why insult the poor, affront the great?

P. A knave 's a knave to me, in ev'ry state:
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail,
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire;
If on a pillory, or near a throne,
He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
This dreaded satirist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress:
So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhym'd for Moore,
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lie,
To please his mistress, one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:

Let Budgel c'harge low Grubstreet on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleased, except his will;
Let the two Curlls of town and court, abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse.
Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool:
That harmless mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!
Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in virtue, or in song.
Of gentle blood (part shed in Honour's cause,
While yet in Britain honour had applause,)
Each parent sprung—*A.* What fortune, pray?—*P.* Their own
And better got, than Bestia's from the throne.
Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious through his age.
No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
Unlearn'd he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language but the language of the heart.
By nature honest, by experience wise,
Healthy by temperance, and by exercise;
His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me, thus to live, and thus to die!
Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.
O Friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!
On cares like these, if length of days attend,
May Heaven, to bless those days, preserve my friend

Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a Queen.
A. Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n.

FROM THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE IMITATED.

To Augustus

While you, great patron of mankind! sustain
The balanc'd world, and open all the main;
Your country, chief, in arms abroad defend,
At home, with morals, arts, and laws amend:
How shall the muse, from such a monarch, steal
An hour, and not defraud the public weal?
Edward and Henry, now the boast of fame,
And virtuous Alfred, a more sacred name,
After a life of generous toils endur'd,
The Gaul subdu'd, or property secur'd,
Ambition humbled, mighty cities storm'd,
Or laws established, and the world reform'd;
Clos'd their long glories, with a sigh, to find
Th' unwilling gratitude of base mankind!
All human virtue, to its latest breath,
Finds envy never conquer'd, but by death.
The great Alcides, every labour past,
Had still this monster to subdue at last.
Sure fate of all, beneath whose rising ray
Each star of meaner merit fades away!
Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat,
Those suns of glory please not till they set.
To thee, the world its present homage pays
The harvest early, but mature the praise:
Great friend of liberty! in kings a name
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame:
Whose word is truth, as sacred and rever'd,
As Heaven's own oracles from altars heard.

Wonder of kings! like whom, to mortal eyes
None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall rise.
Just in one instance, be it yet confest,
Your people, Sir, are partial in the rest:
Foes to all living worth except your own,
And advocates for folly dead and gone.
Authors, like coins, grow dear as they grow old;
It is the rust we value, not the gold.
Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learn'd by rote,
And beastly Skelton heads of houses quote:
One likes no language but the Faery Queen;
A Scot will fight for Christ's Kirk of the Green;
And each true Briton is to Ben so civil,
He swears the muses met him at the devil.
Tho' justly Greece her eldest sons admires,
Why should not we be wiser than our sires?
In ev'ry public virtue we excel,
We build, we paint, we sing, we dance as well.
And learned Athens to our art must stoop,
Could she behold us tumbling through a hoop.
If time improve our wit as well as wine,
Say at what age a poet grows divine?
Shall we, or shall we not, account him so,
Who died, perhaps, a hundred years ago?
End all dispute; and fix the year precise
When British bards begin t' immortalize?
'Who lasts a century can have no flaw,
I hold that wit a classic, good in law.'
Suppose he wants a year, will you compound?
And shall we deem him ancient, right and sound,
Or damn to all eternity at once,
At ninety-nine, a modern and a dunce?
'We shall not quarrel for a year or two;
By courtesy of England, he may do.'
Then, by the rule that made the horse-tail bare,
I pluck out year by year, as hair by hair,
And melt down ancients like a heap of snow:
While you, to measure merits, look in Stowe,

And estimating authors by the year,
Bestow a garland only on a bier.
Shakespeare, (whom you and ev'ry play-house bill
Style the divine, the matchless, what you will,)
For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.
Ben, old and poor, as little seem'd to heed
The life to come, in ev'ry poet's creed.
Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.
'Yet surely, surely, these were famous men!
What boy but hears the sayings of old Ben?
In all debates where critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's art,
Of Shakespeare's nature, and of Cowley's wit,
How Beaumont's judgment check'd what Fletcher writ;
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow;
But, for the passions, Southern sure and Rowe.
These, only these, support the crowded stage,
From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's age.'
All this may be; the people's voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.
To Gammer Gurton if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careless Husband praise,
Or say our fathers never broke a rule;
Why then, I say, the public is a fool.
But let them own, that greater faults than we
They had, and greater virtues, I'll agree.
Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman feet:
Milton's strong pinion now not heaven can bound,
Now serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground,
In quibbles angel and archangel join,
And God the Father turns a school-divine.
Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
Like slashing Bentley with his desperate hook,

Or damn all Shakespeare, like th' affected fool
At court, who hates what'er he read at school.
But for the wits of either Charles's days,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease;
Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more,
(Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies o'er,)
One simile, that solitary shines
In the dry desert of a thousand lines,
Or lengthen'd thought that gleams through many a page,
Has sanctified whole poems for an age.
I lose my patience, and I own it too,
When works are censur'd, not as bad but new;
While if our elders break all reason's laws,
These fools demand not pardon, but applause.
On Avon's bank, where flowers eternal blow,
If I but ask, if any weed can grow?
One tragic sentence if I dare deride
Which Betterton's grave action dignified,
Or well-mouth'd Booth with emphasis proclaims,
(Tho' but, perhaps, a muster-roll of names,)
How will our fathers rise up in a rage,
And swear all shame is lost in George's age!
You'd think no fools disgrac'd the former reign,
Did not some grave examples yet remain,
Who scorn a lad should teach his father skill,
And, having once been wrong, will be so still.
He, who to seem more deep than you or I,
Extols old bards, or Merlin's prophecy,
Mistake him not; he envies, not admires,
And to debase the sons, exalts the sires.
Had ancient times conspir'd to disallow
What then was new, what had been ancient now?
Or what remain'd, so worthy to be read
By learned critics, of the mighty dead?
In days of ease, when now the weary sword
Was sheath'd, and luxury with Charles restor'd;
In ev'ry taste of foreign courts improv'd,
'All, by the king's example, liv'd and lov'd.'

Then peers grew proud in horsemanship t' excel,
Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell;
The soldier breath'd the gallantries of France,
And ev'ry flowery courtier writ romance.
Then marble, soften'd into life, grew warm,
And yielding metal flow'd to human form:
Lely on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul.
No wonder then, when all was love and sport,
The willing Muses were debauch'd at court:
On each enervate string they taught the note
To pant, or tremble through an eunuch's throat.

But Britain, changeful as a child at play,
Now calls in princes, and now turns away.
Now Whig, now Tory, what we lov'd we hate;
Now all for pleasure, now for church and state;
Now for prerogative, and now for laws;
Effects unhappy! from a noble cause.

Time was, a sober Englishman would knock
His servants up, and rise by five o'clock,
Instruct his family in every rule,
And send his wife to church, his son to school.
To worship like his fathers, was his care;
To teach their frugal virtues to his heir;
To prove, that luxury could never hold;
And place, on good security, his gold.
Now times are chang'd, and one poetic itch
Has seiz'd the court and city, poor and rich:
Sons, sires, and grandsires, all will wear the bays,
Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays,
To theatres, and to rehearsals throng,
And all our grace at table is a song.
I, who so oft renounce the muses, lie,
Not ——'s self e'er tells more fibs than I;
When sick of muse, or follies we deplore,
And promise our best friends to rhyme no more;
We wake next morning in a raging fit,
And call for pen and ink to show our wit.

He serv'd a 'prenticeship, who sets up shop;
Ward tried on puppies, and the poor, his drop;
Ev'n Radcliffe's doctors travel first to France,
Nor dare to practise till they 've learn'd to dance.
Who builds a bridge that never drove a pile?
(Should Ripley venture, all the world would smile;)
But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man.

Yet, Sir, reflect, the mischief is not great;
These madmen never hurt the church or state:
Sometimes the folly benefits mankind;
And rarely avarice taints the tuneful mind.
Allow him but his plaything of a pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:
Flight of cashiers, or mobs, he 'll never mind;
And knows no losses while the muse is kind.
To cheat a friend, or ward, he leaves to Peter;
The good man heaps up nothing but mere metre,
Enjoys his garden and his book in quiet;
And then—a perfect hermit in his diet.

Of little use the man you may suppose
Who says in verse what others say in prose;
Yet let me show, a poet 's of some weight,
And (tho' no soldier) useful to the state.
What will a child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue?
What 's long or short, each accent where to place,
And speak in public with some sort of grace?
I scarce can think him such a worthless thing,
Unless he praise some monster of a king;
Or virtue, or religion turn to sport,
To please a lewd, or unbelieving Court.
Unhappy Dryden!—In all Charles's days,
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays;
And in our own (excuse some courtly stains)
No whiter page than Addison remains.
He, from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
And sets the passions on the side of truth,

Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
And pours each human virtue in the heart.
Let Ireland tell, how wit upheld her cause,
Her trade supported, and supplied her laws;
And leave on Swift this grateful verse engrav'd,
'The rights a court attack'd, a poet sav'd.'
Behold the hand that wrought a nation's cure,
Stretch'd to relieve the idiot and the poor,
Proud vice to brand, or injur'd worth adorn,
And stretch the ray to ages yet unborn.
Not but there are, who merit other palms;
Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with psalms:
The boys and girls whom charity maintains,
Implore your help in these pathetic strains:
How could devotion touch the country pews,
Unless the Gods bestow'd a proper muse?
Verse cheers their leisure, verse assists their work,
Verse prays for peace, or sings down Pope and Turk.
The silenc'd preacher yields to potent strain,
And feels that grace his prayer besought in vain;
The blessing thrills through all the lab'ring throng,
And heaven is won by violence of song.

Our rural ancestors, with little blest,
Patient of labour when the end was rest,
Indulg'd the day that hous'd their annual grain,
With feasts, and offerings, and a thankful strain:
The joy their wives, their sons, and servants share,
Ease of their toil, and partners of their care:
The laugh, the jest, attendants on the bowl,
Smooth'd every brow, and open'd every soul:
With growing years the pleasing licence grew,
And taunts alternate innocently flew.
But times corrupt, and nature, ill-inclin'd,
Produc'd the point that left a sting behind;
Till friend with friend, and families at strife,
Triumphant malice rag'd through private life.
Who felt the wrong, or fear'd it, took th' alarm,
Appeal'd to law, and justice lent her arm.

At length, by wholesome dread of statutes bound,
The poets learn'd to please, and not to wound:
Most warp'd to flattery's side; but some more nice,
Preserv'd the freedom, and forbore the vice.
Hence satire rose, that just the medium hit,
And heals with morals what it hurts with wit.
We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms:
Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow.
Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.
Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein,
And splay-foot verse, remain'd, and will remain.
Late, very late, correctness grew our care,
When the tir'd nation breath'd from civil war.
Exact Racine, and Corneille's noble fire,
Show'd us that France had something to admire.
Not but the tragic spirit was our own,
And full in Shakespeare, fair in Otway shone:
But Otway fail'd to polish or refine,
And fluent Shakespeare scarce effac'd a line.
Ev'n copious Dryden wanted, or forgot,
The last and greatest art, the art to blot.
Some doubt, if equal pains, or equal fire
The humble muse of comedy require.
But in known images of life, I guess
The labour greater, as th' indulgence less.
Observe how seldom ev'n the best succeed:
Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed?
What pert, low dialogue has Farquhar writ!
How Van wants grace, who never wanted wit!
The stage how loosely does Astrea tread,
Who fairly puts all characters to bed!
And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,
To make poor Pinky eat with vast applause!
But fill their purse, our poet's work is done,
Alike to them, by pathos or by pun.

O you! whom vanity's light bark conveys
On fame's mad voyage by the wind of praise,
With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
For ever sunk too low, or born too high!
Who pants for glory finds but short repose,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows.
Farewell the stage! if just as thrives the play,
The silly bard grows fat, or falls away.

There still remains to mortify a wit,
The many-headed monster of the pit:
A senseless, worthless, and unhonour'd crowd;
Who, to disturb their betters mighty proud,
Clattering their sticks before ten lines are spoke,
Call for the farce, the bear, or the black-joke.
What dear delight to Britons farce affords!
Ever the taste of mobs, but now of lords:
(Taste, that eternal wanderer, which flies
From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes.)
The play stands still; damn action and discourse,
Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and horse;
Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
Peers, heralds, bishops, ermine, gold, and lawn;
The champion too! and, to complete the jest,
Old Edward's armour beams on Cibber's breast.
With laughter sure Democritus had died,
Had he beheld an audience gape so wide.
Let bear or elephant be e'er so white,
The people, sure, the people are the sight!
Ah luckless poet! stretch thy lungs and roar,
That bear or elephant shall heed thee more;
While all its throats the gallery extends,
And all the thunder of the pit ascends!
Loud as the wolves, on Orcas' stormy steep,
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep,
Such is the shout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat;
Or when from court a birthday suit bestow'd,
Sinks the lost actor in the tawdry load.

Booth enter;—hark! the universal peal!
'But has he spoken?' Not a syllable.
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare?'
Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.

FROM THE EPILOGUE TO THE SATIRES.

Fr. Not twice a twelvemonth you appear in print
And when it comes, the court see nothing in't,
You grow correct that once with rapture writ,
And are, besides, too moral for a wit.
Decay of parts, alas! we all must feel—
Why now, this moment, don't I see you steal?
'Tis all from Horace; Horace long before ye
Said, 'Tories call'd him Whig, and Whigs a Tory;'
And taught his Romans, in much better metre,
'To laugh at fools who put their trust in Peter.'
But Horace, Sir, was delicate, was nice;
Bubo observes, he lash'd no sort of vice:
Horace would say, Sir Billy serv'd the crown,
Blunt could do bus'ness, H—ggins knew the town;
In Sappho touch the failings of the sex,
In reverend bishops note some small neglects,
And own, the Spaniard did a waggish thing,
Who cropt our ears, and sent them to the King.
His sly, polite, insinuating style
Could please at court, and make Augustus smile.
An artful manager, that crept between
His friend and shame, and was a kind of screen.
But 'faith your very friends will soon be sore;
Patriots there are, who wish you'd jest no more—
And where's the glory? 'twill be only thought
That great men never offer'd you a groat.
Go see Sir Robert——

P. See Sir Robert!—hum—
And never laugh—for all my life to come?
Seen him I have, but in his happier hour

Of social pleasure, ill-exchang'd for power;
Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe.
Would he oblige me? let me only find,
He does not think me what he thinks mankind.
Come, come, at all I laugh he laughs no doubt;
The only diff'rence is, I dare laugh out.

F. Why, yes: with Scripture still you may be free;
A horse-laugh, if you please, at honesty;
A joke on Jekyl, or some odd old Whig
Who never chang'd his principle, or wig:
A patriot is a fool in ev'ry age,
Whom all Lord Chamberlains allow the stage:
These nothing hurts; they keep their fashion still,
And wear their strange old virtue, as they will.

If any ask you, 'Who 's the man so near
His prince, that writes in verse, and has his ear?'
Why, answer, Lyttelton, and I 'll engage
The worthy youth shall ne'er be in a rage:
But were his verses vile, his whisper base,
You 'd quickly find him in Lord Fanny's case.
Sejanus, Wolsey, hurt not honest Fleury,
But well may put some statesmen in a fury.

Laugh then at any, but at fools or foes;
These you but anger, and you mend not those.
Laugh at your friends, and, if your friends are sore,
So much the better, you may laugh the more.
To vice and folly to confine the jest,
Sets half the world, God knows, against the rest;
Did not the sneer of more impartial men
At sense and virtue, balance all again.
Judicious wits spread wide the ridicule,
And charitably comfort knave and fool.

P. Dear Sir, forgive the prejudice of youth:
Adieu distinction, satire, warmth, and truth!
Come, harmless characters that no one hit;
Come Henley's oratory, Osborn's wit!
The honey dropping from Favonio's tongue,
The flow'rs of Bubo, and the flow of Y—ng!

The gracious dew of pulpit eloquence,
And all the well-whipt cream of courtly sense,
That first was H—vy's, F—'s next, and then
The S—te's, and then H—vy's once again.
O come, that easy, Ciceronian style,
So Latin, yet so English all the while,
As, tho' the pride of Middleton and Bland,
All boys may read, and girls may understand!
Then might I sing, without the least offence,
And all I sung should be the nation's sense:
Or teach the melancholy muse to mourn,
Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts perform'd, and all her children blest!
So—Satire is no more—I feel it die—
No Gazetteer more innocent than I.—
And let, a God's-name, ev'ry fool and knave
Be grac'd through life, and flatter'd in his grave.
F. Why so? if Satire knows its time and place,
You still may lash the greatest—in disgrace:
For merit will by turns forsake them all;
Would you know when? exactly when they fall.
But let all satire in all changes spare
Immortal S—k, and grave De——re.
Silent and soft, as saints remove to heav'n,
All ties dissolv'd, and ev'ry sin forgiv'n,
These may some gentle ministerial wing
Receive, and place for ever near a king!
There, where no passion, pride, or shame transport,
Lull'd with the sweet nepenthe of a court;
There, where no father's, brother's, friend's, disgrace
Once break their rest, or stir them from their place:
But past the sense of human miseries,
All tears are wip'd for ever from all eyes;
No cheek is known to blush, no heart to throb,
Save when they lose a question, or a job.

From the Dunciad, Book IV.

Oh (cried the goddess) for some pedant reign!
Some gentle James, to bless the land again;
To stick the doctor's chair into the throne,
Give law to words, or war with words alone,
Senates and courts with Greek and Latin rule,
And turn the council to a grammar school!
For sure, if dulness sees a grateful day,
'Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.
O! if my sons may learn one earthly thing,
Teach but that one, sufficient for a king;
That which my priests, and mine alone, maintain,
Which, as it dies, or lives, we fall, or reign:
May you, my Cam, and Isis, preach it long!
'The right divine of kings to govern wrong.'

Prompt at the call, around the goddess roll
Broad hats, and hoods, and caps, a sable shoal:
Thick and more thick the black blockade extends,
A hundred head of Aristotle's friends.
Nor wert thou, Isis! wanting to the day,
(Tho' Christ-church long kept prudishly away)
Each staunch polemic, stubborn as a rock,
Each fierce logician, still expelling Locke,
Came whip and spur, and dash'd through thin and thick
On German Crousaz, and Dutch Burgersdyck.
As many quit the streams that murm'ring fall
To lull the sons of Margaret and Clare-hall,
Where Bentley late tempestuous wont to sport
In troubled waters, but now sleeps in port.
Before them march'd that awful aristarch;
Plow'd was his front with many a deep remark:
His hat, which never veil'd to human pride,
Walker with reverence took, and laid aside.
Low bow'd the rest: he, kingly, did but nod;
So upright Quakers please both man and God.
Mistress! dismiss that rabble from your throne:
Avaunt—is Aristarchus yet unknown?

Thy mighty Scholiast, whose unwearied pains
Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains,
Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,
Critics like me shall make it prose again.
Roman and Greek grammarians! know your better;
Author of something yet more great than letter:
While towering o'er your alphabet like Saul
Stands our digamma, and o'ertops them all.
'Tis true, on words is still our whole debate,
Dispute of *me* or *te*, of *aut* or *at*,
To sound or sink in *cano*, O or A,
Or give up Cicero to C or K.
Let Freind affect to speak as Terence spoke,
And Alsop never but like Horace joke:
From me, what Virgil, Pliny may deny,
Manilius or Solinus shall supply:
For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek,
I poach in Suidas for unlicens'd Greek.
In ancient sense if any needs will deal,
Be sure I give them fragments, not a meal;
What Gellius or Stobaeus hash'd before,
Or chew'd by blind old Scholiasts o'er and o'er.
The critic eye, that microscope of wit,
Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit;
How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
Are things which Kuster, Burman, Wasse shall see,
When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea.

Conclusion of the Dunciad.

More she had spoke, but yawn'd—all nature nods:
What mortal can resist the yawn of gods?
Churches and chapels instantly it reach'd;
(St James's first, for leaden G—— preach'd)
Then catch'd the schools; the hall scarce kept awake;
The convocation gap'd, but could not speak:

Lost was the nation's sense, nor could be found,
While the long solemn unison went round:
Wide, and more wide, it spread o'er all the realm;
Ev'n Palinurus nodded at the helm:
The vapour mild o'er each committee crept;
Unfinish'd treaties in each office slept;
And chiefless armies doz'd out the campaign;
And navies yawn'd for orders on the main.
O Muse! relate (for you can tell alone,
Wits have short memories, and dunces none),
Relate, who first, who last resign'd to rest;
Whose heads she partly, whose completely, blest;
What charms could faction, what ambition lull,
The venal quiet, and entrance the dull;
'Till drown'd was sense, and shame, and right, and wrong—
O sing, and hush the nations with thy song!

* * * * * *

In vain, in vain—the all-composing hour
Resistless falls: the muse obeys the pow'r.
She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of Night primæval and of Chaos old!
Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand opprest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after Art goes out, and all is night.
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!

In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
For public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
Light dies before thy uncreating word;
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all.

AMBROSE PHILIPS.

[AMBROSE PHILIPS was born in Leicestershire in 1671, and died in his house at Vauxhall on the 18th of June, 1749. His *Pastorals* were published in 1709.]

The reputation of Ambrose Philips has undergone some curious reverses. His *Epistle to the Earl of Dorset*, which Steele pronounced 'as fine a piece as we ever had,' and Goldsmith 'incomparably fine,' seems to us as frigid and as ephemeral as its theme; the *Distressed Mother*, in which he made Racine speak with the voice of Rowe, no longer holds a place, even in memory, on the tragic stage; his translations of Sappho, once thought so brilliant and so affecting, seems to modern readers ludicrously mean, nor is criticism any longer concerned to decide whether the pastorals of Philips or of Pope are the more insipid. But while all these works, on which his contemporary reputation was founded, are forgotten, his odes to private persons, and in particular to children, which won him ridicule from his own age, and from Henry Carey the immortal name of Namby-Pamby, have a simplicity of versification and a genuine play of fancy which are now recognised as rare gifts in the artificial school of Addison in which he was trained. Ambrose Philips is moreover to be praised, not in these odes only, but in his poems generally, for an affectionate observation of natural beauty.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

FROM THE ODE TO MISS CARTERET.

By the next returning spring,
When again the linnets sing,
When again the lambkins play,
Pretty sportlings! full of May;
When the meadows next are seen,
Sweet enamel! white and green;
And the year, in fresh attire,
Welcomes every gay desire;
Blooming on, shalt thou appear
More inviting than the year,
Fairer sight than orchard shows,
Which beside a river blows.
Yet another spring I see,
And a brighter bloom in thee,
And another round of time,
Circling, still improves thy prime;
And, beneath the vernal skies,
Yet a verdure more shall rise,
Ere thy beauties, kindling show,
In each finished feature glow;
Ere, in smiles and in disdain,
Thou assert thy maiden reign,
Absolute to save or kill
Fond beholders at thy will.
Then the taper-moulded waist,
With a span of beauty braced,
And the swell of either breast,
And the wide high-vaulted chest,
And the neck so white and round,
Little neck with brilliants bound,
And the store of charms that shine
Above, in lineaments divine,
Crowded in a narrow space
To complete the desperate face;

Those alluring powers, and more,
Shall enamoured youths adore,
These and more, in courtly lays,
Many an aching heart shall praise.

TO MISS CHARLOTTE PULTENEY, IN HER MOTHER'S ARMS

Timely blossom, infant fair,
Fondling of a happy pair,
Every morn and every night
Their solicitous delight,
Sleeping, waking, still at ease,
Pleasing, without skill to please;
Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,
Lavish of a heedless tongue.
Simple maiden, void of art,
Babbling out the very heart,
Yet abandoned to thy will,
Yet imagining no ill,
Yet too innocent to blush,
Like the linnet in the bush,
To the mother-linnet's note
Moduling her slender throat,
Chirping forth thy pretty joys,
Wanton in the change of toys,
Like the linnet green, in May,
Flitting to each bloomy spray.
Wearied then, and glad of rest,
Like the linnet in the nest.
This thy present happy lot,
This, in time, will be forgot;
Other pleasures, other cares,
Ever-busy Time prepares;
And thou shalt in thy daughter see
This picture once resembled thee.

THOMAS PARNELL.

[THOMAS PARNELL was born in Dublin in 1679, and was buried at Chester on the 18th of October, 1718. His *Poems* were first collected after his death, by Pope.]

In contemplating the Lampadephoria of poetical history we sometimes meet with a figure whose torch was well charged with the resin of genius and ready to be enflamed, but whom accidental circumstances removed from the line of light so long and so far that its destiny was never properly fulfilled. Such a figure is Parnell, who, having spent his youth as a thoroughly insignificant amateur in verse, was roused during the last five years of his life, under the influence of Pope, a much younger man than he, to strike a few magnificent chords on the lyre of a true poet. The last three pieces in the posthumous edition of Parnell's poems show us what he might have been, had he lived in London instead of Ireland, had he been born in 1699 instead of 1679, and had he understood at once the imperative bent of his genius. But this sententious and sonorous writer, whose verse in its deeper harmonies surpasses even Pope's in melody, fancied himself a satirist, a society-singer, and emulated in his false ambition the successes of Oldham and Prior. But while he was vainly attempting to subdue for himself a province in Acrostic-land, there lay unvisited a romantic island of poesy, which was his by birthright, and it was Pope who opened his eyes to this fact. We know little of Parnell's life, but we may be sure, from internal evidence, that his last three poems were composed during the five years between the publication of *Windsor Forest* and his own death. Yet, though Pope awakened his genius within him, Parnell was not the disciple of Pope; within the narrow range of what he did well, there was no writer of his time who showed a greater originality.

The Hermit may be considered as forming the apex and *chef d'œuvre* of Augustan poetry in England. It is more exactly in the French taste than any work that preceded it, and after it English poetry swiftly passed into the degeneracy of classicism. Parnell's poem is the model of a moral *conte;* the movement is dignified and rapid, the action and reflection are balanced with exquisite skill, the surprise is admirably prepared, and the treatment never flags from beginning to end. The French complaint of the lack of style in our minor poetry might have been triumphantly confronted by the Dennises and Budgells of the infancy of our criticism, by a reference to Parnell's masterpiece, which, if we are ready to grant that polish, elegance and symmetry are the main elements of poetry, could scarcely be surpassed in any language. But more of real inspiration attended the composition of his two remarkable odes, the *Night-Piece* and the *Hymn to Contentment.* In these he originated two distinct streams of poetical influence, for the former was no less certainly the precursor of the curious funereal school of Young, Blair and Porteus, than the latter was of Collins' exquisite strain of lyrical writing. In both he shows himself the disciple of Milton, and wields the ringing octosyllabic measure as no one had done since *Il Penseroso* was published. The lines with which we open our selection from the *Hymn to Contentment* reach a higher range of melody, and strike a more subtle chord of fancy than perhaps any other verses of that age. Yet Parnell has been neglected from his own generation to ours, and it is doubtful whether his moral abstractions can ever hope to regain the popular ear.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

FROM 'A NIGHT-PIECE ON DEATH.'

By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:
Their books from wisdom widely stray,
Or point at best the longest way.
I 'll seek a readier path, and go
Where wisdom's surely taught below.

How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide!
The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire:
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
'Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest.'

Those graves, with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground,
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,
Where toil and poverty repose.

The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
The chisel's slender help to fame,
(Which ere our set of friends decay
Their frequent steps may wear away,)
A middle race of mortals own,
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.

The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,
Whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones,
These, all the poor remains of state,
Adorn the rich, or praise the great;
Who while on earth in fame they live,
Are senseless of the fame they give.

Ha! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow, and wan, and wrapp'd with shrouds,
They rise in visionary crowds,
And all with sober accent cry,
'Think, mortal, what it is to die.'

From 'A Hymn to Contentment.'

The silent heart, which grief assails,
Treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales,
Sees daisies open, rivers run,
And seeks, as I have vainly done,
Amusing thought; but learns to know
That solitude's the nurse of woe.
No real happiness is found
In trailing purple o'er the ground;
Or in a soul exalted high,
To range the circuit of the sky,
Converse with stars above, and know
All nature in its forms below;

The rest it seeks, in seeking dies,
And doubts at last, for knowledge, rise.

Lovely, lasting peace, appear!
This world itself, if thou art here,
Is once again with Eden blest,
And man contains it in his breast.

'Twas thus, as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
The branches whisper as they wav'd:
It seem'd, as all the quiet place
Confess'd the presence of the Grace.
When thus she spoke—'Go rule thy will,
Bid thy wild passions all be still,
Know God—and bring thy heart to know
The joys which from religion flow:
Then every Grace shall prove its guest,
And I'll be there to crown the rest.'

Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
In my hours of sweet retreat,
Might I thus my soul employ,
With sense of gratitude and joy!
Rais'd as ancient prophets were,
In heavenly vision, praise, and prayer;
Pleasing all men, hurting none,
Pleas'd and bless'd with God alone:
Then while the gardens take my sight,
With all the colours of delight;
While silver waters glide along,
To please my ear, and court my song;
I'll lift my voice, and tune my string,
And thee, great source of nature, sing.

The sun that walks his airy way,
To light the world, and give the day;

The moon that shines with borrow'd light;
The stars that gild the gloomy night;
The seas that roll unnumber'd waves;
The wood that spreads its shady leaves;
The field whose ears conceal the grain,
The yellow treasure of the plain;
All of these, and all I see,
Should be sung, and sung by me:
They speak their maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.

Go search among your idle dreams,
Your busy or your vain extremes;
And find a life of equal bliss,
Or own the next begun in this.

THE HERMIT.

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well:
Remote from man, with God he pass'd the days,
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.

A life so sacred, such serene repose,
Seem'd heaven itself, till one suggestion rose;
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway:
His hopes no more a certain prospect boast,
And all the tenour of his soul is lost.
So when a smooth expanse receives imprest
Calm nature's image on its watery breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:
But if a stone the gentle scene divide,
Swift ruffling circles curl on every side,

And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,
Banks, trees, and skies, in thick disorder run.
To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if books, or swains, report it right,
(For yet by swains alone the world he knew,
Whose feet came wandering o'er the nightly dew,)
He quits his cell; the pilgrim-staff he bore,
And fix'd the scallop in his hat before;
Then with the sun a rising journey went,
Sedate to think, and watching each event.
The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,
And long and lonesome was the wild to pass;
But when the southern sun had warm'd the day,
A youth came posting o'er a crossing way;
His raiment decent, his complexion fair,
And soft in graceful ringlets wav'd his hair.
Then near approaching, 'Father, hail!' he cried;
'And hail, my son,' the reverend sire replied;
Words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd,
And talk of various kind deceiv'd the road;
Till each with other pleas'd, and loth to part,
While in their age they differ, join in heart:
Thus stands an aged elm in ivy bound,
Thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.
Now sunk the sun; the closing hour of day
Came onward, mantled o'er with sober gray;
Nature in silence bid the world repose;
When near the road a stately palace rose:
There by the moon through ranks of trees they pass,
Whose verdure crown'd their sloping sides of grass.
It chanc'd the noble master of the dome
Still made his house the wandering stranger's home;
Yet still the kindness, from a thirst of praise,
Prov'd the vain flourish of expensive ease.
The pair arrive: the liveried servants wait;
Their lord receives them at the pompous gate.
The table groans with costly piles of food,
And all is more than hospitably good.

Then led to rest, the day's long toil they drown,
Deep sunk in sleep, and silk, and heaps of down.
At length 'tis morn, and at the dawn of day,
Along the wide canals the zephyrs play;
Fresh o'er the gay parterres the breezes creep,
And shake the neighbouring wood to banish sleep.
Up rise the guests, obedient to the call:
An early banquet deck'd the splendid hall;
Rich luscious wine a golden goblet grac'd,
Which the kind master forc'd the guests to taste.
Then, pleas'd and thankful, from the porch they go;
And, but the landlord, none had cause of woe;
His cup was vanish'd; for in secret guise
The younger guest purloin'd the glittering prize.
As one who spies a serpent in his way,
Glistening and basking in the summer ray,
Disorder'd stops to shun the danger near,
Then walks with faintness on, and looks with fear;
So seem'd the sire; when far upon the road,
The shining spoil his wily partner show'd.
He stopp'd with silence, walk'd with trembling heart,
And much he wish'd, but durst not ask to part:
Murmuring he lifts his eyes, and thinks it hard,
That generous actions meet a base reward.
While thus they pass, the sun his glory shrouds,
The changing skies hang out their sable clouds;
A sound in air presag'd approaching rain,
And beasts to covert scud across the plain.
Warn'd by the signs, the wandering pair retreat,
To seek for shelter at a neighbouring seat.
'Twas built with turrets, on a rising ground,
And strong, and large, and unimprov'd around;
Its owner's temper, timorous and severe,
Unkind and griping, caus'd a desert there.
As near the miser's heavy doors they drew,
Fierce rising gusts with sudden fury blew;
The nimble lightning mix'd with showers began,
And o'er their heads loud rolling thunders ran.

Here long they knock, but knock or call in vain,
Driven by the wind, and batter'd by the rain.
At length some pity warm'd the master's breast,
('Twas then his threshold first receiv'd a guest,)
Slow creaking turns the door with jealous care,
And half he welcomes in the shivering pair;
One frugal faggot lights the naked walls,
And nature's fervour through their limbs recalls:
Bread of the coarsest sort, with eager[1] wine,
Each hardly granted, serv'd them both to dine;
And when the tempest first appear'd to cease,
A ready warning bid them part in peace.
With still remark the pondering hermit view'd
In one so rich, a life so poor and rude;
And why should such, within himself he cried,
Lock the lost wealth a thousand want beside?
But what new marks of wonder soon took place
In every settling feature of his face,
When from his vest the young companion bore
That cup, the generous landlord own'd before,
And paid profusely with the precious bowl,
The stinted kindness of this churlish soul!

But now the clouds in airy tumult fly;
The sun emerging opes an azure sky;
A fresher green the smelling leaves display,
And, glittering as they tremble, cheer the day:
The weather courts them from their poor retreat,
And the glad master bolts the weary gate.

While hence they walk, the pilgrim's bosom wrought
With all the travel of uncertain thought;
His partner's acts without their cause appear,
'Twas there a vice, and seem'd a madness here:
Detesting that, and pitying this, he goes,
Lost and confounded with the various shows.

Now night's dim shades again involve the sky,
Again the wanderers want a place to lie,
Again they search, and find a lodging nigh:
The soil improv'd around, the mansion neat,
And neither poorly low, nor idly great

[1] sharp, acid

It seem'd to speak its master's turn of mind,
Content, and not for praise, but virtue kind.
Hither the walkers turn with weary feet,
Then bless the mansion, and the master greet:
Their greeting fair bestow'd, with modest guise,
The courteous master hears, and thus replies:
'Without a vain, without a grudging heart,
To him who gives us all, I yield a part;
From him you come, for him accept it here,
A frank and sober, more than costly cheer.'
He spoke, and bid the welcome table spread,
Then talk'd of virtue till the time of bed,
When the grave household round his hall repair,
Warn'd by a bell, and close the hours with prayer.
At length the world, renew'd by calm repose,
Was strong for toil, the dappled morn arose.
Before the pilgrims part, the younger crept
Near the clos'd cradle where an infant slept,
And writh'd his neck: the landlord's little pride,
O strange return! grew black, and gasp'd, and died!
Horror of horrors! what! his only son!
How look'd our hermit when the fact was done?
Not hell, though hell's black jaws in sunder part,
And breathe blue fire, could more assault his heart.
Confus'd, and struck with silence at the deed,
He flies, but, trembling, fails to fly with speed.
His steps the youth pursues: the country lay
Perplex'd with roads, a servant show'd the way:
A river cross'd the path; the passage o'er
Was nice to find; the servant trod before:
Long arms of oaks an open bridge supplied,
And deep the waves beneath the bending glide.
The youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,
Approach'd the careless guide, and thrust him in;
Plunging he falls, and rising lifts his head,
Then flashing turns, and sinks among the dead.
Wild, sparkling rage inflames the father's eyes,
He bursts the bands of fear, and madly cries,
'Detested wretch!'—but scarce his speech began,

When the strange partner seem'd no longer man:
His youthful face grew more serenely sweet;
His robe turn'd white, and flow'd upon his feet;
Fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair;
Celestial odours breathe through purpled air;
And wings, whose colours glitter'd on the day,
Wide at his back their gradual plumes display.
The form ethereal bursts upon his sight,
And moves in all the majesty of light.

Though loud at first the pilgrim's passion grew,
Sudden he gaz'd, and wist not what to do;
Surprise in secret chains his words suspends,
And in a calm his settling temper ends.
But silence here the beauteous angel broke,
The voice of music ravish'd as he spoke.

'Thy prayer, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown,
In sweet memorial rise before the throne:
These charms, success in our bright region find,
And force an angel down, to calm thy mind;
For this, commission'd, I forsook the sky,
Nay, cease to kneel—thy fellow-servant I.

'Then know the truth of government divine,
And let these scruples be no longer thine.

'The Maker justly claims that world he made,
In this the right of Providence is laid;
Its sacred majesty through all depends
On using second means to work his ends:
'Tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,
The power exerts his attributes on high,
Your actions uses, nor controls your will,
And bids the doubting sons of men be still.

'What strange events can strike with more surprise,
Than those which lately struck thy wondering eyes?
Yet taught by these, confess th' Almighty just,
And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!

'The great vain man, who far'd on costly food,
Whose life was too luxurious to be good;
Who made his ivory stands with goblets shine,
And forc'd his guests to morning draughts of wine,

Has, with the cup, the graceless custom lost,
And still he welcomes, but with less of cost.

'The mean, suspicious wretch, whose bolted door
Ne'er mov'd in duty to the wandering poor;
With him I left the cup, to teach his mind
That heaven can bless, if mortals will be kind.
Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,
And feels compassion touch his grateful soul.
Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
With heaping coals of fire upon its head;
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And loose from dross, the silver runs below.

'Long had our pious friend in virtue trod,
But now the child half-wean'd his heart from God;
Child of his age, for him he liv'd in pain,
And measur'd back his steps to earth again.
To what excesses had this dotage run!
But God, to save the father, took the son.
To all but thee, in fits he seem'd to go,
And 'twas my ministry to deal the blow.
The poor fond parent, humbled in the dust,
Now owns in tears the punishment was just.

'But how had all his fortune felt a wrack,
Had that false servant sped in safety back!
This night his treasur'd heaps he meant to steal,
And what a fund of charity would fail!

'Thus Heaven instructs thy mind: this trial o'er,
Depart in peace, resign, and sin no more.'

On sounding pinions here the youth withdrew,
The sage stood wondering as the seraph flew.
Thus look'd Elisha, when, to mount on high,
His master took the chariot of the sky;
The fiery pomp ascending left the view;
The prophet gaz'd, and wish'd to follow too.

The bending hermit here a prayer begun,
'Lord! as in heaven, on earth thy will be done!'
Then gladly turning, sought his ancient place,
And pass'd a life of piety and peace.

JOHN GAY.

[JOHN GAY was born at Barnstaple in 1688. Fairly educated, he began life in London as a silk-mercer; but soon relinquished that occupation for literature. His first poem was *Rural Sports*, a Georgic 'inscribed to Mr. Pope,' 1713. In the following year he produced *The Shepherd's Week*, a set of six pastorals. His principal remaining works are the farce of *The What-d'ye Call-it*, 1715; the mock-heroic poem of *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, 1716; *Fables*, 1727–38; and the famous *Beggar's Opera*, 1728. His *Poems on Several Occasions*, including the pastoral tragedy of *Dione*, were published in 1720. He was also concerned in, and bore the blame of, the unlucky comedy of *Three Hours after Marriage*, to which Pope and Arbuthnot had largely contributed. He died in London in December, 1732.]

Gay appears to have been one of those easy-tempered, indolent, irresponsible good-creatures, whose lot in this world would probably be either pitiful or tragic, if a beneficent Fate did not provide them with charitable friends who watch over them with almost parental solicitude. Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, seem to have cherished a genuine affection for him; and in later life the Duke and Duchess of Queensbury received him into their house, and took care both of the helpless poet and his money. His first poem, *Rural Sports*, though it contains some happy descriptive passages, is of the '*toujours bien, jamais mieux*' order of performance. Its dedication, however, procured him the friendship of Pope. *The Shepherd's Week*, his next effort, was in fact suggested by Pope, who, fresh from his covert attack in the *Guardian* (Monday, April 27, 1713) on the sham pastoral of Ambrose Philips, foresaw what powerful assistance Gay's observant humour and knowledge of the country would furnish to his cause. The rustic life was to be depicted with the gilt off, and 'the right simple Eclogue' essayed 'after the true ancient guise

of Theocritus.' 'Thou wilt not find my Shepherdesses,' says the author's proem, 'idly piping upon oaten Reeds, but milking the Kine, tying up the Sheaves, or, if the Hogs are astray, driving them to their Styes. My Shepherd gathereth none other Nosegays but what are the growth of our own Fields; he sleepeth not under Myrtle shades, but under a Hedge; nor doth he vigilantly defend his Flocks from Wolves, because there are none.' Like Fielding's novel of *Joseph Andrews*, the execution of *The Shepherd's Week* was far superior to its avowed object of mere ridicule. In spite of their barbarous 'Bumkinets' and 'Grubbinols,' Gay's eclogues abound with interesting folk-lore and closely-studied rural pictures. We see the country-girl burning hazel-nuts to find her sweet-heart, or presenting the faithless Colin with a knife with a 'posy' on it, or playing 'Hot Cockles,' or listening to *Gillian of Croydon* and *Patient Grissel*. There are also sly strokes of kindly satire, as when the shepherds are represented fencing the grave of Blouzelinda against the prospective inroads of the parson's horse and cow, which have the right of grazing in the churchyard; or when that dignitary, in consideration of the liberal sermon-fee,

'Spoke the Hour-glass in her praise—quite out.'

These little touches (and there are a hundred more) make us sure that we are reading no mere caricature; but that the country-life of that age of Queen Anne, which her poet loyally declares to be the only 'Golden Age,' is truly and faithfully brought before us.

The Shepherd's Week was followed by *Trivia*, for which, the preface tells us, the author received several hints from Swift, with whose *City Shower* it has affinities. It is a lively and humourous description of the London streets *circa* 1716, and has an antiquarian as well as a poetical value. The farce of *The What d'ye Call It* contains the musical ballad ''Twas when the seas were roaring,' which we quote. Gay's only other important work (for the *Beggar's Opera* does not come within our limits) is the *Fables*, which in 1726 he prepared for the edification of the young Duke of Cumberland. As a fabulist he is easy and colloquial; and his work is distinguished by good-humour and good-sense; but he fails to reach the happy negligence and the supreme art of La Fontaine. The *Hare and many Friends* is a fair sample of his manner; and it is of additional interest as being in some measure a personal utterance, though the records of his life show that, in spite of his disappointments of court favour, he seldom

failed in finding a Monmouth or a Burlington to soothe his wounded feelings. Moreover, the profits from his works, which enabled him, in spite of losses, to die worth £6000, could not have been inconsiderable.

The *Fables* are Gay's most extensive effort. His remaining works consist of *Epistles*, *Town Eclogues*, *Tales*, and *Miscellaneous Pieces*. The *Epistles* are sprightly and familiar. One of them, *A Welcome from Greece*, addressed to Pope on his having finished his translation of the *Iliad*, has an unexpected vivacity and lyric movement. It is in an *ottava-rima* earlier than Frere or Byron; and exhibits the poet's contemporaries assembling to greet him after his six years' toil. Prior, Congreve, Steele, Chandos, Bathurst,—few of the illustrious names of the age are absent. Nor are the other sex unrepresented:—

'What lady's that, to whom he gently bends?
Who knows not her? ah! those are Wortley's eyes!
How art thou honoured, numbered with her friends!
For she distinguishes the good and wise.
The sweet-tongued Murray near her side attends;
Now to my heart the glance of Howard flies;
Now Hervey, fair of face, I mark full well,
With thee, Youth's youngest daughter, sweet Lepell.'

As to Gay's *Town Eclogues*, they are neither better nor worse than Lady Mary's own; and probably had a like origin, ridicule of Ambrose Philips. His *Tales* have the indelicacy but not the grace of Prior's. Of his songs and ballads, that of *Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Eyed Susan* is too well-known to need description; and too great a favourite to be omitted from any anthology. *Damon and Cupid* and *The Lady's Lamentation* are other examples of that singing faculty which Gay possessed in so marked a degree, and which contributed so triumphantly to the success of the *Beggar's Opera*.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

From 'The Shepherd's Week.'

Ah, Colin! canst thou leave thy Sweetheart true!
What I have done for thee will Cic'ly do?
Will she thy linen wash or hosen darn,
And knit thee gloves made of her own-spun yarn?
Will she with huswife's hand provide thy meat,
And every Sunday morn thy neckcloth plait?
Which o'er thy kersey doublet spreading wide,
In service-time drew Cic'ly's eyes aside. . . .
If in the soil you guide the crooked share,
Your early breakfast is my constant care;
And when with even hand you strow the grain,
I fright the thievish rooks from off the plain.
In misling days when I my thresher heard,
With nappy beer I to the barn repaired;
Lost in the music of the whirling flail,
To gaze on thee I left the smoking pail:
In harvest when the sun was mounted high,
My leathern bottle did thy drought supply;
Whene'er you mowed I followed with the rake,
And have full oft been sun-burnt for thy sake;
When in the welkin gathering showers were seen,
I lagged the last with Colin on the green;
And when at eve returning with thy car,
Awaiting heard the jingling bells from far;
Straight on the fire the sooty pot I placed,
To warm thy broth I burnt my hands for haste.
When hungry thou stoodst staring, like an oaf,
I sliced the luncheon from the barley loaf:
With crumbled bread I thickened well thy mess.
Ah, love me more, or love thy pottage less!

A BALLAD.

[From *The What d'ye Call It.*]

'Twas when the seas were roaring
With hollow blasts of wind;
A damsel lay deploring,
All on a rock reclined.
Wide o'er the rolling billows
She cast a wistful look;
Her head was crowned with willows,
That tremble o'er the brook.

'Twelve months are gone and over,
And nine long tedious days.
Why didst thou, venturous lover,
Why didst thou trust the seas?
Cease, cease, thou cruel ocean,
And let my lover rest:
Ah! what's thy troubled motion
To that within my breast?

'The merchant, robbed of pleasure,
Sees tempests in despair;
But what's the loss of treasure,
To losing of my dear?
Should you some coast be laid on
Where gold and diamonds grow,
You'd find a richer maiden,
But none that loves you so.

'How can they say that nature
Has nothing made in vain;
Why then beneath the water,
Should hideous rocks remain?

No eyes the rocks discover
That lurk beneath the deep,
To wreck the wandering lover,
And leave the maid to weep.'

All melancholy lying,
Thus wailed she for her dear;
Repaid each blast with sighing,
Each billow with a tear.
When, o'er the white wave stooping
His floating corpse she spied;
Then, like a lily drooping,
She bowed her head, and died.

THE HARE WITH MANY FRIENDS

Friendship, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.
The child whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father's care.
'Tis thus in friendship; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.
A Hare, who, in a civil way,
Complied with everything, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train,
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain.
Her care was, never to offend,
And every creature was her friend.
As forth she went at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies:
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles, to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round,

Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.
What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the Horse appeared in view!
'Let me,' says she, 'your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight;
To friendship every burden's light.'
The Horse replied: 'Poor honest Puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus;
Be comforted; relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear.'
She next the stately Bull implored;
And thus replied the mighty lord.
'Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may, without offence, pretend,
To take the freedom of a friend;
Love calls me hence; a favourite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow:
And when a lady's in the case,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the Goat is just behind.'
The Goat remarked her pulse was high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
'My back,' says he, 'may do you harm;
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm.'
The Sheep was feeble, and complained
His sides a load of wool sustained:
Said he was slow, confessed his fears,
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.
She now the trotting Calf addressed,
To save from death a friend distressed.
'Shall I,' says he, 'of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler passed you by;
How strong are those, how weak am I!

Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then. You know my heart.
But dearest friends, alas! must part!
How shall we all lament: Adieu!
For see, the hounds are just in view.'

BLACK-EYED SUSAN.

All in the Downs the fleet was moored,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When Black-eyed Susan came aboard,
'Oh! where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew?'

William, who high upon the yard
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard
He sighed, and cast his eyes below:
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands.
And, quick as lightning, on the deck he stands.

So the sweet lark, high poised in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast—
If chance his mate's shrill call he hear—
And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lips those kisses sweet.

'O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain;
Let me kiss off that falling tear;
We only part to meet again.
Change as ye list, ye winds! my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

'Believe not what the landsmen say,
Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind;
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In every port a mistress find;
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,
For thou art present wheresoe'er I go.

'If to fair India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright,
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory so white.
Thus every beauteous object that I view,
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

'Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet, safe from harms,
William shall to his dear return.
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's eye.'

The boatswain gave the dreadful word;
The sails their swelling bosom spread;
No longer must she stay aboard;
They kissed—she sighed—he hung his head.
Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land,
'Adieu!' she cries, and waved her lily hand.

THOMAS TICKELL.

[THOMAS TICKELL was born at Bridekirk, near Carlisle, in 1686, and died at Bath in 1740. His longest poem, *Kensington Gardens*, appeared in 1722.]

The powers of Tickell were awakened and solely sustained by an unbounded admiration for the person and genius of Addison. His Muse hovered around her object, celebrating its beauties from every side, and even Pope, when he was most angry, could not help smiling to see the pompous figure of Atticus accompanied by so tender and importunate a satellite. That the great man stooped to make a tool of his friend's fidelity in an unworthy literary quarrel, and by the failure of his intrigue brought ridicule upon them both, is matter of history; but this did not deter Tickell from directing that his tombstone in the church of Glasneven should state that 'his highest honour was that of having been the friend of Addison,' or from celebrating the death of the latter in a poem wherein he surpassed not himself only but his master too.

The famous elegy is justly ranked among the greatest masterpieces of its kind. In it a sublime and public sorrow for once moved a thoroughly mediocre poet into utterance that was sincere and original. So much dignity, so much pathos, so direct and passionate a distress, are not to be found in any other poem of the period. But when Tickell was not eulogising the majesty and sweetness of Addison, he was but a languid, feeble versifier. *Kensington Gardens* is one of those works that will not let themselves be read; the once-admired ballad of *Colin and Lucy* seems very trite and silly to a modern reader; while the poem *On Hunting*, in which Tickell posed as the English Gratius Faliscus, progressed so slowly that it was at last anticipated by the *Chase* of Somerville, another of Addison's ardent disciples. From this

general condemnation it is only just to except the thoughtful and melodious lines *On the Death of the Earl of Cadogan.*

Tickell's first introduction to Addison was through a copy of verses which he addressed to him from Oxford in 1707, in which this couplet occurred :—

> 'No charms are wanted to thy artful song,
> Soft as Corelli, and as Virgil strong.

For this piece of flattery the young poet was rewarded by Addison's personal friendship. It is worthy of remark that the influence of Addison on English verse was as entirely false and sterile as his influence on prose was fruitful and healthy.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

TO THE EARL OF WARWICK, ON THE DEATH OF MR. ADDISON.

If, dumb too long, the drooping Muse hath stayed,
And left her debt to Addison unpaid;
Blame not her silence, Warwick, but bemoan,
And judge, oh judge, my bosom by your own.
What mourner ever felt poetic fires?
Slow comes the verse, that real woe inspires:
Grief unaffected suits but ill with art,
Or flowing numbers with a bleeding heart.

Can I forget the dismal night, that gave
My soul's best part for ever to the grave!
How silent did his old companions tread,
By mid-night lamps, the mansions of the dead,
Thro' breathing statues, then unheeded things,
Thro' rows of warriors, and thro' walks of kings!
What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire;
The pealing organ, and the pausing choir;
The duties by the lawn-robed prelate payed;
And the last words, that dust to dust conveyed!
While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,
Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend,
Oh gone for ever, take this long adieu;
And sleep in peace, next thy loved Montagu!

To strew fresh laurels let the task be mine,
A frequent pilgrim, at thy sacred shrine,
Mine with true sighs thy absence to bemoan,
And grave with faithful epitaphs thy stone.
If e'er from me thy loved memorial part,
May shame afflict this alienated heart;
Of thee forgetful if I form a song,
My lyre be broken, and untun'd my tongue,
My griefs be doubled, from thy image free,
And mirth a torment, unchastised by thee.

Oft let me range the gloomy isles alone
(Sad luxury! to vulgar minds unknown)
Along the walls where speaking marbles show
What worthies form the hallow'd mould below:
Proud names, who once the reins of empire held;
In arms who triumph'd, or in arts excelled;
Chiefs, graced with scars, and prodigal of blood;
Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood;
Just men, by whom impartial laws were given;
And saints, who taught, and led, the way to heaven
Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest,
Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss conveyed
A fairer spirit, or more welcome shade.

In what new region, to the just assigned,
What new employments please th' unbodied mind?
A winged Virtue, through th' ethereal sky,
From world to world unwearied does he fly?
Or curious trace the long laborious maze
Of heaven's decrees, where wondering angels gaze?
Does he delight to hear bold Seraphs tell
How Michael battled, and the Dragon fell?
Or, mixed with milder Cherubim, to glow
In hymns of love, not ill essayed below?
Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,
A task well suited to thy gentle mind?
Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,
To me thy aid, thou guardian Genius, lend!
When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,
And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;
Lead through the paths thy virtue trode before,
'Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.

That awful form (which, so ye heavens decree,
Must still be loved and still deplored by me)

In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,
Or, rous'd by fancy, meets my waking eyes.
If business calls, or crowded courts invite,
Th' unblemished statesman seems to strike my sight;
If in the stage I seek to soothe my care,
I meet his soul, which breathes in Cato there;
If pensive to the rural shades I rove,
His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove:
'Twas there of Just and Good he reasoned strong,
Cleared some great truth, or raised some serious song;
There patient showed us the wise course to steer,
A candid censor, and a friend severe;
There taught us how to live; and (oh! too high
The price for knowledge) taught us how to die.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

[ALLAN RAMSAY was born in 1686, in Lanarkshire. His father was the manager of Lord Hopetoun's lead mines, but his great-grandfather was younger son of a 'laird of Cockpen,' and nephew of Ramsay of Dalhousie, and he took pride in his descent from this ancient stock. He was apprenticed as a boy to a wig-maker, but passed from writing poetry and editing poetical collections into being a bookseller. His earliest efforts were circulated among his 'cronies' in MS., and sold by himself to the public in penny broad sheets. In 1716 he published an edition of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, with a second canto of his own composition, and soon after another edition with a third new canto. In 1719 he published a collection of *Scots Songs*; in 1721 a collection of his own poems in quarto; in 1722 his *Fables and Tales* and his *Tale of Three Bonnets*; in 1723 his *Fair Assembly*; in 1724 a poem on *Health*; in the same year miscellaneous collections entitled *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, and *The Evergreen*; and in 1725 the work with which chiefly his fame is associated, *The Gentle Shepherd*. He died in 1758.]

Ramsay had an influence upon the growth of the peasant poetry of Scotland which must be taken account of quite apart from the qualities of his own song, and perhaps constitutes a better title to remembrance. He did not create the movement which reached its full volume and intensity in the poetry of Burns, but it was concentrated in him for a generation, and passed on with a mighty impulse. It must always be hazardous work guessing at the beginnings of things, but if one were asked to name the great seminal work of the Scotch poetry of the eighteenth century, one would have little hesitation in pitching upon Watson's *Choice Collection of Scots Songs, Ancient and Modern*. Ramsay himself tells us that his inspiration, or at least his ambition to write, came from this source. It was to the Scotch poetry of the eighteenth

century what *Tottel's Miscellany* was to the English poetry of the sixteenth, only much more powerful in its influence, owing to the fact that fewer influences were at work in the field. Ramsay carried out on a larger scale and with more abundant resources the plan adopted by this pioneer, collecting, adapting, and publishing 'ancient' poems, and getting 'ingenious' friends to assist him in the production of 'modern' poems. His shop at the sign of the Mercury in the High Street of Edinburgh, thus became the headquarters of a school, in which he was the acknowledged master, and the productions of this school, written in the dialect of a peasantry among whom it was a disgrace not to be able to read, and coming home to their 'business and bosoms,' were popular as no literature had ever been before. It was not without some reason that austere moralists lamented the flight of godliness from the land before Ramsay's 'licentious muse.' The *Gentle Shepherd*, with its pagan summons to lads and lasses to 'pu the gowan in its prime,' found its way into the cottages, though as forbidden fruit wherever the authority of the Kirk was respected, almost as freely as the Bible.

To get a correct conception of the general character of Ramsay's poems, we must look at the audience for whom they were written. They were read by peasants, by shepherds, ploughboys, and milkmaids, but they had first passed under the critical eyes of a more lettered circle. It may seem a paradox to call Ramsay's poems *vers de société*, yet such in effect they were, though the society for which they were written had not much of the culture which we now associate with the name. Ramsay was a convivial soul—he has been called a 'convivial buffoon'—and he and his friends had formed themselves into an 'Easy Club,' in imitation of the famous literary clubs of the London coffee-houses. It was for this society that he began to write verses, for a knot of young lawyers, doctors, lairds, and tradesmen, who had a liking for literature and good-fellowship, who read the *Spectator*, Pope, Dryden, and the poets of the Restoration, and met of an evening to sup, crack jokes, and exchange literary essays and small talk. Ramsay's poems smack of this convivial atmosphere. Through the medium of the 'Easy Club,' with such admixture as it could not fail to receive from the vigorous individuality of the members, the spirit of the Restoration passed to do battle among the Scotch peasantry with the austere spirit of the Kirk. The rugged passion and rude pathos, the intense sympathy with the joys and sorrows of a hard existence,

which found voice among a people awakened to the charm of song, did not come from 'renowned Allan,' the 'canty callan' who was the laureate of the Easy Club. Broad fun, sly touches of satire at the expense of local fashions and local characters, compliments to reigning beauties, humorous descriptions of local life, were the subjects with which Ramsay sought the applause of his boon-companions, and appealed with success to a wider public.

The Lass o' Patie's Mill, and *Bessie Bell and Mary Gray*, are examples of the light lyric in which the genial mirth-loving poet was at his ease. When he tried serious themes he soon got beyond his depth. *Farewell to Lochaber* is the only serious lyric of his that has kept its hold, and even that is not without traces of artificiality of sentiment, such as the departing warrior's explanation that he weeps not because he is going to battle, but because he is leaving his sweetheart.

> 'These tears that I shed they are a' for my dear,
> And no for the dangers attending on weir.'

The humorous imp that was Ramsay's true familiar must have guided his pen when he wrote these lines. The lover's agonies were not within reach of his art, although he could paint the lover's delights with genuine lyric rapture; his gay science was summed up in the lines:—

> 'Then I'll draw cuts and take my fate
> And be wi' ane contented.'

It is as a painter of manners with keen, sly, humorous observation, and not as a lyrist, that Ramsay deserves to be remembered. We can well understand Hogarth's admiration for him. His elegies on *Maggie Johnstone* and *Lucky Wood*, and his anticipation of the 'Road to Ruin' in the *Three Bonnets* were after Hogarth's own heart. But the life that he painted in the Scotch capital as he saw it with his twinkling eye, broad sense of fun, and 'pawky' humour, was too coarse to have much interest for any but his own time. In a happy hour for his memory, he conceived the idea of describing the life which he had known in his youth in the country. From writing pastoral dialogues after the manner of Spenser, such as that in which Pope and Steele, as Sandy and Richie, are made to lament the death of Adie in broad Scotch, he took to making real Scotch shepherds and shepherdesses discuss in verse their loves and all the concerns of their daily life. In *The Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay brought back real pastoral poetry to

literature. The Scotch critics of the last century delighted in comparing Ramsay's masterpiece with the pastorals of the Italian masters, and giving him the palm over these competitors. But the kind of composition is so different that a fair basis of comparison can hardly be said to exist. *The Gentle Shepherd* must be judged on its merits as a picture of real rustic life. Its fidelity to nature is attested by the welcome it received from the people whose life it described, and who saw themselves reflected there as they wished that others should see them—the harshness of their struggle for existence forgotten, and all their simple joys gathered up in the poet's imagination.

WILLIAM MINTO

[From *The Gentle Shepherd.*]

JENNY AND PEGGY.

Jenny.

But, poortith[1], Peggy is the warst of a',
Gif o'er your heads ill chance should beggary draw;
There little love or canty[2] cheer can come
Frae duddy[3] doublets and a pantry toom[4].
Your nowt[5] may die; the spate may bear away
Frae aff the howms[6] your dainty rucks of hay;
The thick-blawn wreaths of snaw, or blashy thows[7],
May smoor[8] your wethers and may rot your ewes;
A dyvour[9] buys your butter, woo, and cheese,
But or the day of payment breaks and flees.
With glooman brow the laird seeks in his rent,—
'Tis no to gie: your merchant's to the bent[10]:
His honour maunna want, he poinds[11] your gear;
Syne driven frae house and hold, where will ye steer?
Dear Meg, be wise, and lead a single life;
Troth, it's nae mows[12] to be a married wife.

Peggy.

May sic ill luck befa' that silly she
Wha has sic fears, for that was never me.
Let fowk bode weel, and strive to do their best;
Nae mair's requir'd—let heaven make out the rest.
I've heard my honest uncle often say
That lads should a' for wives that's virtuous pray;
For the maist thrifty man could never get
A well-stor'd room unless his wife wad let.
Wherefore nocht shall be wanting on my part
To gather wealth to raise my shepherd's heart.
Whate'er he wins I'll guide my canny care,
And win the vogue at market, tron, or fair,
For halesome, clean, cheap and sufficient ware.
A flock of lambs, cheese, butter and some woo,
Shall first be sold to pay the laird his due;

[1] poverty. [2] cheerful [3] ragged. [4] empty. [5] cattle. [6] river-flats [7] thaws. [8] smother. [9] bankrupt. [10] off. [11] impounds. [12] joke.

Syne a' behind's our ain. Thus without fear,
With love and rowth[1] we thro' the warld will steer;
And when my Pate in bairns and gear grow rife,
He'll bless the day he gat me for his wife.

Jenny.

But what if some young giglit on the green
With dimpled cheek and twa bewitching een,
Should gar your Patie think his half worn Meg
And her ken'd kisses, hardly worth a feg?

Peggy.

Nae mair of that. Dear Jenny, to be free,
There's some men constanter in love than we.
Nor is the ferly[2] great, when nature kind
Has blest them with solidity of mind;
They'll reason calmly and with kindness smile,
When our short passions wad our peace beguile.
Sae, whensoe'er they slight their maiks[3] at hame,
'Tis ten to ane their wives are maist to blame.
Then I'll employ with pleasure a' my art
To keep him cheerfu', and secure his heart.
At e'en, when he comes weary frae the hill,
I'll have a' things made ready to his will;
In winter, when he toils thro' wind and rain,
A bleezing-ingle and a clean hearth-stane;
And soon as he flings by his plaid and staff,
The seething pots be ready to take aff;
Clean hagabag[4] I'll spread upon his board,
And serve him with the best we can afford;
Good-humour and white bigonets[5] shall be
Guards to my face, to keep his love for me.

Jenny.

A dish of married love right soon grows cauld,
And dosens[6] down to nane, as fowk grow auld.

Peggy.

But we'll grow auld together, and ne'er find
The loss of youth, where love grows on the mind.
Bairns and their bairns make sure a firmer tie
Than aught in love the like of us can spy.

[1] plenty. [2] wonder. [3] mates. [4] huckaback.

See yon twa elms that grow up side by side,
Suppose them some years syne bridegroom and bride;
Nearer and nearer ilka year they've prest,
Till wide their spreading branches are increas'd,
And in their mixture now are fully blest:
This shields the other frae the eastlin blast,
That in return defends it frae the wast.
Sic as stand single (a state sae liked by you),
Beneath ilk storm frae every airt[1] maun bow.

Jenny.

I've done. I yield dear lassie, I maun yield;
Your better sense has fairly won the field,
With the assistance of a little fae
Lies dern'd[2] within my breast this mony a day.

PATIE AND PEGGY.

Patie.

By the delicious warmness of thy mouth
And rowing[3] eye, which smiling tells the truth,
I guess, my lassie, that, as well as I,
You're made for love, and why should ye deny?

Peggy.

But ken ye, lad, gin we confess o'er soon,
Ye think us cheap, and syne the wooing's done:
The maiden that o'er quickly tines[4] her power,
Like unripe fruit will taste but hard and sour.

Patie.

But when they hing o'er lang upon the tree,
Their sweetness they may tine, and sae may ye;
Red-cheeked you completely ripe appear,
And I have tholed[5] and wooed a lang half-year.

Peggy.

Then dinna pu' me; gently thus I fa'
Into my Patie's arms for good and a'.
But stint your wishes to this kind embrace,
And mint[6] nae farther till we've got the grace.

[1] quarter. [2] hidden. [3] rolling. [4] loses. [5] suffered. [6] aim.

Patie.

O charming armfu'! Hence, ye cares away.
I 'll kiss my treasure a' the livelang day:
A' night I 'll dream my kisses o'er again,
Till that day come that ye 'll be a' my ain.

Chorus.

Sun, gallop down the westling skies,
Gang soon to bed, and quickly rise;
O lash your steeds, post time away,
And haste about our bridal day;
And if ye 're wearied, honest light,
Sleep, gin ye like, a week that night.

[From *The Tea-Table Miscellany.*]

THROUGH THE WOOD, LADDIE.

O Sandy, why leaves thou thy Nelly to mourn?
Thy presence would ease me
When naething could please me,
Now dowie [1] I sigh on the bank of the burn,
Ere through the wood, laddie, until thou return.

Though woods now are bonny, and mornings are clear,
While lavrocks are singing
And primroses springing,
Yet nane of them pleases my eye or my ear,
When through the wood, laddie, ye dinna appear.

That I am forsaken some spare no to tell;
I 'm fashed wi' their scorning
Baith evening and morning;
Their jeering aft gaes to my heart wi' a knell,
When through the wood, laddie, I wander mysel'.

Then stay, my dear Sandie, nae langer away,
But quick as an arrow,
Haste here to thy marrow [2],
Wha 's living in languor till that happy day,
When through the wood, laddie, we 'll dance, sing, and play.

[1] melancholy. [2] sweetheart.

AN THOU WERE MY AIN THING.

An thou were my ain thing,
I would love thee, I would love thee;
An thou were my ain thing
How dearly I would love thee.

Like bees that suck the morning dew,
Frae flowers of sweetest scent and hue,
Sae wad I dwell upon thy mow[1]
And gar the gods envý me.

Sae lang's I had the use of light
I'd on thy beauties feast my sight,
Syne in saft whispers through the night
I'd tell how much I loved thee.

How fair and ruddy is my Jean!
She moves a goddess o'er the green.
Were I a king thou should be queen—
Nane but myself aboon thee.

I'ld grasp thee to this breast of mine,
Whilst thou like ivy on the vine
Around my stronger limbs should twine,
Formed handy to defend thee.

Time's on the wing and will not stay,
In shining youth let's make our hay;
Since love admits of no delay,
O let na scorn undo thee.

While love does at his altar stand
Hae, here's my heart, gie me thy hand,
And with ilk smile thou shalt command
The will of him who loves thee.

An thou were my ain thing,
I would love thee, I would love thee;
An thou were my ain thing,
How dearly I would love thee.

[1] mouth.

JAMES THOMSON.

[JAMES THOMSON was born at Ednam in Roxburghshire on the 11th of September, 1700, and died at Kew on the 27th of August, 1748. His first published work, *Winter*, appeared in 1726. The next year *Summer*, *Britannia*, and a few minor poems followed. *Spring* was not published till 1728, and *Autumn* in 1730 completed *The Seasons*. *Sophonisba*, the first of several dramas, appeared in the same year as *Spring*. The first three parts or cantos of *Liberty* were given to the world in 1735, the two last in 1737. *The Castle of Indolence* appeared in 1746, two years before Thomson's death.]

No competent criticism of any school has ever denied Thomson's claim to a place, high if not of the highest, among poets of the second order. His immense and enduring popularity would settle the question, if it had ever been seriously debated. For the *orbis terrarum* may indeed judge without hesitation on such a point, when its judgment is ratified beforehand by many generations. Popularity which outlasts changes of manners and fashions is a testimony to worth which cannot be left out of the account, and Thomson's popularity is eminently of this kind. Neither the somewhat indiscriminate admiration of the romantic style, of which Percy set the fashion, nor the naturalism of Cowper, nor the great revolution championed in various ways by Scott, by the Lakists, and by Byron, nor the still more complete revolution of Shelley and Keats, availed to shake the hold of *The Seasons* on the popular mind. Every one knows Coleridge's remark on seeing a dogs-eared copy on an inn window-sill. During the last century the reading of poetry, except that of contemporary authors, has somewhat gone out of fashion, yet no one who does read *The Seasons*, much more

The Castle of Indolence, fails to admit their charm. It would hardly be too much to say that, making allowance for the time over which his influence has extended, no poet has given the special pleasure which poetry is capable of giving to so large a number of persons in so large a measure as Thomson.

A critical examination of the characteristics of his poetry enables us at once to justify and explain this widespread popularity. Like many of his contemporaries, Thomson is a very unequal poet. Every one who has really endeavoured to read his favourite *Liberty* must endorse Johnson's contemptuous verdict on it. It is not only not good as a whole, but (which is more remarkable) it is scarcely even good in parts. It is with considerable difficulty that one is able to pick out a few lines here and there where the admirable descriptive faculty of the writer has had room to make itself felt. Most of the minor poems (it is true there are not many of them) are also quite devoid of poetical merit. The graceful 'Tell me, thou soul of her I love' is perhaps the only exception to the rule worth mentioning, and certainly the only one worth quoting. It is curious too that on the few occasions on which Thomson attempted the heroic couplet, the special and favourite metre of his time, he produced very bad work. Blank verse and the Spenserian stanza he understood admirably, and his blank verse in especial cannot receive too much commendation With that of Milton, and that of the present Poet Laureate, it must rank as one of the chief original models of the metre to be found in English poetry. Nothing again can be more exquisite than the opening stanzas of *The Castle of Indolence* in respect of metrical proficiency. Now this excellence of form, whatever some critics may think, is a very important element in enduring popularity, because it is not liable to danger from changes of fashion. The qualities which strike the ear pleasantly remain very much the same at all times, unless—and sometimes even when—the language employed has become hopelessly dead. We have at this moment (with the good leave of certain persons of distinction) hardly the faintest idea how the opening of the *De Rerum Natura* sounded when Lucretius read it, and still less of what the choruses of the *Agamemnon* conveyed to the ears of an Athenian audience. But the abiding charm of their form is not lost for us. How much more must this be the case in such work as Thomson's, when the language has undergone merely unimportant modifications. But the metrical charm of Thomson is not his only or indeed his chief

one to the general. He has the peculiar merit of choosing a subject which appeals to and is comprehensible by everybody; which no one can scorn as trivial and yet which no one can feel to be too fine or too esoteric for him. And though he treats this in the true poetical spirit of making the common as though it were uncommon, he does not make it too uncommon for the general taste to relish. No spread of culture, no pressure of fashion, will ever make *The Witch of Atlas* genuinely popular. No degeneracy of education or of fashion, short of an absolute return to barbarism, can prevent *The Seasons* from attracting admiration as soon as they are read or heard. They are not perhaps in any single point possessed of the qualities of the highest poetry. But such poetry as they do possess is perfectly genuine and singularly suitable for its purpose. Literal accuracy and poetical truth are blended in Thomson's descriptions in a way rarely to be found. Every one feels that he has seen what Thomson has put into words for him: every one also feels that Thomson has added a charm for him to the scene when he shall happen to see it again. Although his style is too often deformed by the prevalent Latinisms in language and construction, his reader soon feels that he is after all independent of them. They are not a crutch to him, hardly even a staff, whereby he hopes to climb Parnassus, but a mere clouded cane which, as he mistakenly thinks, is an appropriate ornament. His single phrases, by which a poet is perhaps most safely to be judged, stamp him at once to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. It is bad enough no doubt that any man of Thomson's genius should give us the words—

> 'See where the winding vale its lavish stores
> Irriguous spreads,'

in which the whole poetical capital is to be found in the use of the fine word 'irriguous,' and the artificial derangement of the epithets, but that this is a mere accident of his time must strike every one who turns the page and finds—

> 'The yellow wallflower stained with iron-brown.'

Here there is not a single violence done to language or arrangement, and yet the effect is as good as it can be. Even where the words are unnecessarily grandiose, and the images not such as in strict nature or art would present themselves, the stamp of

poetry is usually on them in a wholly reconciling degree, as in the lines—

'On utmost Kilda's shore whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds.'

Passing from isolated phrases to longer passages, we may point out that the power of composition which Thomson's landscapes display is very remarkable. Owing to this faculty, no poet perhaps is seen to such advantage in extracts of moderate length as Thomson. His narrative episodes, which used to be the most popular, are perhaps not so good as some of the descriptive passages, because instead of being painted in with lasting colours they show too often the mere varnish of the sensibility of the time which has now ceased to appear sensible. To the charge of mannerism he must indeed plead guilty. A poet who caps the climax of three several descriptive passages with three such lines as—

'And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave,'

'And Mecca saddens at the long delay,'

'And Thule bellows through her utmost isles,'

all within the compass of half a dozen pages, may be accused with some justice of taking too literally the legendary advice to 'stick to the coo.' But this, and the occasional ponderosity of his language, are almost the only charges of any weight that can fairly be brought against *The Seasons*.

The Castle of Indolence is even better. The second book does not indeed deserve quite so much praise as the first, being written evidently with less relish, and containing a good deal of otiose and conventional matter. But the first book is not only Thomson's best work, but is one of the very best things of its kind to be found either in English or in any other literature. For it possesses, what *The Seasons* almost of necessity lack, a coherent plan and scheme which are fully and successfully carried out. It is quite complete in itself, and needs no sequel as a work of art. Nor does it need any internal addition. The picture of the castle and its demesne, with the portraits of the chief sojourners, are quite sufficient for the canvas, and few persons will find any fault with the manner in which they are put upon it. Although the archaisms are not always used quite according to knowledge, the slips in this respect are neither in nature nor degree sufficient to interfere with the enjoyment of the piece. The four final stanzas, which are attributed to Armstrong, are perhaps not wholly in character; but even

this is a point on which it is difficult to pronounce decidedly, and with hardly another detail of the book can any fault be found. The opening stanzas, the speech of Indolence, the striking passage where 'the shepherd of the Hebrid Isles' appears, and that describing the fancies that visit the inmates during their sleep, could not be better. How far the occasional touches of burlesque injure the claims of the piece to high poetical rank, is a very intricate question of poetical criticism upon which there is no need to enter here. It is sufficient to say that of the peculiar faculty which we have claimed for Thomson, the faculty of exhibiting specially poetical quality in a form capable of being enjoyed by everybody, there are few better examples in our language than *The Castle of Indolence.*

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

A Snow Scene.

[From *Winter*.]

The keener tempests come: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend—in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congealed.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is—

Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the black heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispersed,
Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.

THE SHEEP-WASHING.

[From *Summer*.]

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compelled, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool; this bank abrupt and high,
And that, fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
Emboldened then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And panting labour to the farthest shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-washed fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banished by the sordid stream,
Heavy and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race; where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturbed, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill—and, tossed from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous pressed,

Head above head; and ranged in lusty rows
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd-king;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace:
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
To stamp his master's cypher ready stand;
Others the unwilling wether drag along;
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy
Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram.
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
By needy man, that all-depending lord,
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies!
What softness in its melancholy face,
What dumb complaining innocence appears!
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved;
No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,
Borrowed your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

THE COMING OF THE RAIN.

[From *Spring*.]

At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by fast degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep,
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,

The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many twinkling leaves
Of aspen tall. The uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all,
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploring, eye
The fallen verdure. Hushed in short suspense,
The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off;
And wait the approaching sign to strike, at once,
Into the general choir. Even mountains, vales,
And forests seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshened world.

STORM IN HARVEST.

[From *Autumn.*]

Defeating oft the labours of the year,
The sultry south collects a potent blast.
At first, the groves are scarcely seen to stir
Their trembling tops, and a still murmur runs
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn;
But as the aerial tempest fuller swells,
And in one mighty stream, invisible,
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world,
Strained to the root, the stooping forest pours
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.
High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,

And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force—
Or whirled in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still over head
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens; till the fields around
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.
Sudden, the ditches swell; the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar; and high above its bank
The river lift; before whose rushing tide,
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,
Roll mingled down: all that the winds had spared,
In one wild moment ruined; the big hopes,
And well-earned treasures, of the painful year.
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman,
Helpless, beholds the miserable wreck
Driving along; his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scattered round,
He sees; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train
Of clamant children dear. Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease;
Be mindful of those limbs, in russet clad,
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride;
And, oh, be mindful of that sparing board
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,
Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice!
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains
And all-involving winds have swept away.

TO HER I LOVE.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! tell me, whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure, roam
And sometimes share thy lover's woe;
Where, void of thee, his cheerless home
Can now, alas! no comfort know?

Oh! if thou hoverest round my walk,
While, under every well-known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
And every tear is full of thee;

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh! visit thou my soothing dream!

FROM 'THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.'

BOOK I.

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
With woody hill o'er hill encompassed round,
A most enchanting wizard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrowned,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne carèd even for play.

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,
From poppies breathed, and beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime, unnumbered glittering streamlets played,
And hurlèd everywhere their waters sheen;
That, as they bickered through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stockdoves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclinèd all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood;
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer-sky:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast;
And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

* * * * * *

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming round,
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,
But every man strolled off his own glad way;
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertained,
No living creature could be seen to stray;
While solitude, and perfect silence reigned;
So that to think you dreamt you almost was constrained.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles;
Or that aërial beings sometimes deign
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in Ocean Phoebus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro,
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

* * * * * *

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran
Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,
And sobbing breezes sighed, and oft began
(So worked the wizard) wintry storms to swell,
As heaven and earth they would together mell;
At doors and windows threatening seemed to call
The demons of the tempest, growling fell,
Yet the least entrance found they none at all:
Whence sweeter grew our sleep secure in massy hall.

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,
Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace;
O'er which were shadowy cast elysian gleams,
That played, in waving lights, from place to place;
And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.
Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,
So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space;
Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,
As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!
My muse will not attempt your fairy land:
She has no colours that like you can glow:
To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.
But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band
Than these same guileful angel-seeming sprights,
Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and bland,
Poured all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,
And blest them oft besides with more refined delights.

* * * * * *

To number up the thousands dwelling here,
An useless were, and eke an endless task;
From kings, and those who at the helm appear,
To gipsies brown in summer-glades who bask.
Yea many a man, perdie, I could unmask,
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,
With tape-ty'd trash, and suits of fools that ask
For place or pension laid in decent row;
But these I passen by, with nameless numbers moe.

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,
There was a man of special grave remark[1];
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
Pensive, not sad; in thought involv'd, not dark;
As soot this man could sing as morning lark,
And teach the noblest morals of the heart;
But these his talents were yburied stark:
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,
Which or boon Nature gave, or nature-painting Art.

To noontide shades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound,
Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,
Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,
Where the wild thyme and camomile are found;
There would he linger, till the latest ray
Of light fate trembling on the welkin's bound,
Then homeward thro' the twilight shadows stray,
Sauntering and slow: so had he passed many a day.

[1] William Paterson, Thomson's amanuensis

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they past;
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd
Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,
And all its native light anew revealed;
Oft as he travers'd the cerulean field,
And marked the clouds that drove before the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind:
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,
(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)
One shyer still[1], who quite detested talk;
Oft stung by spleen, at once away he broke,
To groves of pine and broad o'ershadowing oak;
There inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,
And on himself his pensive fury wroke,
Ne ever utter'd word, save when first shone
The glittering star of eve—'Thank Heaven! the day is done.'

[1] Probably the poet Armstrong.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[JOHN ARMSTRONG was born in Liddesdale about the year 1709, and died in London in 1779. His poetical works, which here alone concern us, were *The Economy of Love*, 1739, *The Art of Preserving Health*, 1744, and some slight pieces published in volumes of miscellanies later.]

Armstrong is, beyond all doubt, the most remarkable poet of the school of Thomson. It would appear that the style in his case was not the result merely of imitation of the author of *The Seasons*, but came from a similar cause, the study at once of the Queen Anne men and of older writers. Both Shakespeare and Spenser were sufficiently attractive to Armstrong when he was quite a boy to induce him to imitate them, and though the imitations show more zeal than appreciation, they have some merit. *The Economy of Love*, from which no extracts can here be given, contains many stately verses, and some which exhibit considerable novelty of structure. On the whole Armstrong's versification and language are Thomsonian. The blemishes of that style, such as the ridiculous classicism which calls a cold bath a 'gelid cistern,' and so forth, are present in large measure. But the merits of abundant fancy, of surprising range of illustration, and of a certain starched grace which is not unattractive, are present likewise. It would be difficult to find a more unsuitable subject for poetry than the art of preserving health: yet in treating it Armstrong has managed to produce many passages which lovers and students of blank verse cannot afford to disdain. His vigour is unquestionable, and his skill is by no means of an every-day order. The poem however is deformed, not merely by the unavoidable drawbacks of its subject, but by the insertion of a large mass of unnecessary and now obsolete technicalities, which could at no time have added to its

attractions, and which now make parts of it nearly unreadable. Here and there, too, we are offended by the defect which Armstrong shares with Swift and with Smollett, the tendency to indulge in merely nauseous details. On the whole however the merits of *The Art of Preserving Health* far outweigh its defects. It may indeed be urged by a devil's advocate that it is but a left-handed compliment to say that a man has done better than could be expected a task which, as sense and taste should have shown him, ought not to have been attempted at all. But Armstrong must always have, with competent judges, the praise which belongs to an author who has a distinct and peculiar grasp of a great poetical form. His rhymed verse is on the whole very inferior to his blank. The rhymes are frequently careless, and the poet's ear does not seem to have taught him how to construct couplets with the proper variety and continuity of cadence. His satire however, if a little conventional, is sometimes vigorous, and a specimen of the poem entitled *Taste* is therefore given here.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

FROM THE 'ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.'

BOOK III.

The body, moulded by the clime, endures
The equator heats or hyperborean frost:
Except by habits foreign to its turn,
Unwise, you counteract its forming power.
Rude at the first, the winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance: study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun.
Against the rigors of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies some frequent
The gelid cistern; and, where nought forbids
I praise their dauntless heart: a frame so steeled
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts
That breathe the tertian or fell rheumatism.
The nerves so tempered never quit their tone,
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts.
But all things have their bounds: and he who makes
By daily use the kindest regimen
Essential to his health, should never mix
With human kind, nor art, nor trade pursue.
He not the safe vicissitudes of life
Without some shock endures; ill-fitted he
To want the known, or bear unusual things.
Besides, the powerful remedies of pain
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)
Should never with your prosperous days of health
Grow too familiar: for by frequent use
The strongest medicines lose their healing power
And even the surest poisons theirs to kill.

BOOK IV.

How to live happiest? how avoid the pains,
The disappointments, and disgusts of those
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ,

The precepts here of a divine old man
I could recite. Tho' old, he still retained
His manly sense, and energy of mind.
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
He still remembered that he once was young;
His easy presence checked no decent joy.
Him even the dissolute admired; for he
A graceful looseness when he pleased put on,
And laughing could instruct. Much had he read,
Much more had seen: he studied from the life,
And in th' original perused mankind.
Versed in the woes and vanities of life
He pitied man: and much he pitied those
Whom falsely-smiling fate has cursed with means
To dissipate their days in quest of joy.
'Our aim is happiness; 'tis yours, 'tis mine,'
He said, ''tis the pursuit of all that live:
Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attained.
But they the widest wander from the mark,
Who thro' the flowery paths of sauntering joy
Seek this coy goddess: that from stage to stage
Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue.
For, not to name the pains that pleasure brings
To counterpoise itself, relentless fate
Forbids that we thro' gay voluptuous wilds
Should ever roam: and were the fates more kind
Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale:
Were these exhaustless, nature would grow sick,
And, cloyed with pleasure, squeamishly complain
That all is vanity, and life a dream.
Let nature rest: be busy for yourself,
And for your friend; be busy even in vain
Rather than tease her sated appetites.
Who never fasts no banquet e'er enjoys;
Who never toils or watches, never sleeps.
Let nature rest: and when the taste of joy
Grows keen, indulge; but shun satiety.
'Tis not for mortals always to be blest,
But him the least the dull or painful hours

Of life oppress, whom sober sense conducts,
And virtue, thro' this labyrinth we tread.
Virtue and sense I mean not to disjoin;
Virtue and sense are one. and trust me, still
A faithless heart betrays the head unsound.
Virtue (for mere good-nature is a fool)
Is sense and spirit with humanity:
'Tis sometimes angry and its frown confounds;
'Tis even vindictive, but in vengeance just.
Knaves fain would laugh at it: some great ones dare
But at his heart the most undaunted son
Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.
To noblest uses this determines wealth;
This is the solid pomp of prosperous days;
The peace and shelter of adversity.
And if you pant for glory, build your fame
On this foundation, which the secret shock
Defies of envy and all-sapping time.
The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes
The vulgar eye; the suffrage of the wise,
The praise that's worth ambition, is attained
By sense alone and dignity of mind.
Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heaven: a happiness
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great Nature's favourites; a wealth
That ne'er encumbers, nor can be transferr'd.

FROM 'TASTE, AN EPISTLE TO A YOUNG CRITIC.'

Read boldly, and unprejudiced peruse
Each fav'rite modern, e'en each ancient Muse.
With all the comic salt and tragic rage,
The great stupendous genius of our stage,
Boast of our island, pride of humankind,
Had faults to which the boxes are not blind;
His frailties are to every gossip known,
Yet Milton's pedantries not shock the town.

Ne'er be the dupe of names however high,
For some outlive good parts, some misapply.
Each elegant Spectator you admire,
But must you therefore swear by Cato's fire?
Masks for the court, and oft a clumsy jest,
Disgraced the muse that wrought the Alchemist.
'But to the ancients.'—Faith! I am not clear,
For all the smooth round type of Elzevir,
That ev'ry work which lasts in prose or song
Two thousand years deserves to last so long:
For—not to mention some eternal blades
Known only now in academic shades,
(Those sacred groves where raptured spirits stray,
And in word-hunting waste the livelong day)
Ancients whom none but curious critics scan,—
Do read Messala's praises if you can.
Ah! who but feels the sweet contagious smart
While soft Tibullus pours his tender heart?
With him the loves and muses melt in tears,
But not a word of some hexameters!
'You grow so squeamish and so devilish dry
You 'll call Lucretius vapid next.' Not I:
Some find him tedious, others think him lame,
But if he lags his subject is to blame.
Rough weary roads thro' barren wilds he tried.
Yet still he marches with true Roman pride;
Sometimes a meteor, gorgeous, rapid, bright,
He streams athwart the philosophic night.
Find you in Horace no insipid odes?—
He dared to tell us Homer sometimes nods:
And but for such a critic's hardy skill
Homer might slumber unsuspected still.

WILLIAM SOMERVILLE.

[William Somerville was born in Warwickshire in 1677. He was educated at Winchester, and became a Fellow of New College, Oxford. In 1704 he inherited the seat of his ancestors, Edston, where he spent the remainder of his life as a country gentleman. Late in life he began to write, and published *The Two Springs*, 1725; *Occasional Poems*, 1727; *The Chase*, 1734; and *Hobbinol*. He died July 19, 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henley-in Arden.]

Somerville was a handsome noisy squire, a strapping fellow six feet high, a hard rider, a crack shot. No more characteristic specimen of the sporting country gentleman, pure and simple, could be imagined, or one less likely to develope into a poet. It was, in fact, not until fast living had begun to break down his constitution that he took to literature as a consolation. One of his earliest exercises was an epistle addressed to Addison, who had bought a property in Warwickshire, and so had become Somerville's neighbour. This poem is neatly and enthusiastically versified, and contains the well-known compliment which pleased Dr. Johnson so much :—

> 'When panting Virtue her last efforts made,
> You brought your Clio to the virgin's aid.'

Somerville was the disciple of Addison, but he enjoyed at the same time the friendship of Pope. A lyric correspondence with Allan Ramsay tells us more about his person than we should otherwise have known, and an epistle to James Thomson displays the respect with which he learned to contemplate his own literary judgment. A friendship with the boyish Shenstone was the last event of a career that ended very plaintively, in pain, financial ruin, and drunkenness. His life is a singular variant of the pagan ideal

of the time ; it is curious to find a boisterous squire, of the coarse type that Fielding painted in the next generation, assuming the airs of a stoic and a wit, and striking the fashionable Cato attitude in top-boots and a hunting-belt.

Somerville, who was a well-read man, took the *Cynegetica* of Gratius Faliscus as his model, when he produced his best poem, *The Chase*. Like the Latin poet, he alternates moral maxims with practical information about the training and the points of hounds. This epic, which is in four books, discusses in its first part the origin of hunting, the economy of kennels, the physical and moral accomplishments of hounds, and the choosing of a good or bad scenting day. The second book, which possesses more natural language and a finer literary quality than the others, commences with directions for hare-hunting, and closes with a moral reproof of tyranny. In the third book hunting is treated from an antiquarian and an exotic standpoint, while the fourth deals with the breeding of hounds, their diseases, and the diseases they cause, such as hydrophobia. It will hardly be guessed from such a sketch of the contents that *The Chase* is a remarkably readable and interesting poem : it is composed in blank verse that is rarely turgid and not very often flat, and the zeal and science of the author give a certain vitality to his descriptions which compels the reader's attention. People that have a practical knowledge of the matters described confess that Somerville thoroughly understood what he was talking about, and that in his easy chair before the fire he 'plied his function of the woodland' no less admirably than he had done in the saddle in his athletic youth.

The success of *The Chase* induced him, when he was quite an old man, to sing of fishing and of the bowling green ; but on these subjects he was less interesting than on hunting. His *Hobbinol*, a sort of mock-heroic poem on rural games, written in emulation of *The Splendid Shilling* of John Philips, was intended to be sprightly, and only succeeded in being ridiculous. Less foolish, but somewhat coarsely and frivolously easy, were his *Fables*, in the manner of Prior. Posterity, in short, has refused to regard Somerville in any other light than as the broken-down squire, warming himself with a mug of ale in his ancestral chimney corner, and instructing the magnificent Mr. Addison in the mysteries of breeds and points.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

FROM 'THE CHASE.'

BOOK I.

Ye vigorous youths, by smiling fortune blest
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,
Heap'd copious by your wise forefathers' care,
Hear and attend! while I the means reveal
T' enjoy those pleasures, for the weak too strong,
Too costly for the poor: to rein the steed
Swift-stretching o'er the plain, to cheer the pack
Opening in concerts of harmonious joy,
But breathing death. What tho' the gripe severe
Of brazen-fisted time, and slow disease
Creeping thro' ev'ry vein, and nerve unstrung,
Afflict my shattered frame, undaunted still,
Fixed as a mountain ash, that braves the bolts
Of angry Jove; tho' blasted, yet unfallen;
Still can my soul in fancy's mirror view
Deeds glorious once, recall the joyous scene
In all its splendours decked, o'er the full bowl
Recount my triumphs past, urge others on
With hand and voice, and point the winding way:
Pleased with that social sweet garrulity,
The poor disbanded veteran's sole delight.
First let the kennel be the huntsman's care,
Upon some little eminence erect,
And fronting to the ruddy dawn; its courts
On either hand wide op'ning to receive
The sun's all-cheering beams, when mild he shines,
And gilds the mountain tops. For much the pack
(Roused from their dark alcoves) delight to stretch
And bask, in his invigorating ray:
Warned by the streaming light, and merry lark,
Forth rush the jolly clan; with tuneful throats
They carol loud, and in grand chorus joined
Salute the new-born day.

BOOK II.

Here on this verdant spot, where Nature kind,
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes ;
Where flowers autumnal spring, and the rank mead
Affords the wand'ring hares a rich repast ;
Throw off thy ready pack. See, where they spread
And range around, and dash the glitt'ring dew.
If some staunch hound, with his authentic voice,
Avow the recent trail, the justling tribe
Attend his call, then with one mutual cry,
The welcome news confirm, and echoing hills
Repeat the pleasing tale. See how they thread
The brakes, and up yon furrow drive along !
But quick they back recoil, and wisely check
Their eager haste ; then o'er the fallowed ground
How leisurely they work, and many a pause
Th' harmonious concert breaks ; till more assured
With joy redoubled the low valleys ring.
What artful labyrinths perplex their way !
Ah ! there she lies ; how close ! she pants, she doubts
If now she lives ; she trembles as she sits,
With horror seized. The withered grass that clings
Around her head, of the same russet hue
Almost deceived my sight, had not her eyes
With life full-beaming her vain wiles betrayed.
At distance draw thy pack, let all be hushed,
No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard,
Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain
Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice.
Now gently put her off ; see how direct
To her known Muse she flies ! Here, huntsman, bring
(But without hurry) all thy jolly hounds,
And calmly lay them in. How low they stoop,
And seem to plough the ground ! then all at once
With greedy nostrils snuff the fuming steam
That glads their flutt'ring hearts. As winds let loose
From the dark caverns of the blustering God,
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn.

Hope gives them wings while she's spurred on by fear.
The welkin rings, men, dogs, hills, rocks, and woods
In the full concert join. Now, my brave youths,
Stripped for the chace, give all your souls to joy!
See how their coursers, than the mountain roe
More fleet, the verdant carpet skim, thick clouds
Snorting they breathe, their shining hoofs scarce print
The grass unbruised; with emulation fired
They strain to lead the field, top the barred gate,
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush
The thorny-twining hedge; the riders bend
O'er their arched necks; with steady hands, by turns
Indulge their speed, or moderate their rage.
Where are their sorrows, disappointments, wrongs,
Vexations, sickness, cares? All, all are gone,
And with the panting winds lag far behind.

MATTHEW GREEN.

[MATTHEW GREEN was born in 1696. He came of a Dissenting family; held a post in the Custom House; and died a bachelor at a lodging in Nag's Head Court, Gracechurch Street, in 1737. His first poem *The Grotto* was published in 1732; *The Spleen*, his chief work, appeared in 1737. In 1796 it was published in a volume with some additional pieces and a preface by Dr. Aikin.]

To most people the name of Matthew Green, if it suggests anything, suggests a line in his longest poem,—the familiar

'Fling but a stone, the giant dies,'

which occurs in his general plea for physical exercise. It would almost appear as if the first discoverer of this happily concise precept, exhausted by the effort, had rested from further enquiry, for it is not often that one hears reference made to any other part of the poem. And yet *The Spleen* is full of things almost if not quite as good, and marked in all cases by distinct originality and a fresh and unfettered mode of utterance. Now it is a clever simile, as when poetasters are spoken of as those who

'buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,
Err with their wings for want of eyes';

now a picture-couplet, such as this of the divine

'in whose gay red-lettered face,
We read good living more than grace';

now a perfectly poetic line like

'Brown fields their fallow sabbaths keep';

or lastly such a pleasantly ingenious passage as that in which the

effect of blue eyes on the old is compared to the miracle of St. Januarius :—

> 'Shine but on age, you melt its snow;
> Again fires long-extinguished glow,
> And, charmed by witchery of eyes,
> Blood long congealèd liquefies!
> True miracle, and fairly done
> By heads which are adored while on.'

But to multiply quotations would be practically to reproduce the entire poem, which is not long. Green suffered really or poetically from the fashionable eighteenth-century disorder which Pope has so well described in *The Rape of the Lock*, and in this 'motley piece,' as he calls it, he sets forth the various expedients which he employed to evade his enemy. Taken altogether, his precepts constitute a code of philosophy not unlike that advocated in more than one of the Odes of Horace. To observe the religion of the body ; to cultivate cheerfulness and calm ; to keep a middle course, and possess his soul in quiet ; content, as regards the future, to ignore what Heaven withholds,—such are the chief features of his plan. But, in developing his principles he takes occasion to deal many a side-long stroke at imperfect humanity, and not always at those things only which are opposed to his theory of conduct. Female education, faction, law, religious sects, reform, speculation, place-hunting, poetry, ambition,—all these are briefly touched, and seldom left unmarked by some quivering shaft of ridicule. Towards the end of the poem comes an ideal picture of rural retirement, which may be compared with the joint version by Pope and Swift of Horace's sixth satire in the second book ; and the whole closes with the writers views upon immortality and a summary of his practice. Regarded as a whole, we can recall few discursive poems which contain so much compact expression and witty illustration. The author was evidently shrewd and observant, and unusually gifted in the detection of grotesque aspects and remote affinities. He must have been more than fairly read, and although at the outset of his task he appears to disclaim scholarship,[1] he must have been familiar with classical commonplaces—

[1] 'School-helps I want, to climb on high
Where all the ancient treasures lie,
And there unseen commit a theft
On wealth in Greek exchequers left.'

witness, for instance, the line 'See better things and do the worst'; although for this and other examples he may have gone no farther than that eighteenth-century repertory of ready-made learning, the mottoes of the *Spectator*. In his verse, notwithstanding that he occasionally makes use of such hideous Latinisms as 'nefandous' and 'fecundous,' his vocabulary is fresh and exact, and remarkably free from the conventionalism of contemporary poetic diction.

Of Green's remaining pieces, *The Grotto*, and the lines *On Barclay's Apology for the Quakers* are the most noteworthy. Both of these are characterised by the same qualities which are exhibited in *The Spleen*. *The Seeker* is a humorous little picture of the different professors of religion.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

FROM 'THE SPLEEN.'

To cure the mind's wrong bias, Spleen,
Some recommend the bowling-green;
Some, hilly walks; all, exercise;
Fling but a stone, the giant dies.
Laugh and be well. Monkeys have been
Extreme good doctors for the Spleen;
And kitten, if the humour hit,
Has harlequined away the fit.
Since mirth is good in this behalf,
At some particulars let us laugh.
Witlings, brisk fools, cursed with half-sense,
That stimulates their impotence;
Who buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,
Err with their wings for want of eyes;
Poor authors worshipping a calf,
Deep tragedies that make us laugh,
A strict dissenter saying grace,
A lecturer preaching for a place,
Folks, things prophetic to dispense,
Making the past the future tense,
The popish dubbing of a priest,
Fine epitaphs on knaves deceased,
Green-aproned Pythonissa's rage,
Great Æsculapius on his stage,
A miser starving to be rich,
The prior of Newgate's dying speech,
A jointured widow's ritual state,
Two Jews disputing *tête-à-tête*,
New almanacs composed by seers,
Experiments on felons' ears,
Disdainful prudes, who ceaseless ply
The superb muscle of the eye,
A coquette's April-weather face,
A Queenborough mayor behind his mace,

And fops in military shew,
Are sovereign for the case in view.

* * * * *

In rainy days keep double guard,
Or Spleen will surely be too hard;
Which, like those fish by sailors met,
Fly highest, while their wings are wet.
In such dull weather, so unfit
To enterprise a work of wit,
When clouds one yard of azure sky,
That's fit for simile, deny,
I dress my face with studious looks,
And shorten tedious hours with books.
But if dull fogs invade the head,
That memory minds not what is read,
I sit in window dry as ark,
And on the drowning world remark:
Or to some coffee-house I stray
For news, the manna of a day,
And from the hipped discourses gather,
That politics go by the weather:
Then seek good-humoured tavern chums,
And play at cards, but for small sums;
Or with the merry fellows quaff,
And laugh aloud with them that laugh;
Or drink a joco-serious cup
With souls who've took their freedom up,
And let my mind, beguiled by talk,
In Epicurus' garden walk,
Who thought it heaven to be serene;
Pain, hell; and purgatory, spleen.

* * * * *

Now, if untired, consider, friend,
What I avoid to gain my end.
I never am at Meeting seen,
Meeting, that region of the Spleen;
The broken heart, the busy fiend,
The inward call, on Spleen depend.

Law, licensed breaking of the peace,
To which vacation is disease;
A gypsy diction scarce known well
By th' magi, who law-fortunes tell,
I shun; nor let it breed within
Anxiety, and that the Spleen;
Law, grown a forest, where perplex
The mazes, and the brambles vex;
Where its twelve verderers every day
Are changing still the public way:
Yet if we miss our path and err,
We grievous penalties incur;
And wanderers tire, and tear their skin,
And then get out where they went in.

* * * * *

I rail not with mock-patriot grace
At folks, because they are in place;
Nor, hir'd to praise with stallion pen,
Serve the ear-lechery of men;
But to avoid religious jars
The laws are my expositors,
Which in my doubting mind create
Conformity to church and state.
I go, pursuant to my plan,
To Mecca with the Caravan;
And think it right in common sense
Both for diversion and defence.
Reforming schemes are none of mine:
To mend the world's a vast design:
Like theirs, who tug in little boat,
To pull to them the ship afloat,
While to defeat their labour'd end,
At once both wind and stream contend:
Success herein is seldom seen,
And zeal, when baffled, turns to Spleen.
Happy the man, who, innocent,
Grieves not at ills he can't prevent;

His skiff does with the current glide,
Not puffing pulled against the tide.
He, paddling by the scuffling crowd,
Sees unconcerned life's wager rowed,
And when he can't prevent foul play,
Enjoys the folly of the fray.
By these reflections I repeal
Each hasty promise made in zeal.
When gospel propagators say,
We're bound our great light to display,
And Indian darkness drive away,
Yet none but drunken watchmen send
And scoundrel link-boys for that end;
When they cry up this holy war,
Which every christian should be for,
Yet such as owe the law their ears,
We find employ'd as engineers:
This view my forward zeal so shocks,
In vain they hold the money-box.
At such a conduct, which intends
By vicious means such virtuous ends,
I laugh off Spleen, and keep my pence
From spoiling Indian innocence.

* * * * *

You, friend, like me, the trade of rhyme
Avoid, elaborate waste of time,
Nor are content to be undone,
To pass for Phœbus' crazy son.
Poems, the hop-grounds of the brain,
Afford the most uncertain gain;
And lotteries never tempt the wise
With blanks so many to a prize.
I only transient visits pay,
Meeting the Muses in my way,
Scarce known to the fastidious dames,
Nor skill'd to call them by their names.
Nor can their passports in these days,
Your profit warrant, or your praise.

On Poems by their dictates writ,
Critics, as sworn appraisers, sit,
And mere upholsterers in a trice
On gems and painting set a price.
These tailoring artists for our lays
Invent cramped rules, and with strait stays
Striving free Nature's shape to hit,
Emaciate sense, before they fit.

* * * * *

Forced by soft violence of prayer,
The blithesome goddess soothes my care,
I feel the deity inspire,
And thus she models my desire.
Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made,
A farm some twenty miles from town,
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own;
Two maids, that never saw the town,
A serving-man not quite a clown,
A boy to help to tread the mow,
And drive, while t'other holds the plough
A chief, of temper formed to please,
Fit to converse, and keep the keys;
And better to preserve the peace,
Commission'd by the name of niece;
With understandings of a size
To think their master very wise.
May heav'n (it's all I wish for) send
One genial room to treat a friend,
Where decent cup-board, little plate,
Display benevolence, not state.
And may my humble dwelling stand
Upon some chosen spot of land:
A pond before full to the brim,
Where cows may cool, and geese may swim;
Behind, a green like velvet neat,
Soft to the eye, and to the feet;

Where odorous plants in evening fair
Breathe all around ambrosial air;
From Eurus, foe to kitchen ground,
Fenced by a slope with bushes crowned,
Fit dwelling for the feathered throng,
Who pay their quit-rents with a song;
With opening views of hill and dale,
Which sense and fancy too regale,
Where the half-cirque, which vision bounds,
Like amphitheatre surrounds:
And woods impervious to the breeze,
Thick phalanx of embodied trees,
From hills through plains in dusk array
Extended far, repel the day.

* * * * *

Thus sheltered, free from care and strife,
May I enjoy a calm through life;
See faction, safe in low degree,
As men at land see storms at sea,
And laugh at miserable elves,
Not kind, so much as to themselves,
Cursed with such souls of base alloy,
As can possess, but not enjoy;
Debarred the pleasure to impart
By avarice, sphincter of the heart,
Who wealth, hard earned by guilty cares,
Bequeath untouched to thankless heirs.
May I, with look ungloomed by guile,
And wearing Virtue's livery-smile,
Prone the distressed to relieve,
And little trespasses forgive,
With income not in Fortune's pow'r,
And skill to make a busy hour,
With trips to town life to amuse,
To purchase books, and hear the news,
To see old friends, brush off the clown,
And quicken taste at coming down,
Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,
And slowly mellowing in age,

When Fate extends its gathering gripe,
Fall off like fruit grown fully ripe,
Quit a worn being without pain,
Perhaps to blossom soon again.

* * * * *

Thus, thus I steer my bark, and sail
On even keel with gentle gale;
At helm I make my reason sit,
My crew of passions all submit.
If dark and blustering prove some nights,
Philosophy puts forth her lights;
Experience holds the cautious glass,
To shun the breakers, as I pass,
And frequent throws the wary lead,
To see what dangers may be hid:
And once in seven years I 'm seen
At Bath or Tunbridge, to careen.
Though pleased to see the dolphins play,
I mind my compass and my way.
With store sufficient for relief,
And wisely still prepared to reef,
Nor wanting the dispersive bowl
Of cloudy weather in the soul,
I make (may heav'n propitious send
Such wind and weather to the end)
Neither becalmed, nor over-blown,
Life's voyage to the world unknown.

ON BARCLAY'S APOLOGY FOR THE QUAKERS.

These sheets primæval doctrines yield,
Where revelation is reveal'd;
Soul-phlegm from literal feeding bred,
Systems lethargic to the head
They purge, and yield a diet thin,
That turns to gospel-chyle within.

Truth sublimate may here be seen
Extracted from the parts terrene.
In these is shewn, how men obtain
What of Prometheus poets feign:
To scripture-plainness dress is brought,
And speech, apparel to the thought.
They hiss from instinct at red coats,
And war, whose work is cutting throats,
Forbid, and press the law of love:
Breathing the spirit of the dove.
Lucrative doctrines they detest,
As manufactured by the priest;
And throw down turnpikes, where we pay
For stuff, which never mends the way;
And tithes, a Jewish tax, reduce,
And frank the gospel for our use.
They sable standing armies break,
But the militia useful make:
Since all unhired may preach and pray,
Taught by these rules as well as they;
Rules, which, when truths themselves reveal,
Bid us to follow what we feel.

* * * * *

Well-natured, happy shade, forgive!
Like you I think, but cannot live.
Thy scheme requires the world's contempt,
That, from dependence life exempt;
And constitution fram'd so strong,
This world's worst climate cannot wrong.
Not such my lot; not Fortune's brat,
I live by pulling off the hat;
Compelled by station every hour
To bow to images of power;
And in life's busy scenes immersed,
See better things, and do the worst.
Eloquent Want, whose reasons sway,
And make ten thousand truths give way,

While I your scheme with pleasure trace,
Draws near, and stares me in the face.
Consider well your state, she cries,
Like others kneel, that you may rise;
Hold doctrines, by no scruples vexed,
To which preferment is annexed,
Nor madly prove, where all depends,
Idolatry upon your friends.
See, how you like my rueful face,
Such you must wear, if out of place.
Cracked is your brain to turn recluse
Without one farthing out at use.
They, who have lands, and safe bank-stock,
With faith so founded on a rock,
May give a rich invention ease,
And construe scripture how they please.
The honoured prophet, that of old
Used heav'n's high counsels to unfold,
Did, more than courier angels, greet
The crows, that brought him bread and meat.

JOHN DYER.

[Born at Aberglasney, Caermarthenshire, 1698 or 1699; died 1758. *Grongar Hill* was published 1726; *The Ruins of Rome*, 1740; *The Fleece*, 1757.]

'The subject of the *Fleece*, sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets?' So, in his way of prompt finality, pronounced Johnson the dictator. Yet Akenside, whose poetical aims were sufficiently remote from the common, had declared that he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*; 'if that were ill received he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence.' Gray ventured to brave the elegant disdain of Horace Walpole by affirming that 'Mr. Dyer has more of poetry in his imagination than almost any of our number.' And one in our own century, of loftier genius than Gray, looking back from his Westmoreland solitudes to his humbler brother poet among the Cambrian hills, has left his protest against the injustice of 'hasty Fame' in her neglect of Dyer:

> 'Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
> A grateful few shall love thy modest Lay,
> Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
> O'er naked Snowdon's wide aerial waste,
> Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill.'

The power of hills was not on Johnson; Fleet Street, with its roar, had more music for his ear than the piping of a thrush or the tender clamour of the mother-ewes.

Grongar Hill, and *The Country Walk*, appeared in Poetical Miscellanies of the year 1726, the same year that saw the publica-

tion of Thomson's *Winter*. It was the year in which Pope was imagining his goddess of Dulness, as she surveyed through fog her long succession of Grub Street children. From remote Scotland and from Southern Wales came a gift to English poetry which neither Grub Street nor Twickenham could bestow. While Pope, a paladin in ruffles and periwig, was doing to death by exquisite rapier-thrusts the swarming hosts of Dulness, his own position was threatened unawares. That poetry of external nature which was to alienate for a season the general heart from such poetry as his, was already inaugurated by the youthful singers of *Winter* and of *Grongar Hill*.

Dyer had been for a time pupil to the painter Richardson, and master and pupil may have laid down their brushes now and again to con over some passage of Milton, whom they both knew well and honoured. In Dyer's love of landscape there is something of the painter's feeling; he loves a wide prospect, diversified by stream and wood, backed by blue aërial steeps 'solemnly vast'; the effect is heightened if the landscape include the ragged walls of some crumbling castle, or some peasant's smoky nest leaning against its gnarled tree. There remains but to add a human figure or two—an old man white-bearded, in weed ragged and brown, leaning on his spade in the little garden, or a fisher in the willow shade,

> 'Who with the angle in his hand
> Swings the nibbling fry to land.'

The poetry of ruins was not reserved for the romantic second half of the century. It is Dyer who describes

> 'The spacious plain
> Of Sarum, spread like ocean's boundless round,
> Where solitary Stonehenge grey with moss,
> Ruin of ages, nods.'

And Johnson could not withhold his admiration from some lines conceived among Rome's 'dilapidating edifices.'

> 'The Pilgrim oft
> At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
> Aghast the voice of time, disparting towers,
> Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
> Rattling around loud thundering to the moon.'

But Dyer, as even these lines show, is not a painter who would constrain words to be the medium of his art; he is a poet. He has a heart that listens, an eye that loves; his landscape is full of living change, of tender incident, of the melody of breeze and bird and stream. Here under glossy-rinded beeches 'the burrowing rabbit turns the dust'; here the new-dropped lamb,

> 'Tottering with weakness by his mother's side
> Feels the fresh world about him';

here the husbandman returning at eve to his 'little smiling cottage warm embowered,' meets his rosy children at the door,

> 'Prattling their welcomes, and his honest wife,
> With good brown cake and bacon slice, intent
> To cheer his hunger after labour hard.'

Dyer loves solitary musing on some gentle hillside, and sometimes moralises amiably on the gains of a private life remote from men;

> 'Grass and flowers Quiet treads.'

But it is one of his distinctions that he never really opposed nature and human society, as poets of Rousseau's part of the century were wont to oppose them; and he not only pays homage to trade in the way of easy platitudes, but really receives thrills of poetic excitement from the life of man in commerce, its force, its vividness, its picturesqueness, its variety. 'Tis art and toil,' he exclaims, 'give nature value.' Could he choose his lot it would be on some healthful waste, 'far from a Lord's loath'd neighbourhood'; yet he would not be neighbourless, for he loves his toiling fellow-men, and if the soil were coarse and sterile, it should be so only 'till forced to flourish and subdued by me.'

The farmer still collecting his scattered sheaves under the full-orbed harvest moon, the strong-armed rustic plunging in the flood an unshorn ewe, the carter on the dusty road beside his nodding wain, the maiden at her humming wheel, delight Dyer's imagination no more than do the Sheffield smiths near the glaring mass 'clattering their heavy hammers down by turns,' the builder, trowel in hand, at whose spell Manchester rises and spreads like Carthage before the eyes of Æneas, the keen-eyed factor inspecting his bales, the bending porter on the wharf where masts crowd thick. The poet's ancestors, as he is pleased to record in verse, were

weavers, who, flying from the rage of superstition, brought the loom to

> 'that soft tract
> Of Cambria, deep-embayed, Dimetian land,
> By green hills fenced, by ocean's murmur lull'd.'

From them he obtained a goodly heritage—his love of freedom and his love of industry. He honoured traffic, the 'friend to wedded love'; he honoured England for her independence and her mighty toil; America, for her vast possibilities of well-being. He pleaded against the horrors of the slave trade. He courted the favour of no lord. And, in an age of city poets, he found his inspiration on the hillside and by the stream.

EDWARD DOWDEN

GRONGAR HILL.

Silent Nymph, with curious eye!
Who, the purple evening, lie
On the mountain's lonely van,
Beyond the noise of busy man,
Painting fair the form of things,
While the yellow linnet sings;
Or the tuneful nightingale
Charms the forest with her tale;
Come with all thy various hues,
Come, and aid thy sister Muse;
Now while Phœbus riding high
Gives lustre to the land and sky!
Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landskip bright and strong;
Grongar, in whose mossy cells
Sweetly musing Quiet dwells;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest Muses made,
So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sate upon a flowery bed,
With my hand beneath my head;
While strayed my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead, and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
'Till Contemplation had her fill.
About his chequered sides I wind,
And leave his brooks and meads behind,
And groves, and grottoes where I lay,
And vistoes shooting beams of day:
Wide and wider spreads the vale;
As circles on a smooth canal:

The mountains round, unhappy fate!
Sooner or later, of all height,
Withdraw their summits from the skies,
And lessen as the others rise:
Still the prospect wider spreads,
Adds a thousand woods and meads,
Still it widens, widens still,
And sinks the newly-risen hill.
Now, I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landskip lies below!
No clouds, no vapours intervene,
But the gay, the open scene
Does the face of nature show,
In all the hues of heaven's bow!
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.
Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly towering in the skies;
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires;
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads,
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks.
Below me trees unnumbered rise,
Beautiful in various dyes:
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable yew,
The slender fir, that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs;
And beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phillis, queen of love,
Gaudy as the opening dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wandering eye.
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,

And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an aweful look below;
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps;
So both a safety from the wind
On mutual dependence find.
'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds;
And there the poisonous adder breeds
Conceal'd in ruins, moss and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls.
Yet time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile compleat,
Big with the vanity of state;
But transient is the smile of fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sun beam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.
And see the rivers how they run,
Thro' woods and meads, in shade and sun,
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave, they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life to endless sleep!
Thus is nature's vesture wrought,
To instruct our wandering thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.
Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landskip tire the view!
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys, warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky;

The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,
The naked rock, the shady bower;
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each gives each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Æthiop's arm.
See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide,
Where the evening gilds the tide;
How close and small the hedges lie!
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!
A step methinks may pass the stream,
So little distant dangers seem;
So we mistake the future's face,
Eyed thro' Hope's deluding glass;
As yon summits soft and fair
Clad in colours of the air,
Which to those who journey near,
Barren, brown, and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way;
The present's still a cloudy day.
O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see:
Content me with an humble shade,
My passions tamed, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul:
'Tis thus the busy beat the air;
And misers gather wealth and care.
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,
As on the mountain-turf I lie;
While the wanton Zephyr sings,
And in the vale perfumes his wings;
While the waters murmur deep;
While the shepherd charms his sheep;
While the birds unbounded fly,
And with musick fill the sky,
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high.
Be full, ye courts, be great who will;
Search for Peace with all your skill:

Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor,
In vain you search, she is not there ;
In vain ye search the domes of care!
Grass and flowers Quiet treads,
On the meads, and mountain-heads,
Along with Pleasure, close allied,
Ever by each other's side :
And often, by the murmuring rill,
Hears the thrush, while all is still,
Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

FROM 'THE FLEECE.' Bk. I.

Ah gentle shepherd, thine the lot to tend,
Of all, that feel distress, the most assail'd,
Feeble, defenceless : lenient be thy care :
But spread around thy tenderest diligence
In flow'ry spring-time, when the new-dropt lamb,
Tottering with weakness by his mothers side,
Feels the fresh world about him ; and each thorn,
Hillock, or furrow, trips his feeble feet :
O guard his meek sweet innocence from all
Th' innumerous ills, that rush around his life ;
Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons prone,
Circling the skies to snatch him from the plain ;
Observe the lurking crows ; beware the brake,
There the sly fox the careless minute waits ;
Nor trust thy neighbour's dog, nor earth, nor sky :
Thy bosom to a thousand cares divide.
Eurus oft flings his hail ; the tardy fields
Pay not their promised food ; and oft the dam
O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,
Or fails to guard, when the bold bird of prey
Alights, and hops in many turns around,
And tires her also turning : to her aid
Be nimble, and the weakest in thine arms

Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,
Between the lark's note and the nightingale's,
His hungry bleating still with tepid milk:
In this soft office may thy children join,
And charitable habits learn in sport:
Nor yield him to himself, ere vernal airs
Sprinkle thy little croft with daisy flowers:
Nor yet forget him: life has rising ills:
Various as æther is the pastoral care:
Through slow experience, by a patient breast,
The whole long lesson gradual is attained,
By precept after precept, oft received
With deep attention: such as Nuceus sings
To the full vale near Soar's enamour'd brook,
While all is silence: sweet Hinclean swain!
Whom rude obscurity severely clasps:
The muse, howe'er, will deck thy simple cell
With purple violets and primrose flowers,
Well-pleased thy faithful lessons to repay.

* * * * * *

Now, jolly swains, the harvest of your cares
Prepare to reap, and seek the sounding caves
Of high Brigantium, where, by ruddy flames,
Vulcan's strong sons with nervous arm around
The steady anvil and the glaring mass,
Clatter their heavy hammers down by turns,
Flattening the steel; from their rough hands receive
The sharpened instrument, that from the flock
Severs the fleece. If verdant elder spreads
Her silver flowers; if humble daisies yield
To yellow crow-foot, and luxuriant grass,
Gay shearing-time approaches. First, howe'er,
Drive to the double fold, upon the brim
Of a clear river, gently drive the flock,
And plunge them one by one into the flood:
Plunged in the flood, not long the struggler sinks,
With his white flakes, that glisten thro' the tide;

The sturdy rustic, in the middle wave,
Awaits to seize him rising; one arm bears
His lifted head above the limpid stream,
While the full clammy fleece the other laves
Around, laborious, with repeated toil;
And then resigns him to the sunny bank,
Where, bleating loud, he shakes his dripping locks.

ROBERT BLAIR.

[ROBERT BLAIR was born at Edinburgh in 1699. He became a minister, and was presented to the living of Athelstaneford in Haddingtonshire, where most of his life was passed. He died there in 1746. *The Grave* was published at Edinburgh in 1743.]

Blair's singular little poem, which has perhaps been more widely read than any other poetical production of a writer who wrote no other poetry, was, it is said, rejected by several London publishers on the ground that it was 'too heavy for the times.' As its introducer was Dr. Watts, it is not likely that he suggested it to any but serious members of the trade. *The Grave* thus adds one to the tolerably long list of books respecting the chances of which professional judgment has been hopelessly out. It acquired popularity almost as soon as it was published, and retained it for at least a century; indeed its date is not yet gone by in certain circles. Long after its author's death it obtained an additional and probably a lasting hold on a new kind of taste by the fact of Blake's illustrating it. The artist's designs indeed were, as he expresses it in the beautiful Dedication to Queen Charlotte, rather 'visions that his soul had seen' than representations of anything directly contained in Blair's verse. But that verse itself is by no means to be despised. Technically its only fault is the use and abuse of the redundant syllable. The quality of Blair's blank verse is in every respect rather moulded upon dramatic than upon purely poetical models, and he shows little trace of imitation either of Milton, or of his contemporary Thomson. Whether his studies—contrary to the wont of Scotch divines at that time—had really been much directed to the drama, I cannot say; but the perusal of his poem certainly suggests such a conclusion, not merely the licence just mentioned, but the generally declamatory and rhetorical tone

helping to produce the impression. The matter of the poem is good. General plan it has none, but in so short a composition a general plan is hardly wanted. It abounds with forcible and original ideas expressed in vigorous and unconventional phraseology, nor is it likely nowadays that this phraseology will strike readers, as it struck the delicate critics of the eighteenth century, as being 'vulgar.' Vigorous single lines are numerous; and it is at least as much a tribute to the vigour of the poem as to its popularity, that many of its phrases have worked their way into current speech. Nor is it difficult to produce sustained passages, the effect of which is marred only by the ugly technical fault already noticed. The poem naturally invites comparison with the *Night Thoughts*. In depth of meaning it is probably the inferior of Young's work. But its shortness is very much in its favour, as also is the absence of conventionality which distinguishes it, if we except a little stock satire about the trappings of the grave, &c. The wonder is however, not that Blair has sometimes fallen into the use of the cut and dried, but that he has so often avoided it. To have written a poem of seven or eight hundred lines on such a subject, which after the lapse of nearly a century and a half can be read with pleasure and even some admiration, is something; perhaps it is something by no means inconsiderable. It is due beyond all doubt to the fact that Blair had the specially poetic faculty of saying old things in a new way. There is almost always something novel in his dressing up of his images and a suggestive unhackneyedness in their expression. It is sufficient to read the last four lines of the poem to perceive this.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

[From *The Grave.*]

SELF-MURDER.

Self-Murder! name it not: our island's shame,
That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states.
Shall nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,
Self-preservation, fall by her own act?
Forbid it, Heaven!—let not upon disgust
The shameless hand be foully crimsoned o'er
With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt!
Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage,
To rush into the presence of our Judge
As if we challenged him to do his worst
And mattered not his wrath: unheard-of tortures
Must be reserved for these, these herd together,
The common damned shun their society,
And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.
Our time is fix'd and all our days are numbered,
How long, how short we know not; this we know,
Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,
Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission,
Like sentries that must keep their destined stand
And wait the appointed hour till they're relieved.
Those only are the brave that keep their ground,
And keep it to the last. To run away
Is but a coward's trick. To run away
From this world's ills, that at the very worst
Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves
By boldly venturing on a world unknown
And plunging headlong in the dark—'tis mad,
No phrenzy half so desperate as this.

OMNES EODEM COGIMUR.

On this side and on that men see their friends
Drop off like leaves in autumn, yet launch out

Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers
In the world's hale and undegenerate days
Could scarce have leisure for. Fools that we are,
Never to think of death and of ourselves
At the same time: as if to learn to die
Were no concern of ours. Oh! more than sottish
For creatures of a day in gamesome mood
To frolic on Eternity's dread brink
Unapprehensive, when, for aught we know,
The very first swoln surge shall sweep us in.
Think we or think we not, time hurries on
With a resistless unremitting stream,
Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief
That slides his hand under the miser's pillow
And carries off his prize. What is this world?
What but a spacious burial-field unwalled
Strewed with death's spoils, the spoils of animals
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.
The very turf on which we tread once lived,
And we that live must lend our carcases
To cover our own offspring; in their turns
They too must cover theirs—'tis here all meet.
The shivering Icelander and sunburnt Moor,
Men of all climes who never met before,
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,
His sovereign's keeper and the people's scourge,
Are huddled out of sight.—Here lie abashed
The great negotiators of the earth,
And celebrated masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts;
Now vain their treaty skill.—Death scorns to treat.
Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burden
From his galled shoulders, and when the stern tyrant.
With all his guards and tools of power about him
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm, and quick as thought escapes
Where tyrants vex not and the weary rest.

THE RESURRECTION.

Nor shall it hope in vain: the time draws on
When not a single spot of burial earth,
Whether on land or in the spacious sea,
But must give back its long committed trust
Inviolate, and faithfully shall these
Make up the full account, not the least atom
Embezzled or mislaid of the whole tale.
Each soul shall have a body ready furnished,
And each shall have his own. Hence, ye profane!
Ask not how this can be. Sure the same power
That reared the piece at first and took it down
Can reassemble the loose scattered parts
And put them as they were. Almighty God
Has done much more, nor is his arm impaired
With length of days, and what he can he will.
His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.
When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumbering dust,
Not unattentive to the call, shall wake,
And every joint possess its proper place
With a new elegance of form unknown
To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul
Mistake its partner, but, amidst the crowd
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush with all the impatience of a man
That 's new come home, who having long been absent
With haste runs over ev'ry different room
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!
Nor time nor death shall part them ever more.
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.

Thus at the shut of even the weary bird
Leaves the wide air and, in some lonely brake,
Cowers down and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledged wings and bears away.

EDWARD YOUNG.

[THE author of the *Night Thoughts* was born at Upham in Hampshire in 1684, and died on the 12th of April 1765. *The Last Day* was published in 1713, and was soon followed by *The Force of Religion*. Young's unlucky tendency to flattery and toadyism early showed itself in many small pieces to persons of rank which cannot be said to have been regularly published until long afterwards. In 1719 *Busiris*, his first tragedy, was performed; and in the same year the *Letter to Tickell on the Death of Addison* and the *Paraphrase of the Book of Job* appeared. *The Revenge* followed in 1721. The satires composing *The Universal Passion* made their appearance during the course of 1725 and the following three years. In 1728 they were collectively published. Meanwhile the accession of George II had been hailed with the so-called *Odes to Ocean, &c.* *The Brothers*, a tragedy, coincided pretty nearly with this. In 1730 appeared the *Imperium Pelagi*, and two *Epistles to Pope*. Some more Pindarics followed. The first *Night Thought* was published in 1742, the last in 1744. Of Young's remaining works, *Resignation*, which appeared three years before his death, need alone be mentioned.]

Except Wordsworth, Young is probably the most unequal of English poets. The difference between his best work and his worst is so great as to be almost unintelligible, and it is fair to him to say that he seems to have been aware of this. When his collected poems were reprinted, a large number were by his express direction left out. Publication however constitutes, as it has been well observed, in one sense an unpardonable sin; and in estimating Young it is necessary to take the *Odes* and the *Imperium Pelagi* into consideration as well as the *Night Thoughts* and the *Last Day*. Of the class represented by the first-named works it may be said that hardly any worse poetry has ever been written. There is scarcely a stanza of the so-called *Odes* which does not read like an admir-

able and intentional burlesque. The author seems by his rhymes to have had no ear at all, and his gross and fulsome flattery is unspeakably nauseous. Of this latter peculiarity indeed even his best work contains but too many instances. The fine passage, soon to be quoted, from the *Last Day* is disfigured by the insertion in the midst of it of a clumsy and foolish panegyric on Queen Anne, which any one but an eighteenth-century divine would have felt to be not only intrinsically in bad taste, but hopelessly inappropriate to the case.

The depths to which Young sinks at his worst are however compensated by the heights at which at his best he arrives. If poetry and poets could be judged by single lines, there are few save the highest who could safely challenge comparison with Young. He had an astonishing fertility of thought of a certain kind, and a corresponding richness of expression. Nor were his powers confined, as it has been asserted, to the production of 'gloomy epigram.' He stands pre-eminent among artists of blank verse, and a critic might well have asked him, as Jeffrey asked Macaulay, where he got his style from. The earlier eighteenth century is indeed remarkable for its mould of blank verse. Considering that though Young was a much older man than Thomson he did not produce his great work until many years after the appearance of *Winter*, it may be that *The Seasons* exercised some influence over him; but the influence was scarcely that of imitation. The different uses to which the two instruments were put may perhaps in some measure account for the difference of their sound. Both have in common the tendency to florid language and to antithesis which the Popian couplet had made popular, both use and indeed abuse the effect of strongly contrasted lights and shades. But Young, probably owing to his dramatic studies, is much more rhetorical than Thomson. Not a few passages in the *Night Thoughts*, especially that remarkable one in the Third Night about dying friends, where the confusion of metaphors does not obscure the grandeur of the verse, are of the finest tragic mould. It was inevitable that in the hands of a man of such uncritical taste as Young this tragic quality should often degenerate into mere declamation. The inequality indeed which is so characteristic of him exists even in detached passages of very small extent, so that it is difficult if not impossible to select any in which the taste shall not be offended. The *Night Thoughts* has accordingly long ceased to be the popular book it once was. As a poet of moral ideas however Young will always deserve attention,

independently of the excellence of his versification. The famous passage on Procrastination, which, hackneyed as it is, is so decidedly his masterpiece, that it cannot be left out in any selection from his works, is in its way not to be surpassed, and its excellence fully accounts for the popularity of Young in a century such as the eighteenth, which, whatever its practice might be, was, in theory, nothing if not moralist. This popularity, as is pretty generally known, spread to France, where Young long had many fervent admirers, though he is probably to a great extent chargeable with the bad repute of England for spleen. Blake's remarkable illustrations also add considerable interest of the accidental kind to the book. Those of the minor poems which deserve notice at all are not dissimilar in characteristics to the *Night Thoughts*. The satires have almost as great, though scarcely so original a merit as these latter, and both in the *Last Day* and the *Job* fine and striking passages abound.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

FROM 'THE LAST DAY.' BOOK I.

Sooner or later, in some future date,
(A dreadful secret in the book of Fate)
This hour, for aught all human wisdom knows,
Or when ten thousand harvests more have rose;
When scenes are changed on this revolving Earth,
Old empires fall, and give new empires birth;
While other Bourbons rule in other lands,
And, (if man's sin forbids not) other Annes;
While the still busy world is treading o'er
The paths they trod five thousand years before,
Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,
Of earth dissolved, or an extinguished sun,
(Ye sublunary worlds, awake, awake!
Ye rulers of the nation, hear and shake)
Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day;
In sudden night all Earth's dominions lay;
Impetuous winds the scatter'd forests rend;
Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend;
The valleys yawn, the troubled ocean roar
And break the bondage of his wonted shore;
A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread;
Darkness the circle of the sun invade;
From inmost Heaven incessant thunders roll
And the strong echo bound from pole to pole.

THE OLD COQUETTE.

[From *Satire V, on Women.*]

'But adoration! give me something more,'
Cries Lycé on the borders of threescore.
Nought treads so silent as the foot of Time:
Hence we mistake our autumn for our prime.

'Tis greatly wise to know before we're told
The melancholy news that we grow old.
Autumnal Lycé carries in her face
Memento mori to each public place.
O how your beating breast a mistress warms
Who looks through spectacles to see your charms,
While rival undertakers hover round
And with his spade the sexton marks the ground!
Intent not on her own, but others' doom,
She plans new conquests and defrauds the tomb.
In vain the cock has summoned sprites away,
She walks at noon and blasts the bloom of day.
Gay rainbow silks her mellow charms infold,
And nought of Lycé but herself is old.
Her grizzled locks assume a smirking grace,
And art has levelled her deep furrowed face.
Her strange demand no mortal can approve,
We'll ask her blessing, but can't ask her love.
She grants, indeed, a lady may decline
(All ladies but herself) at ninety-nine.

PROCRASTINATION.

[From *The Complaint, Night I.*]

By nature's law, what may be, may be now;
There's no prerogative in human hours.
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain; the reverse
Is sure to none; and yet on this perhaps,
This peradventure, infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant, we build
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes
As we the fatal sisters could out-spin,
And big with life's futurities, expire.
Not e'en Philander had bespoke his shroud.

Nor had he cause; a warning was denied:
How many fall as sudden, not as safe;
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home!
Of human ills the last extreme beware;
Beware, Lorenzo, a slow sudden death.
How dreadful that deliberate surprise!
Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.
Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears
The palm, 'That all men are about to live,
For ever on the brink of being born.'
All pay themselves the compliment to think
They one day shall not drivel: and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise;
At least, their own; their future selves applaud
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead.
Time lodg'd in their own hands is folly's vails;
That lodg'd in fate's to wisdom they consign.
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.
All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage: when young indeed
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,
As duteous sons our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool,
Knows it at forty and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

[From *Night III.*]

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To damp our brainless ardours; and abate
That glare of life which often blinds the wise.
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars
Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws
'Cross our obstructed way; and thus to make
Welcome as safe, our port from every storm.
Each friend by fate snatched from us is a plume,
Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
Which makes us stoop from our aërial heights
And, damp'd with omen of our own decease,
On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
Just skim Earth's surface, ere we break it up,
O'er putrid earth to scratch a little dust
And save the world a nuisance. Smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love;
For us they languish and for us they die,
And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain?
Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hovering shades
Which wait the revolution in our hearts?
Shall we disdain their silent soft address,
Their posthumous advice and pious prayer?
Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
Tread under-foot their agonies and groans,
Frustrate their anguish and destroy their deaths?

ASPIRATION.

[From *Night IV.*]

O thou great arbiter of life and death,
Nature's immortal, unmaterial sun,
Whose all-prolific beam late call'd me forth
From darkness, teeming darkness where I lay,

The worm's inferior, and in rank beneath
The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,
To drink the spirit of the golden day,
And triumph in existence; and could know
No motive, but my bliss; and hast ordain'd
A rise in blessing, with the patriarch's joy,
Thy call I follow to the land unknown.
I trust in thee and know in whom I trust;
Or life, or death, is equal; neither weighs:
All weight in this—O let me live to thee!

THE STREAM OF LIFE.

[From *Night V.*]

Is it, that life has sown her joys so thick
We can't thrust in a single care between?
Is it, that life has such a swarm of cares
The thought of death can't enter for the throng?
Is it, that time steals on with downy feet,
Nor wakes indulgence from her golden dream?
To day is so like yesterday, it cheats;
We take the lying sister for the same.
Life glides away, Lorenzo, like a brook;
For ever changing, unperceived the change.
In the same brook none ever bathed him twice,
To the same life none ever twice awoke.
We call the brook the same; the same we think
Our life, though still more rapid in its flow;
Nor mark the much, irrevocably laps'd
And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say
(Retaining still the brook to bear us on)
That life is like a vessel on the stream?
In life embark'd we smoothly down the tide
Of time descend, but not on time intent,
Amused, unconscious of the gliding wave;
Till on a sudden we perceive a shock;
We start, awake, look out; what see we there?
Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.

JOHN BYROM.

[JOHN BYROM, born in 1691 at Kearsale, near Manchester, was educated partly at Merchant Taylors' and partly at Trinity College, Cambridge. For some time he read medicine. Afterwards he practised and taught stenography. Then the paternal estate fell in to him, and he removed from London to Manchester, where he lived in great repute for many years, and died in 1763. His poems were published at Manchester in two volumes.]

Byrom's is a figure rather curious than notable, rather amiable than striking. He had many turns and accomplishments, and many holds upon life. He loved learning, for instance, and had scholarship enough to write with point upon scholarly subjects. Again, it is certain that he was a man who could love; for he gave over medicine and the chance of medical honours merely to follow up and win the lady he was wooing to wife. Then, as became Weston's successful rival, the teacher who had improved upon Weston's own system, and had Hoadley and Chesterfield for his pupils, he was keenly interested in stenography, and not only lectured on it to his classes (his lectures, by the way, are said to have been full of matter and of wit), but read papers about it before the Royal Society. Also, he was curiously versed in theology and philosophical divinity; he held advanced opinions on the dogmas of predestination and imputed righteousness; he is known for a disciple of William Law, a student of Malebranche and Madame Bourignon, a follower of Jacob Boehmen, for whose sake he learned German, and some of whose discourse he was at the pains of running into English verse. And above all was he addicted to letters and the practice of what he was pleased to think poetry. Add to this, that he was a good and cheerful talker, whose piety was not always pun-proof ('Hic jacet Doctor Byfield,

volatilis olim, tandem fixus'), but who was capable on occasion of right and genuine epigram, and the picture is complete. As revealed in it, Byrom is the very type and incarnation of the ingenious amateur.

Verse was his organ; he wrote it more easily and delightedly than prose. From his schooldays onwards, when, as he declares, a line of metre was more to him than a dozen themes, down to the last hours of his life,

> 'Him, numbers flowing in a measured time,
> Him, sweetest grace of English verse, the rhyme,
> Choice epithet and smooth descriptive line,
> Conspiring all to finish one design,
> Smit with delight'—

and as that delight usually took on palpable shape, it appears to us expressed in more epistles, songs, pastorals, hymns, essays, satires and epigrams, than nowadays one cares to consider. Nothing came amiss to Byrom in the way of subject. He was interested in everything, and said his say about everything; and that say was always in metre. It was alike in metre that he sang the praises of Joanna Bentley, the Phoebe of his first pastoral, and did battle with Comberbatch in the good cause of Rhyme against Blank Verse; alike in metre that he recorded the gaieties of Tunbridge and the dangers of the Epping stage, the grisly glories of the heroic Figg—'so fierce and sedate'—and the solemn charm of Eastertide and the Nativity. It was in metre that he confuted Middleton, differed from Hervey, emended Horace and Homer, discoursed on the nature of Pentecost, expounded William Law, and explained the Mystical Cobbler. It was in metre that he anatomised beaux and astrologers, made fables and apologies and epigrams, criticised verses and theologies, spoke breaking-up addresses, painted the free and happy workman, and set forth the kindred mysteries of poesy and shorthand. He prattled incessantly, and always in numbers. Not otherwise than in a copy of verses could he define the nature and characteristics of enthusiasm; not otherwise could he submit to the Royal Society his theory that George the Cappadocian had somehow been foisted into the place of Gregory the Roman as England's patron saint. To respect him it is really necessary to remember that he wrote chiefly for his own amusement and his friends', and published but a little of the much that he produced.

It is evident that he had read Prior, though not to the best advantage; it is evident, too, that he had read not only Pope, but the metaphysical poets as well; and the poem of *Careless Content*, here given, is so good an imitation that it has been supposed to be a genuine Elizabethan production. His chief quality is one of ease and fluency; in combination with a certain cheerful briskness of thought and the amiable good sense that is the most striking element in his intellectual composition, it is to be found here and there in all he did. Unhappily for him and for us, it appears to have been as hard for him to correct as it was easy to write. Too often do his verses sound emptily to modern ear—

> 'The art of English poetry, I find,
> At present, Jenkins, occupies your mind'—

too often do they set modern fingers itching to shape and improve them. It follows that he is seen to most advantage when, upon compulsion of his stanza, he is at his briefest and most careful. It is not without reason, therefore, that he is generally known but as the author of the sly and amiable quatrain of benediction alike on King and Pretender. That is the man's highest point as an artist; it is at once his happiest and most complete utterance; and the body of his verse will be searched in vain for such another proof of merit and accomplishment.

W. E. HENLEY.

THE NIMMERS.

Two foot-companions once in deep discourse—
'Tom,' says the one, 'Let's go and *steal* a horse.'
'Steal!' says the other in a huge surprise,
'He that says I'm a thief, I say he lies.'
'Well, well,' replies his friend, 'No such affront!
I did but ask ye. If you won't, you won't.'
So they jogged on, till in another strain
The querist moved to honest Tom again:
'Suppose,' says he, 'for supposition's sake
('Tis but a supposition that I make!)
Suppose that we should *filch* a horse, I say?'
'Filch? filch?' quoth Tom, demurring by the way,
'That's not so bad as downright theft, I own,
But yet—methinks,—'twere better let alone.
It soundeth something pitiful and low.
Shall we go filch a horse, you say? Why, no!
I'll filch no filching;—and I'll tell no lie:
Honesty's the best policy, say I!'

Struck with such vast integrity quite dumb,
His comrade paused. At last, says he, 'Come, come,
Thou art an honest fellow, I agree.
Honest and poor.—Alas, that should not be!—
And dry into the bargain! And no drink!
Shall we go *nim* a horse, Tom? What dost think?'

How clear are things when liquor's in the case!
Tom answers quick, with casuistic grace,
'Nim? yes, yes, yes! Let's nim, with all my heart.
I see no harm in nimming, for my part.
Hard is the case, now I look sharp into't,
That honesty should trudge i' th' dirt afoot!

So many empty horses round about,
That honesty should wear its bottoms out!
Besides, shall honesty be choked with thirst?
Were it my Lord Mayor's horse, I'd nim it first!
And, by the bye, my lad, no scrubby tit!
There is the best that ever wore a bit
Not far from hence.'—'I take ye,' quoth his friend,
'Is not yon stable, Tom, our journey's end?'—
Good wits will jump; both meant the very steed,
The top o' the country both for shape and breed.
So to't they went, and with a halter round
His feathered neck they nimmed him off the ground.

* * * * * * * *

'Twixt right and wrong how many gentle trimmers
Will neither steal nor filch, but will be plaguy Nimmers!

CARELESS CONTENT.

I am content, I do not care,
Wag as it will the world for me!
When fuss and fret was all my fare
It got no ground that I could see;
So when away my caring went
I counted cost and was content.

With more of thanks and less of thought
I strive to make my matters meet;
To seek what ancient sages sought,
Physic and food in sour and sweet;
To take what passes in good part
And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With good and gently-humoured hearts
I choose to chat where'er I come,
Whate'er the subject be that starts;
But if I get among the glum
I hold my tongue to tell the troth,
And keep my breath to cool my broth.

For chance or change of peace or pain,
  For Fortune's favour or her frown,
For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
  I never dodge nor up nor down,
But swing what way the ship shall swim,
Or tack about with equal trim.

I suit not where I shall not speed,
  Nor trace the turn of every tide.
If simple sense will not succeed
  I make no bustling, but abide.
For shining wealth or scaring woe
I force no friend, I fear no foe.

Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
  Of they're-i'-th'-wrong and we're-i'-th'-right,
I shun the rancours and the routs;
  And, wishing well to every wight,
Whatever turn the matter takes,
I deem it all but ducks and drakes

With whom I feast I do not fawn,
  Nor if the folks should flout me, faint.
If wonted welcome be withdrawn
  I cook no kind of a complaint.
With none disposed to disagree,
I like them best who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule
  How all my betters should behave;
But fame shall find me no man's fool,
  Nor to a set of men a slave;
I love a friendship free and frank,
But hate to hang upon a hank.

Fond of a true and trusty tie,
I never loose where'er I link,
Though if a business budges by
I talk thereon just as I think;
My word, my work, my heart, my hand,
Still on a side together stand.

If names or notions make a noise,
Whatever hap the question hath
The point impartially I poise,
And read and write, but without wrath;
For, should I burn or break my brains,
Pray, who will pay me for my pains?

I love my neighbour as myself—
Myself like him too, by his leave!
Nor to his pleasure, power or pelf
Came I to crouch, as I conceive!
Dame Nature doubtless has designed
A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,
Mood it and brood it in your breast;
Or, if ye ween for worldly stirs
That man does right to mar his rest,
Let me be deft and debonair,
I am content, I do not care!

On the Origin of Evil.

Evil, if rightly understood,
Is but the skeleton of good
Divested of its flesh and blood.

While it remains, without divorce,
Within its hidden secret source,
It is the good's own strength and force.

As bone has the supporting share
In human form divinely fair,
Although an evil when laid bare;

As light and air are, fed by fire,
A shining good while all conspire,
But, separate, dark raging ire;

As hope and love arise from faith
Which then admits no ill, nor hath,
But, if alone, it would be wrath;

Or any instance thought upon
In which the evil can be none
Till unity of good is gone:—

So, by abuse of thought and skill,
The greatest good, to wit, Free Will,
Becomes the origin of ill.

Thus when rebellious angels fell,
The very Heaven where good ones dwell
Became the apostate spirits' hell;

Seeking against eternal right
A force without a love and light
They found, and felt its evil might.

Thus Adam, biting at their bait
Of good and evil, when he ate
Died to his first thrice-happy state,

Fell to the evils of this ball
Which, in harmonious union all,
Were Paradise before his fall,

And, when the life of Christ in men
Revives its faded image, then
Will all be Paradise again.

EPIGRAMS.

In truths that nobody can miss
It is the *quid* that makes the *quis*;
In such as lie more deeply hid
It is the *quis* that makes the *quid*.

God bless the King—I mean the faith's defender!
God bless (no harm in blessing!) the Pretender!
But who pretender is, or who is king—
God bless us all!—that's quite another thing.

RICHARD GLOVER.

[RICHARD GLOVER, the son of a London merchant, was born in 1712, in a house near Cannon Street, City. He was not at either university, but through sympathy with the history of ancient Greece made himself a competent Greek scholar. He entered into business, and was much esteemed and trusted by the London merchants. In 1760 he was elected M.P. for Weymouth. His chief poems were, *Leonidas*, 1737 (enlarged in 1770); *London, or the Progress of Commerce*, 1739; *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*, in the same year; and *The Athenaid*, published posthumously in 1788. He died in 1785.]

Glover was a man of considerable powers, but he was stronger on the side of politics and practical life than in the field of literature. In his poems the rhetoric of party warfare is more conspicuous than the inspiration of genius. His best-known poem, *Leonidas*, was based it is true on his reading of Herodotus and Plutarch; but in reality it is the utterance of one who wished to stir his fellow-citizens to an anti-Walpole 'patriotic' policy. So far as the form is concerned it may be called a blank-verse echo of Pope's version of Homer, the influence of which may continually be traced; and under the inspiration of this model Glover expands the few simple chapters of his authority Herodotus into the dimensions of an epic by inventing various characters, love-affairs, and thrilling episodes.

Campbell remarks that the want of 'impetuosity of progress' is the chief fault in the poem. It does not seem clear that this censure is just. The action moves on swiftly enough, and is sufficiently varied by epoch-making or decorative incidents. The personages introduced are not inactive, or long-winded; they have only the damning fault of being dull. The reader does not much care what they do, nor what becomes of them. A sort of glossy rhetoric is the

general characteristic of the poem, which accordingly is not without striking passages, but the lack of human interest mars the total effect. Campbell was nearer the mark when, after observing that Glover does not make his pictures grotesque by introducing modern accessories and details, he added,—'but his purity is cold, his heroes are like outlines of Grecian faces, with no distinct or minute physiognomy.' In agreement with this line of criticism, Southey describes *Leonidas* as 'cold and bald, stately rather than strong in its best parts, and in general rather stiff than stately.' The terseness which Glover, writing about Spartans, affected, made him often pile a number of short abrupt sentences one upon the other; hence the stiffness and baldness of which Southey complains. Thus we read in Book xii :—

> 'On living embers these are cast. So wills
> Leonidas The phalanx then divides.
> Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
> By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last
> Himself conducts. The word is given. They seize
> The burning fuel.'

The conclusion, where Leonidas, after performing impossible feats of valour and slaughter, dies without a word, rather of exhaustion than of wounds, exhibits an uninteresting flatness, which Glover, who knew Virgil well, and must have noted how wonderfully effective are the last words of Dido, Turnus, Pallas, and Mezentius, ought sedulously to have avoided.

Of the *Athenaid*, a sequel to *Leonidas*, with its thirty books, it is enough to say that it is simply unreadable. It appears to be a florid reproduction, with new incidents and scenery, of the story of the Græco-Persian war, from Thermopylæ to Platæa.

The opposition to Sir Robert Walpole found in Glover an enthusiastic ally. One of his chief objects in writing *London* is said to have been to exasperate the public mind against Spain, a power to which Walpole was held to have truckled. In the same year, after the news came of Vernon's success at Porto Bello, Glover wrote the spirited ballad of *Hosier's Ghost*, rather perhaps with the design of damaging Walpole than exalting Vernon. The political aim interests us no more ; but the music and swing of the verse,—perhaps also the naval cast of the imagery and the diction,—will keep this ballad popular with Englishmen for many a year to come.

T. ARNOLD.

POLYDORUS AND MARON.

[From *Leonidas*, Book IX.]

'I too, like them, from Lacedæmon spring,
Like them instructed once to poise the spear,
To lift the ponderous shield. Ill destined wretch!
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates,
Who have compelled my free-born hand to change
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds;
Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,
My ten years anguish, and the fell despair,
Which on my youth have preyed; relenting once,
Grant I may bear my buckler to the field,
And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below!'
'Why to be known a Spartan must thou seek
The shades below?' Impatient Maron spake.
'Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds;
Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth;
Live, and perform the duties which become
A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He who leads
Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close
Without an offspring to uphold the state.'
'He will,' replies the brother in a glow,
Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek,
'He will permit me to complete by death
The measure of my duty; will permit
Me to achieve a service, which no hand
But mine can render, to adorn his fall
With double lustre, strike the barbarous foe
With endless terror, and avenge the shame
Of an enslaved Laconian.' Closing here
His words mysterious, quick he turned away
To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
In grateful sorrow ministered her aid;

While the humane, the hospitable care
Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse
On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid
Of Ariena. He from bondage freed
Four eastern captives, whom his generous arm
That day had spared in battle; then began
This solemn charge. 'You, Persians, whom my sword
Acquired in war, unransomed, shall depart.
To you I render freedom which you sought
To wrest from me. One recompense I ask,
And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp
This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king
Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom.
Then say, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordained.
Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
Leads desolation; o'er the nations spreads
Calamity and tears; thou first shalt mourn,
And through thy house destruction first shalt range.'

Ballad of Admiral Hosier's Ghost.

As near Porto-Bello lying
On the gently-swelling flood,
At midnight with streamers flying
Our triumphant navy rode;
There while Vernon sat all-glorious
From the Spaniards' late defeat;
And his crews, with shouts victorious,
Drank success to England's fleet;

On a sudden, shrilly sounding,
Hideous yells and shrieks were heard;
Then each heart with fear confounding,
A sad troop of ghosts appeared;
All in dreary hammocks shrouded,
Which for winding sheets they wore,
And with looks by sorrow clouded
Frowning on that hostile shore.

On them gleamed the moon's wan lustre,
When the shade of Hosier brave
His pale bands was seen to muster,
Rising from their watery grave :
O'er the glimmering wave he hied him,
Where the Burford reared her sail,
With three thousand ghosts beside him,
And in groans did Vernon hail.

'Heed, O heed, our fatal story,
I am Hosier's injured ghost,
You, who now have purchased glory
At this place where I was lost ;
Though in Porto-Bello's ruin
You now triumph free from fears,
When you think on our undoing,
You will mix your joy with tears.

'See these mournful spectres sweeping
Ghastly o'er this hated wave,
Whose wan cheeks are stained with weeping ;
These were English captains brave :
Mark those numbers pale and horrid,
Those were once my sailors bold,
Lo, each hangs his drooping forehead,
While his dismal tale is told.

'I, by twenty sail attended,
Did this Spanish town affright ;
Nothing then its wealth defended
But my orders not to fight :
O ! that in this rolling ocean
I had cast them with disdain,
And obeyed my heart's warm motion,
To have quelled the pride of Spain ;

'For resistance I could fear none,
But with twenty ships had done
What thou, brave and happy Vernon,
Hast achieved with six alone.

Then the Bastimentos never
Had our foul dishonour seen,
Nor the sea the sad receiver
Of this gallant train had been.

'Thus, like thee, proud Spain dismaying,
And her galleons leading home,
Though condemned for disobeying,
I had met a traitor's doom.
To have fallen, my country crying
"He has played an English part,'
Had been better far than dying
Of a grieved and broken heart.

'Unrepining at thy glory,
Thy successful arms we hail;
But remember our sad story,
And let Hosier's wrongs prevail.
Sent in this foul clime to languish,
Think what thousands fell in vain,
Wasted with disease and anguish,
Not in glorious battle slain.

'Hence with all my train attending,
From their oozy tombs below,
Through the hoary foam ascending,
Here I feed my constant woe;
Here the Bastimentos viewing,
We recall our shameful doom,
And, our plaintive cries renewing,
Wander through the midnight gloom.

'O'er these waves for ever mourning
Shall we roam deprived of rest,
If to Britain's shores returning
You neglect my just request;
After this proud foe subduing,
When your patriot friends you see,
Think on vengeance for my ruin,
And for England shamed in me!'

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield on the 18th of Sept. 1709. The first of his noteworthy poems, *London*, was published in 1738, at a period of his life when he was in great poverty, and for the copyright of the poem he only obtained ten guineas. It appeared on the same morning as Pope's Satire, '1738,' and surpassed the latter in popularity. In 1747 he wrote his celebrated Prologue for the opening of Drury Lane Theatre. At this theatre was exhibited in 1749 his tragedy of *Irene*, which, though acted for thirteen nights, failed to secure the public favour. *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was published earlier in the same year with a view to excite an interest in the author of the play. These were his last important poetical works. He wrote however three Prologues: one to *Comus* in 1750, when that play was acted for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter; another to Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man* in 1769; and a third to the revived *Word to the Wise* in 1777. He died on the 13th of Dec. 1784.]

Johnson may be said to occupy the central place in that highly characteristic school of didactic poetry which was originated by Pope and completed by Goldsmith. The essence of Pope's didactic compositions is personal satire. It is true that he specially prides himself on being the champion of virtue and the great promoter of moral truth. But the virtue which he had invariably before his imagination was his own, and throughout his *Imitations of Horace* morality is always exalted in the person of the poet, and always seems to be endangered by the wicked virulence of his private enemies. In consequence of their intense personality, Pope's didactic poems fail in point of poetical design. In the *Essay on Man* the subject-matter is Bolingbroke's rather than Pope's, and the conduct of the argument is extraordinarily confused; while in the *Moral Essays* and *Satires*, what really pleases is the beauty of detail, the terse epigrams, the brilliant images, and above all the matchless portraiture of particular characters. The great beauty of Goldsmith's poems, on the other

hand, lies in the justness of their design, the relation of the means to the end, and of the parts to the whole. He relies hardly at all on personal interest for his effects; but he is perhaps the most persuasive of all didactic poets, from the extraordinary art which he possesses of enlisting simple and universal feelings in behalf of the moral principle which he seeks to establish.

Johnson unites in his own style many of the opposite excellences exhibited by his predecessor and his friend. It was impossible that the bias of his strong character should be altogether concealed in his verse, and *London* in particular appears to have been largely inspired by personal motives like those which suggested to Pope his *Imitations of Horace*. But the different genius of the two poets is seen in the selection of their respective originals. Pope was struck by the many superficial points of resemblance between himself and the lively egotistical Horace, and seized eagerly on the opportunity of presenting his own virtues, friendships, and enmities to the public under a transparent veil of imitation. Johnson, on the contrary, who, as an unknown writer, could not hope to interest the public in his personal concerns, chose a general theme, and imitated the satirist whose denunciations of Roman vice offered, in many respects, an apt parallel to the manners of his own age. *London* is marked by genuine public spirit; at the same time we see quite as much of the man as of the moralist in the poet's characteristic allusions to the penalties of poverty, his antipathy to the Whigs, and his dislike of foreigners. The story that 'Thales' was meant for Savage, and that the occasion of the poem was the departure of the latter from London after his trial, is confuted by dates, but we may be sure that the poem gives us a real representation of Johnson's feelings as a struggling author and a political partisan.

The Vanity of Human Wishes marks a calmer and more prosperous epoch in the poet's life, and its philosophical generalising spirit is an anticipation of Goldsmith's *Traveller*. Johnson was now relieved from the immediate pressure of want; and in his second *Imitation* he takes a wider survey of mankind; he suppresses all personal satire, and fetches the illustrations of his argument from distant times. The style of this poem is also completely different from that of *London*: in the latter he is ardent, animated, and colloquial, while in the *Vanity of Human Wishes* he speaks with the gravity of a moralist, making his periods swelling and sonorous, balancing his verses against each

other, and equalling Pope himself in the condensation of his language. Nevertheless, the whole spirit of the composition, though professedly an imitation, is highly characteristic of the man: we see in it the melancholy gloom that darkened all his view of human existence, while at the same time the noble lines of the conclusion recall the language of those touching fragments of prayer which Boswell discovered among his papers and has preserved in his *Life*.

His Prologues are of the highest excellence; indeed it may be confidently affirmed that he is the best writer of prologues in the language. No man was ever so well qualified to strike that just mean between respectfulness and authority which such addresses to the public require. His sound critical power and elevated feeling are well exemplified in the *Prologue spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre*; and there is true greatness of spirit in his Prologue to *Comus*, in which he claims the liberality of the audience for Milton's granddaughter as a tardy redress for the injustice shown by the nation to the genius of the poet himself. His admirable independence of character is perhaps even better seen in the Prologue to *A Word to the Wise*, a play which at its first exhibition was damned in consequence of political prejudices against the author, but was revived after his death. Nothing can be better than the dignity with which Johnson, in this address, while recognising the judicial authority of the audience, indirectly reproves them for their previous disregard of the laws of humanity by which all their verdicts ought to be determined.

W. J. COURTHOPE.

THALES' REASONS FOR LEAVING LONDON.

[From *London.*]

A transient calm the happy scenes bestow
And for a moment lull the sense of woe.
At length awaking, with contemptuous frown
Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town.
Since worth, he cries, in these degenerate days
Wants even the cheap reward of empty praise;
In those cursed walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science toils in vain;
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,
And every moment leaves my little less;
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,
And life still vigorous revels in my veins;
Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier place,
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
Some peaceful vale with Nature's paintings gay;
Where once the harass'd Briton found repose,
And safe in poverty defied his foes;
Some secret cell, ye powers indulgent give,
Let —— live here, for ——— has learned to live.
Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away
And plead for pirates in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poisoned youth
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.

* * * * * *

Ah! what avails it that, from slavery far,
I drew the breath of life in English air,
Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lisp the tale of Henry's victories;
If the gulled conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery prevails when arms are vain?

* * * * * *

By numbers here from shame or censure free,
All crimes are safe but hated poverty.
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse.
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak
Wakes from his dream and labours for a joke;
With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze
And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
Of all the griefs that harass the distressed,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
Has Heaven reserv'd in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste or undiscovered shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaimed by Spain?
Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore
And bear oppression's insolence no more.
This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
Slow rises worth by poverty depressed;
But here more slow where all are slaves to gold,
Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold,
Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implored,
The groom retails the favours of his lord.

THE RISE AND FALL OF WOLSEY.

[From *The Vanity of Human Wishes.*]

In full-flown dignity see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turned by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows:
Still to new heights his restless wishes tower,
Claim leads to claim and power advances power;
Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,
And rights submitted left him none to seize:

At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye,
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly;
Now drops at once the pride of awful state,
The golden canopy, the glittering plate,
The regal palace, the luxurious board,
The liveried army, and the menial lord.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
Grief aids disease, remembered folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.
Speak thou whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
Shall Wolsey's wealth with Wolsey's end be thine?
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
The wisest Justice on the banks of Trent?
For, why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
On weak foundations raise the enormous weight?
Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin to the gulfs below?

THE TRUE OBJECTS OF DESIRE.

[From *The Vanity of Human Wishes.*]

Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike, alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Inquirer, cease; petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.
Safe in his power whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer;

Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
Yet, when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants who grants the power to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE DRURY LANE THEATRE. 1747.

When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose:
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain:
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed
And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method and invent by rule;
His studious patience and laborious art,
By regular approach assailed the heart:
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,
For those who durst not censure scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the general doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wished for Jonson's art or Shakespeare's flame;

Themselves they studied, as they felt they writ;
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetic friend;
They pleased their age and did not aim to mend.
Yet bards like these aspired to lasting praise,
And proudly hoped to pimp in future days.
Their cause was general, their supports were strong,
Their slaves were willing and their reign was long,
Till Shame regained the post that Sense betrayed,
And Virtue called Oblivion to her aid.

Then crushed by rules, and weakened as refined,
For years the power of Tragedy declined:
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roared, whilst Passion slept.
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remained though Nature fled.
But forced at length her ancient reign to quit,
She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit;
Exulting Folly hailed the joyful day,
And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,
And mark the future periods of the Stage?
Perhaps if skill could distant times explore,
New Behns, new Durfeys yet remain in store;
Perhaps, where Lear has raved, and Hamlet died,
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride:
Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance?)
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

Hard is his lot that, here by Fortune plac'd,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
With ev'ry meteor of caprice must play,
And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day.
Ah! let not Censure term our fate our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice;
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;

'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense;
To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
For useful mirth and salutary woe;
Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

PROLOGUE TO THE COMEDY OF A WORD TO THE WISE.

This night presents a play which public rage,
Or right, or wrong, once hooted from the stage,
From zeal or malice now no more we dread,
For English vengeance wars not with the dead.
A generous foe regards with pitying eye
The man whom fate has laid where all must lie.
To wit reviving from its author's dust
Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just.
For no renewed hostilities invade
Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade.
Let one great payment every claim appease,
And him, who cannot hurt, allow to please,
To please by scenes unconscious of offence,
By harmless merriment, or useful sense,
Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
Approve it only—'tis too late to praise.
If want of skill or want of care appear,
Forbear to hiss—the poet cannot hear.
By all like him must praise and blame be found
At best a fleeting gleam, or empty sound.
Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,
When liberal pity dignified delight;
When pleasure fir'd her torch at virtue's flame,
And mirth was bounty with an humbler name.

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

[JOHN WESLEY, founder of 'the people called Methodists,' was the second son of Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth. He was born June 17, 1703. Educated at the Charterhouse and Oxford, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College in 1726, and there with some brief intervals remained till 1735, when having been ordained by Potter, then Bishop of Oxford, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, he laid the first foundations of the society which, from the rigid and almost ascetic rules adopted by its members, was called 'Methodists.'

In 1735 he went to Georgia, at the inducement of General Oglethorpe, governor of that colony, to preach to the Indians. This mission, for personal reasons, was a comparative failure. He returned to England in 1738, and there found that his former friend and disciple, George Whitefield, had embarked on the course of itinerant preaching, in which John Wesley, though with considerable difference of character and opinions, joined him —and this from henceforth became the purpose of his life. A career of incessant activity, in which preaching, writing, and organising played almost equal parts, occupied the remainder of his long career, which closed on March 2, 1791. He had, as Matthew Arnold expresses it, 'a genius for godliness,' and he united with it a breadth of sympathy and a soundness of judgment which, although occasionally betrayed into eccentricity, gave him a conspicuous place amongst the teachers of the eighteenth century. His life is best told, in a literary point of view, by Southey, and with the utmost detail of admiring yet truthful partisanship, by Dr. Tyerman.

CHARLES WESLEY, John's younger brother, was born Oct. 18, 1708. He was educated at Westminster School, and Christ Church, Oxford, and shared his brother's career in Oxford and in Georgia. He was more of a scholar and poet than of a preacher, and his connexion with the Church of England was exposed to a less severe strain than that of John. He died in 1788.]

It was a fine conception which prompted John Wesley to the arduous task of creating for his followers not merely an ecclesiastical

society, a code of laws, and a rule of life, but also a poetical literature which should fulfil their religious aspirations. The thought was no doubt inspired by two motives, — one expressed tersely by a famous Scottish statesman, the other by himself. Fletcher of Saltoun is reported to have said, 'Give others the making of a nation's laws, if only you give to me the making of a nation's ballads'; and John Wesley, from another point of view, added to this sense of the importance of popular poetry the feeling that it ought to be rescued from the exclusive possession of the world,—'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?'

The poetical works of John and Charles Wesley extend through ten volumes, edited lately with scrupulous care by Dr. G. Osborn. Such a demand as the Wesleys thus imposed on their own powers was too extensive even for a great poet to have met; but in this case the difficulty was aggravated partly by the nature of the subject, partly by their own deficiencies. The question why poetry, as applied to sacred subjects, has not had a greater success, has been often debated. A distinguished critic of our times, in his professorial chair, is reported one day to have held out in one hand 'The Golden Treasury of English Lyrics,' collected by Francis Palgrave, and in the other 'The Book of Praise,' collected from all English hymnody by Lord Selborne, and to have asked, 'Why is it that the Golden Treasury contains almost nothing that is bad, and why is it that the Book of Praise contains almost nothing that is good?' The complaint does not apply exclusively to the hymns of Protestant Churches. Dean Milman, in his *Latin Christianity*, has observed that the fame of the Latin hymns of the Mediæval Church rests chiefly on six or seven well-known examples. Take away the Dies Iræ, the Veni Sanctus Spiritus, the Stabat Mater Dolorosa, the Pange Lingua Gloriosa, the Lauda Sion Salvatorem,—and there remains very little that from a literary point of view deserves any attention. In the numerous hymns which have lately been translated into English from the Latin in Lord Bute's edition of the Roman Breviary, it is observable that whilst in those which are rendered into English by Cardinal Newman there is a distinct poetical glow and artistic finish, all the rest are couched in the uniform pedestrian style which is unfortunately familiar to English Churchmen in the vast mass of the verses contained in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.' It is the English poet of the nineteenth century not the Latin hymnodists of the

fourteenth or fifteenth that have furnished whatever there is of poetical in the collection. Three reasons may be given for this comparative failure, inherent in the nature of the subject.

The first is, that the moment poetry is made a vehicle of theological argument it becomes essentially prosaic, as much, or almost as much, as if it were employed for arguments on political or philosophical problems. This accounts for the repulsive aspect worn by that vast number of the Wesleyan hymns which were written to set forth their peculiar and complex system of predestination, assurance, and substitution.

The second reason is, that the very greatness of the words which either from biblical or ecclesiastical usage have been consecrated to the sublime thoughts of religion, misleads the writer into the belief that they are of themselves sufficient to carry on the poetic afflatus. The consequence has been that, whether in Latin or in English, the writers of hymns have been tempted to ring the changes on sacred phrases without imparting to them the touch of their own native sentiment or genius; and consequently that a large majority of hymns exemplify almost as much as the watch-words of political or ecclesiastical party, although in a loftier region, the force of the expression of St. Paul, 'a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.'

The third cause is the temptation which biblical metaphors have afforded of pursuing into detail, and especially into anatomical detail, expressions derived from the physical structure of the human frame. Of all the forms of devotion which in the Roman Catholic Church have taken possession of devout minds, the most unattractive, the most prosaic, because the most surgical, is the devotion which fastens itself on pictures and representations of the Sacred Heart. Such is the temptation which the Wesleyan hymns have too much followed in their luxuriance of phraseology, like 'the dropping of the warm blood,' or like these lines from one of the poems of John Wesley:

> 'I felt my heart, and found a chillness cool
> Its purple channels in my frozen side,
> The spring was now become a standing pool,
> Deprived of motion, and its active tide.'

These difficulties, as we have said, are almost inherent in the nature of the subject; but there are others which arise from the

deficiencies of the author. The general interest in theology, and the yet more general interest in religious feeling, have enlisted in the service of theology, both in prose and poetry, a larger number of inferior writers than will be found either in philosophy or history or science. It is not every one who believes himself equal to a treatise on the stars, or the history of the English nation; but there are very few who do not think themselves equal to treating the truths which concern us all so deeply as those which are involved whether in the essence or in the circumstantials of religion. Accordingly, whilst the Mediaeval Church produced only one or possibly two great poets, there was no restraint on the number of commonplace minds who thought themselves competent to attempt those monastic doggerel rhymes which fill the larger part of the mediaeval hymnology. So also has it been in the Protestant Churches. Men who had hardly a particle of poetic fire in their souls, have not scrupled to produce any number of hymns or psalms on these permitted themes. Amongst such John Wesley is conspicuous. Of all the characteristics of that wonderful mind, none is more remarkable than his downright, plain-spoken, matter-of-fact mode of facing all the great problems which presented themselves to him. For lucidity of expression he almost rivals Paley; for energy he mounts to the level of Warburton or Horsley. But in the prosaic century with which his life was coextensive he was almost the least qualified to produce a substantial addition to its poetry. In the ten volumes of which we have spoken it is sufficient to take at random some few of the passages in which he has endeavoured to clothe his sentiments in verse, in order to appreciate on how low a step he stood in the school of the Muses.

'The smoke of the infernal cave,
Which half the Christian world o'erspread,
Disperse, Thou heavenly Light, and save
The souls by that impostor led,
That Arab-thief, as Satan bold,
Who quite destroy'd Thine Asian fold.'

'With pious Jones and Royal Charles may I
A martyr for the Church of England die!'

'At this most alarming crisis,
Shall we not from sin awake,
While the great Jehovah rises,
Terribly the earth to shake?'

Nevertheless there are two sources of inspiration from which hymn-writers in general and John Wesley in particular have derived a fire which makes it impossible to overlook the claims of the Wesleyan hymnology to be ranked as part of our national literature. First, however prosaic might be the soul of John Wesley himself, he had sufficient appreciation of the grandeur of the gift in others to appropriate it in some degree for his purposes. Such are some beautiful passages adopted or adapted from Gambold the Moravian and from George Herbert. But yet more, Charles Wesley supplied in a large degree the deficiencies of his brother John. He doubtless also was led away by those temptations of hymn-writers to which we have before referred. What John Wesley said of Charles Wesley's Hymns on the Nativity might well have been extended to many dozens, 'Omit one or two of them and I will thank you. They are namby-pambical.' But Charles nevertheless had within him a poetic fervour, perhaps a scholar-like polish, which his brother wanted. These gifts showed themselves in the closer tenacity with which he clung to the Church of his fathers, and also gave to his hymns a literary character which redeems many of them from the pedestrian and argumentative style which disfigures so large a part of his own and his brother's poems. Secondly, there is a redeeming quality in the subjects themselves round which hymns have clustered: although it is true that polemics and over-strained metaphors and sounding words are dangerous pitfalls, yet when a genuine religious soul strikes on one of the greater themes of religion, either touching the simpler emotions of the human heart or the more unquestionable doctrines of Christianity, is struck a spark which not unfrequently rises into true and lasting poetry. Such in the Roman Church were those few hymns to which we have called attention; and such in the Wesleyan hymns are those which we shall select in the following extracts.

Of these the two most important are two of Charles Wesley's hymns, the first on Wrestling Jacob, the second on Catholic Love. The hymn on Wrestling Jacob is not only a hymn, but a philosophical poem, disfigured indeed in parts by the anatomical allusions to the shrunk sinew, but filled on the whole with a depth and pathos which might well excite Watts to say that 'it was worth all the verses he himself had written,' and induce Montgomery to compare it to the action of a lyrical drama.

Of the Hymn on Catholic Love it is a curious and significant

fact that it is not contained in any ordinary hymn-book used either by the Wesleyan community or by the English Church. It is not to be found in Lord Selborne's *Book of Praise*. It was first published at the end of John Wesley's sermon on the Catholic Spirit, on 2 Kings x. 15, in 1755. Nevertheless it is not contained in the published edition of the three volumes where that sermon is printed 'with the last corrections of the author' (1849). It is only to be found, as far as we are aware, in the *Century of Methodism*, p. 175 (1839), and in vol. vi. 71 of *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*. Within the last year it has been republished from the last entry of the journal of Catherine Stanley, widow of Bishop Stanley (*Memoirs of Edward and Catherine Stanley*).

A. P. STANLEY.

CHARLES WESLEY.

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

Hark! how all the welkin rings
Glory to the King of kings![1]
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
Universal nature say,
Christ the Lord is born to-day!

Christ, by highest Heaven adored;
Christ, the Everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail, th' Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to appear,
Jesus, our Immanuel here!

Hail! the heavenly Prince of Peace!
Hail! the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home!
Rise, the Woman's conquering Seed,
Bruise in us the Serpent's head!

[1] These lines are now, with great advantage, always altered to
'Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.'

Now display Thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore,
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine!

Adam's likeness, Lord, efface;
Stamp Thy image in its place;
Second Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love!
Let us Thee, though lost, regain,
Thee, the Life, the Heavenly Man:
O! to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart!

EASTER HYMN.

Christ the Lord is risen to-day,
Sons of men and angels say:
Raise your joys and triumphs high,
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply.

Love's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won:
Lo! our Sun's eclipse is o'er;
Lo! He sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ hath burst the gates of hell!
Death in vain forbids His rise;
Christ hath opened Paradise!

Lives again our glorious King:
Where, O Death, is now thy sting?
Once He died, our souls to save:
Where thy victory, O Grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led,
Following our exalted Head;
Made like Him, like Him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

What though once we perished all,
Partners in our parents' fall?
Second life we all receive,
In our Heavenly Adam live.

Risen with Him, we upward move;
Still we seek the things above;
Still pursue, and kiss the Son
Seated on His Father's Throne.

Scarce on earth a thought bestow,
Dead to all we leave below;
Heav'n our aim, and loved abode,
Hid our life with Christ in God:

Hid, till Christ our Life appear
Glorious in His members here;
Join'd to Him, we then shall shine,
All immortal, all divine.

Hail the Lord of Earth and Heaven!
Praise to Thee by both be given!
Thee we greet triumphant now!
Hail, the Resurrection Thou!

King of glory, Soul of bliss!
Everlasting life is this,
Thee to know, Thy power to prove,
Thus to sing, and thus to love!

CHRIST, THE REFUGE OF THE SOUL.

Jesu, lover of my soul,
  Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
  While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
  Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide;
  O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
  Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
  Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on Thee is stay'd,
  All my help from Thee I bring:
Cover my defenceless head
  With the shadow of Thy wing!

Wilt Thou not regard my call?
  Wilt Thou not accept my prayer?
Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall!
  Lo! on Thee I cast my care!
Reach me out Thy gracious hand!
  While I of Thy strength receive,
Hoping against hope I stand,
  Dying, and behold I live!

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
  More than all in Thee I find:
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
  Heal the sick, and lead the blind!
Just and holy is Thy Name;
  I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am,
  Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
  Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
  Make and keep me pure within!
Thou of Life the Fountain art,
  Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart!
  Rise to all eternity!

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee;
Thou shalt my example be;
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild;
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art;
Give me Thy obedient heart!
Thou art pitiful and kind;
Let me have Thy loving mind!

Meek and lowly may I be;
Thou art all humility!
Let me to my betters bow;
Subject to Thy parents Thou.

Let me above all fulfil
God my heavenly Father's will;
Never His good Spirit grieve;
Only to His glory live!

Thou didst live to God alone;
Thou didst never seek Thine own;
Thou Thyself didst never please;
God was all Thy happiness.

Loving Jesu, gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art!
Live Thyself within my heart!

I shall then shew forth Thy praise;
Serve Thee all my happy days;
Then the world shall always see
Christ, the Holy Child, in me.

WRESTLING JACOB.

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,
  Whom still I hold, but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
  And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

I need not tell Thee who I am,
  My misery or sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name;
  Look on Thy hands, and read it there!
But Who, I ask Thee, Who art Thou?
Tell me Thy Name, and tell me now.

In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
  I never will unloose my hold;
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
  The secret of Thy love unfold.
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know.

Wilt Thou not yet to me reveal
  Thy new, unutterable Name?
Tell me, I still beseech Thee, tell:
  To know it now, resolved I am:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know.

'Tis all in vain to hold Thy tongue,
  Or touch the hollow of my thigh;
Though every sinew be unstrung,
  Out of my arms Thou shalt not fly:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know.

What though my shrinking flesh complain,
And murmur to contend so long?
I rise superior to my pain;
When I am weak, then I am strong:
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-Man prevail.

My strength is gone; my nature dies;
I sink beneath Thy weighty hand,
Faint to revive, and fall to rise;
I fall, and yet by faith I stand:
I stand, and will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
Be conquer'd by my instant prayer!
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me, if Thy Name is Love?

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! Thou diedst for me!
I hear Thy whisper in my heart!
The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Pure universal Love Thou art!
To me, to all, Thy bowels move;
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love!

My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face,
I see Thee face to face, and live:
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

I know Thee, Saviour, Who Thou art;
Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend!
Nor wilt Thou with the night depart,
But stay, and love me to the end!

Thy mercies never shall remove,
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love!

The Sun of Righteousness on me
Hath rose, with healing in His wings;
Withered my nature's strength, from Thee
My soul its life and succour brings;
My help is all laid up above;
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

Contented now upon my thigh
I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness, I
On Thee alone for strength depend;
Nor have I power from Thee to move;
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

Lame as I am, I take the prey,
Hell, earth, and sin, with ease o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
And as a bounding hart fly home!
Through all eternity to prove,
Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love!

CATHOLIC LOVE.

Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,
To Thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught, at last I fly,
With Thee, and Thine to live, and die.

Forth from the midst of Babel brought,
Parties and sects I cast behind;
Enlarged my heart, and free my thought,
Where'er the latent truth I find,
The latent truth with joy to own,
And bow to Jesu's name alone.

Redeem'd by Thine almighty grace,
I taste my glorious liberty,
With open arms the world embrace,
But cleave to those who cleave to Thee;
But only in Thy saints delight,
Who walk with God in purest white.

One with the little flock I rest,
The members sound who hold the Head;
The chosen few, with pardon blest,
And by the anointing Spirit led
Into the mind that was in Thee,
Into the depths of Deity.

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,
Who do my heavenly Father's will;
Who aim at perfect holiness,
And all Thy counsels to fulfil,
Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,
And love their God with all their heart.

For these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,
Unfeigned unbounded love I find,
And constant as the life of God;
Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,
As pure, as even, and as strong.

Joined to the hidden church unknown
In this sure bond of perfectness,
Obscurely safe, I dwell alone,
And glory in the uniting grace,
To me, to each believer given,
To all thy saints in earth and heaven.

JOHN WESLEY.

AN HYMN FOR SERIOUSNESS.

Thou God of glorious majesty,
To Thee against myself, to Thee
A worm of earth I cry,
An half-awakened child of man,
An heir of endless bliss or pain,
A sinner born to die.

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand
Secure, insensible:[1]
A point of life, a moment's space
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.

O God, mine inmost soul convert,
And deeply on my thoughtful heart
Eternal things impress,
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And tremble on the brink of fate,
And wake to righteousness.

Before me place in dread array
The pomp of that tremendous day,
When Thou with clouds shalt come
To judge the nations at Thy bar:
And tell me, Lord, shall I be there
To meet a joyful doom?

[1] Said to have been suggested by a rocky isthmus at the Land's End in Cornwall.

Be this my one great business here,
With serious industry, and fear,
  My future bliss to insure,
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
And suffer all Thy righteous will,
  And to the end endure.

Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,
Transported from the vale, to live
  And reign with Thee above,
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
And hope in full supreme delight,
  And everlasting love.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE.

[SHENSTONE was born at the Leasowes, near Hales Owen in 1714: he died at the same place in 1763. In 1737, while still at Pembroke College, Oxford, he published some miscellaneous poems anonymously. *The Judgment of Hercules* appeared in 1741, *The Schoolmistress* next year. His works, prose and verse, were published in 1764, the year after his death.]

Shenstone is our principal master of what may perhaps be called the artificial-natural style in poetry; and the somewhat lasting hold which some at least of his poems have taken on the popular ear is the best testimony that can be produced to his merit. It is very hard to shape any critical canons likely to pass muster nowadays, and yet capable of saving the bulk of his verse. But the first and second of his *Pastoral Ballads* always fix themselves in the memory of those who, possessing that faculty, are set in childhood to the not very grateful task of learning them; and on re-reading them years after, they do not wholly lose their charm, though the reader may be tempted rather to smile than to sympathise. *The Schoolmistress*, especially the charming passage here, as usually, given, has something of the same grace, so has the *Dying Kid*; while the poem on St. Valentine's Day would perhaps be the best of Shenstone's works but for some inexcusable negligences of expression which ten minutes study would have corrected. It is difficult to believe that Shenstone ever gave much study to his work, or that he possessed any critical faculty. His elegies, though not always devoid of music, are but dreary stuff, and his more ambitious poems still drearier. His attempts at the style of Prior and Gay are for the most part valueless. Yet when all this is discarded, 'My banks they are furnished with bees,' and a few other such things, obstinately recur to the memory and assert that their author after all was a poet. In the mixture of grace and pathos with a certain triviality, with much that is artificial, and with not a little that is downright foolish, Shenstone comes nearer to Goldsmith than to any other English author. His tenderness,

his knowledge of human nature, and his literary power, are of course far inferior to Goldsmith's, yet if inferior in degree he is nevertheless not wholly dissimilar in kind. The really affecting elegy on 'Jessy' is an instance of the genuine feeling which, in an age when such feeling was not common, he possessed; nor are other instances of the same kind hard to be found in him.

As concerns the formal part of poetry, his management of the anapaestic trimeter is unquestionably his chief merit. In the Spenserian stanza he is commendable, and dates fortunately prevent the charge that if *The Castle of Indolence* had not been written neither would *The Schoolmistress*. His anapaests are much more original. The metre is so incurably associated with sing-song and doggrel, that poems written in it are exposed to a heavy disadvantage, yet in the first two pastoral ballads at any rate this disadvantage is not much felt. Shenstone taught the metre to a greater poet than himself, Cowper, and these two between them have written almost everything that is worth reading in it, if we put avowed parody and burlesque out of the question. Perhaps the history of his gardening at the Leasowes has mixed itself up too thoroughly with Shenstone's work, and has soiled his harmless pastorals with memories of the tumble-down huts, the broken benches, the mouldy statues, and all the rest of the draggled finery which in our climate is associated more or less with this style of decoration and of which almost everybody has seen examples. But it really seems that he had, as his well-meaning French panegyrist asserted, 'a mind natural' even though the 'Arcadian greens rural' which he 'laid' must have smacked far less of nature than of art. 'The crook and the pipe and the kid,' of which Johnson speaks so contemptuously, are somehow or other less distasteful in Shenstone than in any other poet. For in the first place one cannot help remembering that the man did, as few men have done, try to turn his life in accordance with his verse, and Worcestershire (nominally Shropshire) into the likeness of the counterfeit Arcadia. Secondly there is an inoffensiveness about him which conciliates and disarms. He was not a great poet, perhaps indeed he was a very small one; but he was a poet somehow, and he wore his rue with a sufficient difference from other poets to deserve that his name should live long in the history of English verse.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

SUFFERING AND SYMPATHY.

[From *The Schoolmistress.*]

O ruthful scene! when from a nook obscure
His little sister doth his peril see:
All playful as she sate, she grows demure;
She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee,
She meditates a prayer to set him free:
Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny
(If gentle pardon could with dames agree)
To her sad grief that swells in either eye
And wrings her so that all for pity she could dye.

No longer can she now her shrieks command,
And hardly she forbears, through awful fear
To rushen forth, and with presumptuous hand
To stay harsh Justice in its mid career.
On thee she calls, on thee her parent dear!
(Ah! too remote to ward the shameful blow!)
She sees no kind domestic visage near,
And soon a flood of tears begins to flow
And gives a loose at last to unavailing woe.

But ah! what pen his piteous plight may trace?
Or what device his loud laments explain?
The form uncouth of his disguised face?
The pallid hue that dyes his looks amain?
The plenteous shower that does his cheek distain
When he in abject wise implores the dame,
Ne hopeth aught of sweet reprieve to gain,
Or when from high she levels well her aim
And through the thatch his cries, each falling stroke proclaim.

PASTORAL BALLAD.

Since Phyllis vouchsafed me a look,
I never once dreamt of my vine:
May I lose both my pipe and my crook,
If I knew of a kid that was mine!
I prized every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh;
And I grieve that I prized them no more.

But why do I languish in vain;
Why wander thus pensively here?
Oh! why did I come from the plain
Where I fed on the smiles of my dear?
They tell me, my favourite maid,
The pride of that valley, is flown;
Alas, where with her I have strayed
I could wander with pleasure, alone.

When forced the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt at my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be so—
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

The pilgrim that journeys all day
To visit some far distant shrine,
If he bear but a relique away
Is happy, nor heard to repine.
Thus widely removed from the fair
Where my vows, my devotion, I owe,
Soft Hope is the relique I bear
And my solace wherever I go.

THE DYING KID.

A tear bedews my Delia's eye,
To think yon playful kid must die;
From crystal spring and flowery mead
Must, in his prime of life, recede.

Erewhile in sportive circles round
She saw him wheel, and frisk, and bound;
From rock to rock pursue his way,
And on the fearful margin play.

Pleased on his various freaks to dwell
She saw him climb my rustic cell;
Then eye my lawns with verdure bright,
And seem all ravished at the sight.

She tells with what delight he stood
To trace his features in the flood;
Then skipped aloof with quaint amaze
And then drew near again to gaze.

She tells me how with eager speed
He flew to hear my vocal reed;
And how with critic face profound,
And steadfast ear devoured the sound.

His every frolic light as air
Deserves the gentle Delia's care;
And tears bedew her tender eye,
To think the playful kid must die.—

But knows my Delia, timely wise,
How soon this blameless era flies?
While violence and craft succeed
Unfair design and ruthless deed!

Soon would the vine his wounds deplore,
And yield her purple gifts no more;
Oh soon, erased from every grove
Were Delia's name, and Strephon's love.

No more those bowers might Strephon see,
Where first he fondly gazed on thee;
No more those beds of flowerets find
Which for thy charming brows he twined.

Each wayward passion soon would tear
His bosom, now so void of care.
And when they left his ebbing vein
What but insipid age remain?

Then mourn not the decrees of Fate
That gave his life so short a date;
And I will join thy tenderest sighs
To think that youth so swiftly flies.

MUCH TASTE AND SMALL ESTATE.

[From *The Progress of Taste.*]

See yonder hill, so green, so round,
Its brow with ambient beeches crowned!
'Twould well become thy gentle care
To raise a dome to Venus there:
Pleas'd would the nymphs thy zeal survey;
And Venus, in their arms, repay.
'Twas such a shade, and such a nook
In such a vale, near such a brook,
From such a rocky fragment springing,
That famed Apollo chose, to sing in.
There let an altar wrought with art
Engage thy tuneful patron's heart,
How charming there to muse and warble
Beneath his bust of breathing marble!
With laurel wreath and mimic lyre
That crown a poet's vast desire.

Then, near it, scoop the vaulted cell
Where Music's charming maids may dwell;
Prone to indulge thy tender passion,
And make thee many an assignation.
Deep in the grove's obscure retreat
Be placed Minerva's sacred seat;
There let her awful turrets rise
(For Wisdom flies from vulgar eyes:)
There her calm dictates shalt thou hear
Distinctly strike thy listening ear:
And who would shun the pleasing labour
To have Minerva for his neighbour?

* * * * *

But did the Muses haunt his cell?
Or in his dome did Venus dwell?
Did Pallas in his counsels share?
The Delian god reward his prayer?
Or did his zeal engage the fair?
When all the structures shone complete
Not much convenient, wondrous neat;
Adorned with gilding, painting, planting,
And the fair guests alone were wanting.
Ah me! ('twas Damon's own confession)
Came Poverty and took possession.

WILLIAM COLLINS.

[WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester on Christmas Day, 1721. It is believed that he went for a time to the Prebendal School of that city; and in 1733 he entered Winchester College, then under Dr. Burton. Before he left school he had written the *Persian Eclogues* (which in their later editions are called *Oriental Eclogues*); and he had printed a so-called sonnet in the Gentleman's Magazine. In 1740 he entered as commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, there being no vacancy at New College; and next year he obtained a demyship at Magdalen. The *Persian Eclogues* were published in 1742; next year came the *Epistle to Sir T. Hanmer*; and in 1744 he seems to have left Oxford for London, where he found a true friend in Johnson. His *Odes*, which he once meant to have published jointly with those of his old schoolfellow Joseph Warton, appeared alone in 1747. After this he went to live at Richmond, where he saw much of Thomson, Armstrong, and others of that company. In 1749 he wrote the *Ode on the death of Thomson*, and the *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*. Soon afterwards he was attacked by the brain-disease from which, with certain intervals of partial recovery, he suffered for the rest of his life. His last years were spent at Chichester under the care of his sister Mrs. Sempill. He died in 1759. It should be mentioned that the textual variations in the different editions of Collins' poems are very numerous.]

In the reaction against that sweeping violence of indiscriminative depreciation with which the school of poets and critics usually registered as Wordsworthian, but actually founded at midnight by William Blake and fortified at sunrise by William Wordsworth, was wont for some half a century to overwhelm the poetry and criticism of the century preceding, the name which of all properly belonging to that period has incomparably the most valid and solid claim to the especial and essential praise that denotes a poet from among other men of genius has hardly yet taken by general consent the place which is unquestionably its due. Even in his own age it was the fatally foolish and uncritical fashion to couple the name of Collins with that of Gray, as though they were poets

of the same order or kind. As an elegiac poet, Gray holds for all ages to come his unassailable and sovereign station; as a lyric poet, he is simply unworthy to sit at the feet of Collins. Whether it may not be a greater thing than ever was done by the greater lyrist, to have written a poem of such high perfection and such universal appeal to the tenderest and the noblest depths of human feeling as Gray's *Elegy*, is of course another and a wholly irrelevant question. But it is not a question which admits of debate at all, among men qualified to speak on such matters, that as a lyric poet Gray was not worthy to unloose the latchets of his shoes. The fanfaronade and falsetto which impair the always rhetorically elaborate and sometimes genuinely sonorous notes of Gray were all but impossible to the finer touch of his precursor. In the little book of odes which dropped, a still-born immortal, from the press, and was finally burnt up even to the last procurable copy by the hands of its author in a fever-fit of angry despair, there was hardly a single false note; and there were not many less than sweet or strong. There was, above all things, a purity of music, a clarity of style, to which I know of no parallel in English verse from the death of Andrew Marvell to the birth of William Blake. Here, in the twilight which followed on the splendid sunset of Pope, was at last a poet who was content to sing out what he had in him—to sing and not to say, without a glimpse of wit or a flash of eloquence These two valuable and admirable superfluities had for generations been regarded, not as fortuitous accessories, but as indispensable requisites, to poetic genius. Nothing so clearly shows how much finer a sense of poetry than is usually attributed to him lay radically latent, when unobscured by theories or prepossessions, in the deliberate judgment of Dr. Johnson, as his recognition in Collins of the eminent and exquisite faculty which he rightly refused to recognise in Gray. The strong-lunged and heavy-handed preacher of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* had an ear fine enough at least to distinguish the born lyric poet from him who had been made one, though self-made. His recognition of Collins had been ready and generous in his youth; it was faithful and consistent in his old age. And in both seasons he stood then, almost as he stands now, alone in the insight of his perception and the courage of his loyalty. For it needed some courage as well as some openness of mind and sureness of instinct to acknowledge as well as to appreciate a quality of merit far more alien than was the quality of Gray's best work from the merit of Pope and his scholars; among

whose ranks the critic himself stood so honourably high as an ethic poet.

Strange as the paradox may sound, it must yet once again be repeated, that the first indispensable faculty of a singer is ability to sing. There was but one man in the time of Collins who had in him a note of pure lyric song, a pulse of inborn music irresistible and indubitable; and that he was that man he could not open his lips without giving positive and instant proof. Poetry was his by birthright: to the very ablest of his compeers it was never more than a christening gift. The Muse gave birth to Collins; she did but give suck to Gray. In Goldsmith's verse, again, there is a priceless and adorable power of sweet human emotion which lay for the most part quite out of our poet's way. His range of flight was perhaps the narrowest but assuredly the highest of his generation. He could not be taught singing like a finch: but he struck straight upward for the sun like a lark. Again, he had an incomparable and infallible eye for landscape; a purity, fidelity, and simple-seeming subtlety of tone, unapproached until the more fiery but not more luminous advent of Burns. Among all English poets he has, it seems to me, the closest affinity to our great contemporary school of French landscape-painters. Corot on canvas might have signed his *Ode to Evening*; Millet might have given us some of his graver studies, and left them as he did no whit the less sweet for their softly austere and simply tender gravity. His magnificent Highland ode, so villainously defaced after his death by the most impudent interpolations on record, has much in it of Millais, and something also of Courbet when the simple genius of that star-crossed idoloclast was content with such noble and faithful use of freedom as he displayed in a picture of upland fell and tarnside copse in the curving hollow of a moor, which was once exhibited in London. Here and here only, for vigour of virile grasp and reach of possessive eyesight, Burns himself was forestalled if not excelled. Here too is a visible power, duly and tenderly subdued into subordination, of command upon human emotion and homely sympathy, less intimate than in Burns and less profound than in Wordsworth, but none the less actual and vivid, which we hardly find elsewhere in this perfect painter of still life or starlit vision. In his artistic tenderness of conscience and scrupulous self-mastery of hand he so closely resembles Mr. Tennyson as once at least to provoke the same doubtful sense of jealous and admiring demur. A notable instance of this refined

excess in conscience is the exquisite recast of the originally exquisite second line in the *Ode to Evening*. Such things will make us now and then misdoubt whether some subtle and noble scruple may not in this case also have robbed us of jewels only less costly than two stanzas excised from the text of *The Miller's Daughter*, full of the colour and breath and odour of a moon-charmed April twilight; if not even of some rapture as rare and precious as we are now forbidden to renew by repossession of the far and fairy light, the clear aerial melody, of the once revealed and long recluse *Hesperides*. Yet I think and trust he would hardly have left so lovely and loveworthy a child of his early genius to fade perforce into compelled and unnatural forgetfulness, while the brother poem, beside which this had appeared as a twin-born sister, was so gloriously refreshed with new blood and transfigured into riper beauty of more wide and deep delight, as were the revived and reinvigorated *Lotos-Eaters*.

But Collins may claim of us a yet loftier note of praise than this: and it is one which could hardly have been sounded by the 'capacious mouth' of his good and true friend Johnson. He was the first English poet, after Milton's voice 'for the dwellers upon earth' fell silent, to blow again the clarion of republican faith and freedom: to reannounce with the passion of a lyric and heroic rapture the divine right and the godlike duty of tyrannicide. He too, in the high-toned phrase of Mr. Browning, like Milton, Burns, and Shelley, 'was with us; they watch from their graves.' And on this side of the summit of fair fame he stands loftily alone between the sunset of Milton and the sunrise of Landor. I hardly think there are much nobler verses in all English than those in which the new Alcæus, 'fancy-blest' indeed, has sung the myrtle-hidden sword that rid the sunlight of the first Pisistratid. For all her evil report among men on the score of passive obedience and regiculture, Oxford has now and then turned out—in a double sense, we might say, with reference to Shelley—sons who have loved the old cause as well as any reared by the nursing mother of Milton.

There is yet another memorable bond of communion which connects the fame of Collins with that of Milton in the past and with that of Shelley in the future. Between the elegy on Edward King and the elegy on John Keats came the far humbler and softer note, yet full of sweet native purity and sincerity, by which Collins set the seal of a gentle consecration on the grave of the 'Druid'

Thomson; a note to be as gently echoed by Wordsworth in commemoration of his own sweeter song and sadder end.

The mention of Wordsworth's name reminds me of another but a casual coincidence between the fortunes of that great poet's work and of this his lyric and elegiac predecessor's. In both cases the generally accepted masterpiece of their lyric labour seems to me by no means the poem genuinely acceptable as such. Mr. Arnold, with the helpful loyalty and sound discretion of a wise disciple, has noted as much in the case of Wordsworth; it is no less demonstrable a truth in the case of Collins. As surely as, for instance, the *Ode to Duty* is a work of greater perfection and more perfect greatness than that *On the Intimations of Immortality*, the *Ode on the Passions* is a work of less equal sustentation and purity of excellence than, for example, is the *Ode to Evening*. Yet of course its grace and vigour, its vivid and pliant dexterity of touch, are worthy of all their long inheritance of praise; and altogether it holds out admirably well to the happy and harmonious end; whereas the very *Ode to Liberty*, after an overture worthy of Milton's or of Handel's *Agonistes*, a prelude that peals as from beneath the triumphal hand of the thunder-bearer, steadily subsides through many noble but ever less and less noble verses, towards a final couplet showing not so much the flatness of failure as the prostration of collapse.

Living both in an age and after an age of critical poetry, Collins, always alien alike from the better and from the worse influences of his day, has shown at least as plentiful a lack of any slightest critical instinct or training as ever did any poet on record, in his epistle to Hanmer on that worthy knight's 'inqualifiable' edition of Shakespeare. But his couplets, though incomparably inferior to Gray's, are generally spirited and competent as well as fluent and smooth.

The direct sincerity and purity of their positive and straightforward inspiration will always keep his poems fresh and sweet to the senses of all men. He was a solitary song-bird among many more or less excellent pipers and pianists. He could put more spirit of colour into a single stroke, more breath of music into a single note, than could all the rest of his generation into all the labours of their lives. And the sweet name and the lucid memory of his genius could only pass away with all relics and all records of lyric poetry in England.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Ode to Liberty.

Strophe.

Who shall awake the Spartan fife,
And call in solemn sounds to life,
The youths, whose locks divinely spreading,
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
Applauding freedom loved of old to view?
What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
At wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing,
(What place so fit to seal a deed renowned?)
Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing,
It leaped in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound!
O goddess, in that feeling hour,
When most its sounds would court thy ears,
Let not my shell's misguided power
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.
No, freedom, no, I will not tell
How Rome, before thy weeping face,
With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,
Pushed by a wild and artless race
From off its wide ambitious base,
When time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of strength and grace,
With many a rude repeated stroke,
And many a barbarous yell, to thousand fragments broke.

Epode.

Yet, even where'er the least appeared,
The admiring world thy hand revered;
Still 'midst the scattered states around,
Some remnants of her strength were found;

They saw, by what escaped the storm,
How wondrous rose her perfect form;
How in the great, the laboured whole,
Each mighty master poured his soul!
For sunny Florence, seat of art,
Beneath her vines preserved a part,
Till they, whom science loved to name,[1]
(O who could fear it?) quenched her flame.
And lo, an humbler relic laid
In jealous Pisa's olive shade!
See small Marino joins the theme,
Though least, not last in thy esteem:
Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings
To those, whose merchant sons were kings;
To him, who, decked with pearly pride,
In Adria weds his green-haired bride;
Hail, port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure:
Nor e'er her former pride relate,
To sad Liguria's bleeding state.
Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak:
(Where, when the favoured of thy choice,
The daring archer heard thy voice;
Forth from his eyrie roused in dread,
The ravening eagle northward fled;)
Or dwell in willowed meads more near,
With those to whom thy stork is dear:
Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
Whose crown a British queen refused!
The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,
One holier name alone remains;
The perfect spell shall then avail,
Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail!

Antistrophe.

Beyond the measure vast of thought,
The works the wizard time has wrought!

[1] The Medici.

The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,
Saw Britain linked to his now adverse strand.
No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,
He passed with unwet feet through all our land.
To the blown Baltic then, they say,
The wild waves found another way,
Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding;
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise,
A wide wild storm even nature's self confounding,
Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise.
This pillared earth so firm and wide,
By winds and inward labours torn,
In thunders dread was pushed aside,
And down the shouldering billows borne.
And see, like gems, her laughing train,
The little isles on every side,
Mona, once hid from those who search the main,
Where thousand elfin shapes abide,
And Wight who checks the westering tide,
For thee consenting heaven has each bestowed,
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride:
To thee this blest divorce she owed,
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy last abode.

Second Epode.

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,
'Midst the green navel of our isle,
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing goddess, stood!
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet:
Though now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls, to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressèd Dane,
Or Roman's self, o'erturned the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.

Yet still, if truth those beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light-embroidered sky,
Amidst the bright pavilioned plains,
The beauteous model still remains.
There, happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string.
How may the poet now unfold
What never tongue or numbers told?
How learn, delighted and amazed,
What hands unknown that fabric raised?
Even now before his favoured eyes,
In Gothic pride, it seems to rise!
Yet Græcia's graceful orders join,
Majestic through the mixed design:
The secret builder knew to choose
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues;
Whate'er heaven's purer mould contains,
When nearer suns emblaze its veins;
There on the walls the patriot's sight
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, graved with some prophetic rage,
Read Albion's fame through every age.
Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,
That near her inmost altar stand!
Now soothe her to her blissful train
Blithe concord's social form to gain;
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even anger's bloodshot eyes in sleep;
Before whose breathing bosom's balm
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm:
Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore;

Our youths, enamoured of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair,
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, lady, thou shalt rule the west!

ODE.

[Written in the beginning of the year 1746.]

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blessed!
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

ODE TO EVENING.

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipped health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favourite name!

THE PASSIONS.

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Thronged around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the muse's painting:
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatched her instruments of sound;
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each (for madness ruled the hour)
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear, his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed; his eyes on fire,
In lightnings owned his secret stings:
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure?
Still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on Echo still, through all the song;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair

And longer had she sung;—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose:
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder, down;
And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!
And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting from his head.
Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed;
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed;
And now it courted love, now raving called on hate

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sat retired;
And, from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
  And, dashing soft from rocks around,
  Bubbling runnels joined the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,
  Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
    Round an holy calm diffusing,
    Love of peace, and lonely musing
  In hollow murmurs died away.
But O! how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
  Her bow across her shoulder flung,
  Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
  The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known!
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen,
  Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
  Peeping from forth their alleys green:
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
  And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.
Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
  First to the lively pipe his hand addrest;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
  Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best;
They would have thought who heard the strain
  They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,
  Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,
  Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:
  Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;
  And he, amidst his frolic play,
  As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid!
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside
As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learned an all-commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard;
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;
E'en all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—
O bid our vain endeavours cease;
Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson.[1]

In yonder grave a druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.

In yon deep bed of whispering reeds
His airy harp shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love through life the soothing shade.

[1] The scene of the following stanzas is supposed to lie on the Thames, near Richmond.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And, while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in pity's ear
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell.

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar,
To bid his gentle spirit rest!

And oft, as ease and health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,
The friend shall view yon whitening spire[1],
And 'mid the varied landscape weep.

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,
Ah! what will every dirge avail;
Or tears, which love and pity shed,
That mourn beneath the gliding sail?

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near?
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
And joy desert the blooming year.

But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crowned sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side,
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

And see—the fairy valleys fade;
Dun night has veiled the solemn view!
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek nature's child, again adieu!

The genial meads, assigned to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom;
Their hinds and shepherd-girls shall dress,
With simple hands, thy rural tomb.

[1] Richmond Church, in which Thomson was buried.

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes:
O vales and wild woods! shall he say,
In yonder grave your druid lies!

AN ODE ON THE POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND [1].

Inscribed to Mr. Home, Author of *Douglas*

I.

Home, thou return'st from Thames, whose naiads long
Have seen thee lingering with a fond delay
'Mid those soft friends, whose hearts, some future day,
Shall melt, perhaps, to hear thy tragic song.
Go, not unmindful of that cordial youth [2]
Whom, long endeared, thou leav'st by Lavant's side;
Together let us wish him lasting truth,
And joy untainted with his destined bride.
Go! nor regardless, while these numbers boast
My short-lived bliss, forget my social name;
But think far off how, on the southern coast,
I met thy friendship with an equal flame!
Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, whose every vale
Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand:
To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail;
Thou need'st but take thy pencil to thy hand,
And paint what all believe who own thy genial land.

[1] The text here given is that in which this ode was first printed, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1780. Of the passages within brackets some were supplied in that version, to fill up lacunæ, by Dr. Carlyle, and some are from the later editions.

[2] Mr. John Barrow, who introduced Home to Collins.

II.

There must thou wake perforce thy Doric quill;
'Tis Fancy's land to which thou set'st thy feet;
Where still, 'tis said, the fairy people meet,
Beneath each birken shade, on mead or hill.
There, each trim lass that skims the milky store
To the swart tribes their creamy bowl allots;
By night they sip it round the cottage door,
While airy minstrels warble jocund notes.
There every herd, by sad experience, knows
How, winged with fate, their elf-shot arrows fly,
When the sick ewe her summer food forgoes,
Or, stretched on earth, the heart-smit heifers lie.
Such airy beings awe the untutored swain:
Nor thou, though learned, his homelier thoughts neglect;
Let thy sweet muse the rural faith sustain;
These are the themes of simple, sure effect,
That add new conquests to her boundless reign,
And fill, with double force, her heart-commanding strain.

III.

Ev'n yet preserved, how often may'st thou hear,
Where to the pole the Boreal mountains run,
Taught by the father to his listening son
Strange lays, whose power had charmed a Spenser's ear.
At every pause, before thy mind possest,
Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,
With uncouth lyres, in many-coloured vest,
Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crowned:
Whether thou bid'st the well-taught hind repeat
The choral dirge that mourns some chieftain brave,
When every shrieking maid her bosom beat,
And strewed with choicest herbs his scented grave;
Or whether, sitting in the shepherd's shiel[1],
Thou hear'st some sounding tale of war's alarms;
When at the bugle's call, with fire and steel,
The sturdy clans poured forth their bony swarms,
And hostile brothers met to prove each other's arms

[1] A hut among the mountains.

IV.

'Tis thine to sing, how, framing hideous spells,
In Sky's lone isle, the gifted wizard seer,
Lodged in the wintry cave with [fate's fell spear [1],]
Or in the depth of Uist's dark forest dwells:
How they, whose sight such dreary dreams engross,
With their own vision oft astonished droop,
When, o'er the watery strath, or quaggy moss,
They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop.
Or, if in sports, or on the festive green,
Their [piercing] glance some fated youth descry,
Who now, perhaps, in lusty vigour seen,
And rosy health, shall soon lamented die.
For them the viewless forms of air obey;
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair:
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless, oft like moody madness, stare
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.

[Stanza v, and half of stanza vi, are missing in the MS.]

What though far off, from some dark dell espied,
His glimmering mazes cheer the excursive sight,
Yet turn, ye wanderers, turn your steps aside,
Nor trust the guidance of that faithless light;
For watchful, lurking, 'mid the unrustling reed,
At those mirk hours the wily monster lies,
And listens oft to hear the passing steed,
And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes,
If chance his savage wrath may some weak wretch surprise.

VII.

Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest indeed!
Whom late bewildered in the dank, dark fen,
Far from his flocks and smoking hamlet then!
To that sad spot [his wayward fate shall lead:]
On him, enraged, the fiend in angry mood,
Shall never look with pity's kind concern,
But instant, furious, raise the whelming flood
O'er its drowned banks, forbidding all return.

[1] Inserted from the later editions.

Or, if he meditate his wished escape,
To some dim hill, that seems uprising near,
To his faint eye the grim and grisly shape,
In all its terrors clad, shall wild appear.
Meantime the watery surge shall round him rise,
Poured sudden forth from every swelling source.
What now remains but tears and hopeless sighs?
His fear-shook limbs have lost their youthly force,
And down the waves he floats, a pale and breathless corse.

VIII.

For him in vain his anxious wife shall wait,
Or wander forth to meet him on his way;
For him in vain at to-fall of the day,
His babes shall linger at the unclosing gate.
Ah, ne'er shall he return! Alone, if night
Her travelled limbs in broken slumbers steep,
With drooping willows drest, his mournful sprite
Shall visit sad, perchance, her silent sleep:
Then he, perhaps, with moist and watery hand,
Shall fondly seem to press her shuddering cheek,
And with his blue-swoln face before her stand,
And, shivering cold, these piteous accents speak:
'Pursue, dear wife, thy daily toils pursue,
At dawn or dusk, industrious as before;
Nor e'er of me one helpless thought renew,
While I lie weltering on the osiered shore,
Drown'd by the kelpie's wrath, nor e'er shall aid thee more!'

IX.

Unbounded is thy range; with varied style
Thy muse may, like those feathery tribes which spring
From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
To that hoar pile[1], which still its ruin shows:
In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,
And culls them, wondering, from the hallowed ground!

[1] The chapel of St. Flannan.

Or thither[1], where, beneath the showery west,
The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid;
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest,
No slaves revere them, and no wars invade:
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power,
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sheeny gold,
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

X.

But, O! o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,
On whose bleak rocks, which brave the wasting tides,
Fair nature's daughter, virtue, yet abides.
Go, just, as they, their blameless manners trace!
Then to my ear transmit some gentle song,
Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain,
Their bounded walks the rugged cliffs along,
And all their prospect but the wintry main.
With sparing temperance, at the needful time,
They drain the sainted spring; or, hunger-prest,
Along the Atlantic rock undreading climb,
And of its eggs despoil the solan's nest.
Thus blest in primal innocence, they live,
Sufficed and happy with that frugal fare
Which tasteful toil and hourly danger give.
Hard is their shallow soil, and bleak and bare;
Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there!

XI.

Nor need'st thou blush that such false themes engage
Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possest;
For not alone they touch the village breast,
But filled in elder time the historic page.
There Shakespeare's self, with every garland crowned,
[Flew to those fairy climes his fancy sheen[2],]
In musing hour, his wayward sisters found,
And with their terrors drest the magic scene.

[1] Iona. [2] Inserted from the later editions

From them he sung, when 'mid his bold design,
Before the Scot afflicted and aghast,
The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line
Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant passed.
Proceed, nor quit the tales which, simply told,
Could once so well my answering bosom pierce;
Proceed, in forceful sounds, and colours bold,
The native legends of thy land rehearse;
To such adapt thy lyre and suit thy powerful verse.

XII.

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart
From sober truth, are still to nature true,
And call forth fresh delight to fancy's view,
The heroic muse employed her Tasso's art!
How have I trembled, when, at Tancred's stroke,
Its gushing blood the gaping cypress poured;
When each live plant with mortal accents spoke,
And the wild blast upheaved the vanished sword!
How have I sat, when piped the pensive wind,
To hear his harp by British Fairfax strung;
Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders which he sung!
Hence, at each sound, imagination glows;
[Hence, at each picture, vivid life starts here[1]!]
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows;
Melting it flows, pure, numerous, strong, and clear,
And fills the impassioned heart, and wins the harmonious ear!

XIII.

All hail, ye scenes that o'er my soul prevail!
Ye [spacious] friths and lakes, which, far away,
Are by smooth Annan filled or pastoral Tay,
Or Don's romantic springs, at distance hail!
The time shall come when I, perhaps, may tread
Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading broom;
Or, o'er your stretching heaths, by fancy led;
[Or o'er your mountains creep, in awful gloom[1]!]

[1] Inserted from the later editions.

Then will I dress once more the faded bower,
Where Jonson sat in Drummond's [classic[1]] shade;
Or crop, from Tiviotdale, each [lyric flower[1],]
And mourn, on Yarrow's banks, [where Willy's laid[1]!]
Meantime, ye powers that on the plains which bore
The cordial youth, on Lothian's plains, attend!—
Where'er he dwell, on hill, or lowly moor,
To him I lose, your kind protection lend,
And, touched with love like mine, preserve my absent friend!

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE.

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assembled here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen;
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

[1] Inserted from the later editions.

When howling winds and beating rain,
  In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
  The tender thought on thee shall dwell;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
  For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
  And mourned till pity's self be dead.

THOMAS GRAY.

[THOMAS GRAY was born in London on the 26th of December 1716. His father is described as 'a citizen and money-scrivener'; we should say nowadays, he was on the stock-exchange. He appears to have been a selfish, extravagant, and violent man. Mr. Antrobus, Gray's uncle on the mother's side, was one of the assistant masters at Eton, and at Eton, under his care. Gray was brought up. At Eton he formed a friendship with Horace Walpole, and with Richard West, whose father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. At Cambridge Gray did not read mathematics and took no degree. He occupied himself with classical literature, history and modern languages; several of his translations and Latin poems date from this time. He intended to read law; but a few months after his leaving Cambridge, Horace Walpole invited him to be his companion on a tour through France and Italy. The friends visited Paris, Florence and Rome, and remained abroad together more than two years. Gray saw and noted much; on this journey were produced the best of his Latin poems. Walpole, however, the son of the Prime Minister, and rich, gave himself airs; a difference arose which made Gray separate from him and return alone to England. He was reconciled with Walpole a year or two later; but meanwhile his father died, in 1741; his mother went to live at Stoke, near Windsor; and Gray, with a narrow income of his own, gave up the law and settled himself in college at Cambridge. In 1742 he lost his friend West; the *Ode to the Spring* was written just before West's death, the *Ode on the Prospect of Eton*, the *Hymn to Adversity*, and the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, were written not long after. The first of Gray's poems which appeared in print was the *Ode on the Prospect of Eton*, published in folio by Dodsley in 1747; 'little notice,' says Warton, 'was taken of it.' The *Elegy* was handed about in manuscript before its publication in 1750; it was popular instantly, and made Gray's reputation. In 1753 Gray lost his mother, to whom he owed everything, and whom he devotedly loved. In 1755 *The Progress of Poesy* was finished, and *The Bard* begun. The post of Poet-Laureate was offered to Gray in 1757, and declined by him. He applied to Lord Bute, in

1762, for the professorship of modern history at Cambridge, but in vain. Six years afterwards the professorship again became vacant, and the Duke of Grafton gave it to Gray without his applying for it. The year afterwards the Duke of Grafton was elected Chancellor of the University, and Gray composed for his installation the well-known *Ode for Music*. It was the last of his works. He talked of giving lectures as professor of history, but his health was bad, and his spirits were low; Gray was the most temperate of men, but he was full of hereditary gout. Travelling amused and revived him; he had made with much enjoyment journeys to Scotland, Wales, and the English Lakes, and in the last year of his life, 1771, he entertained a project of visiting Switzerland. But he was too unwell to make the attempt, and he remained at Cambridge. On the 24th of July, while at dinner in the College hall, he was seized with illness; convulsions came on, and on the 30th of July, 1771, at the age of fifty-four, Gray died. He was never married.]

James Brown, Master of Pembroke Hall at Cambridge, Gray's friend and executor, in a letter written a fortnight after Gray's death to another of his friends, Dr. Wharton of Old Park, Durham, has the following passage :—

'Everything is now dark and melancholy in Mr. Gray's room, not a trace of him remains there; it looks as if it had been for some time uninhabited, and the room bespoke for another inhabitant. The thoughts I have of him will last, and will be useful to me the few years I can expect to live. He never spoke out, but I believe from some little expressions I now remember to have dropped from him, that for some time past he thought himself nearer his end than those about him apprehended.'

He never spoke out. In these four words is contained the whole history of Gray, both as a man and as a poet. The words fell naturally, and as it were by chance, from their writer's pen; but let us dwell upon them, and press into their meaning, for in following it we shall come to understand Gray.

He was in his fifty-fifth year when he died, and he lived in ease and leisure, yet a few pages hold all his poetry; *he never spoke out* in poetry. Still, the reputation which he has achieved by his few pages is extremely high. True, Johnson speaks of him with coldness and disparagement. Gray disliked Johnson, and refused to make his acquaintance; one might fancy that Johnson wrote with some irritation from this cause. But Johnson was not by nature fitted to do justice to Gray and to his poetry; this by itself is a sufficient explanation of the deficiencies of his criticism of Gray.

We may add a further explanation of them which is supplied by Mr. Cole's papers. 'When Johnson was publishing his Life of Gray,' says Mr. Cole, 'I gave him several anecdotes, *but he was very anxious as soon as possible to get to the end of his labours.*' Johnson was not naturally in sympathy with Gray, whose life he had to write, and when he wrote it he was in a hurry besides. He did Gray injustice, but even Johnson's authority failed to make injustice, in this case, prevail. Lord Macaulay calls the Life of Gray the worst of Johnson's Lives, and it had found many censurers before Macaulay. Gray's poetical reputation grew and flourished in spite of it. The poet Mason, his first biographer, in his epitaph equalled him with Pindar. Britain has known, says Mason,

> . . 'a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
> A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.'

The immense vogue of Pope and of his style of versification had at first prevented the frank reception of Gray by the readers of poetry. The *Elegy* pleased; it could not but please: but Gray's poetry, on the whole, astonished his contemporaries at first more than it pleased them; it was so unfamiliar, so unlike the sort of poetry in vogue. It made its way, however, after his death, with the public as well as with the few; and Gray's second biographer, Mitford, remarks that 'the works which were either neglected or ridiculed by their contemporaries have now raised Gray and Collins to the rank of our two greatest lyric poets.' Their reputation was established, at any rate, and stood extremely high, even if they were not popularly read. Johnson's disparagement of Gray was called 'petulant,' and severely blamed. Beattie, at the end of the eighteenth century, writing to Sir William Forbes, says: 'Of all the English poets of this age Mr. Gray is most admired, and I think with justice.' Cowper writes: 'I have been reading Gray's works, and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I was prejudiced.' Adam Smith says: 'Gray joins to the sublimity of Milton the elegance and harmony of Pope; and nothing is wanting to render him, perhaps, the first poet in the English language, but to have written a little more.' And, to come nearer to our own times, Sir James Mackintosh speaks of Gray thus: 'Of all English poets he was the most finished artist. He attained the highest degree of splendour of which poetical style seemed to be capable.'

In a poet of such magnitude, how shall we explain his scantiness of production? Shall we explain it by saying that to make of Gray a poet of this magnitude is absurd; that his genius and resources were small and that his production, therefore, was small also, but that the popularity of a single piece, the *Elegy*,—a popularity due in great measure to the subject,—created for Gray a reputation to which he has really no right? He himself was not deceived by the favour shown to the *Elegy*. 'Gray told me with a good deal of acrimony,' writes Dr. Gregory, 'that the *Elegy* owed its popularity entirely to the subject, and that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose.' This is too much to say; the *Elegy* is a beautiful poem, and in admiring it the public showed a true feeling for poetry. But it is true that the *Elegy* owed much of its success to its subject, and that it has received a too unmeasured and unbounded praise.

Gray himself, however, maintained that the *Elegy* was not his best work in poetry, and he was right. High as is the praise due to the *Elegy*, it is yet true that in other productions of Gray he exhibits poetical qualities even higher than those exhibited in the *Elegy*. He deserves, therefore, his extremely high reputation as a poet, although his critics and the public may not always have praised him with perfect judgment. We are brought back, then, to the question: How, in a poet so really considerable, are we to explain his scantiness of production?

Scanty Gray's production, indeed, is; so scanty that to supplement our knowledge of it by a knowledge of the man is in this case of peculiar interest and service. Gray's letters and the records of him by his friends have happily made it possible for us thus to know him, and to appreciate his high qualities of mind and soul. Let us see these in the man first, and then observe how they appear in his poetry; and why they cannot enter into it more freely and inspire it with more strength, render it more abundant.

We will begin with his acquirements. 'Mr. Gray was,' writes his friend Temple, 'perhaps the most learned man in Europe. He knew every branch of history both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study. Voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture and gardening.' The notes in his

interleaved copy of Linnæus remained to show the extent and accuracy of his knowledge in the natural sciences, particularly in botany, zoology, and entomology. Entomologists testified that his account of English insects was more perfect than any that had then appeared. His notes and papers, of which some have been published, others remain still in manuscript, give evidence, besides, of his knowledge of literature ancient and modern, geography and topography, painting, architecture and antiquities, and of his curious researches in heraldry. He was an excellent musician. Sir James Mackintosh reminds us, moreover, that to all the other accomplishments and merits of Gray we are to add this: 'that he was the first discoverer of the beauties of nature in England, and has marked out the course of every picturesque journey that can be made in it.'

Acquirements take all their value and character from the power of the individual storing them. Let us take, from amongst Gray's observations on what he read, enough to show us his power. Here are criticisms on three very different authors, criticisms without any study or pretension, but just thrown out in chance letters to his friends. First, on Aristotle:—

'In the first place he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book; it tastes for all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention, so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties, and what is worse, leaves you to extricate yourself as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly by his transcribers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine, uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you have to expect.'

Next, on Isocrates:—

'It would be strange if I should find fault with you for reading Isocrates; I did so myself twenty years ago, and in an edition at least as bad as yours The Panegyric, the De Pace, Areopagitic, and Advice to Philip, are by far the noblest remains we have of this writer, and equal to most things extant in the Greek tongue; but it depends on your judgment to distinguish between his real and occasional opinion of things, as he directly contradicts in one place what he has advanced in another; for example, in the Panathenaic and the De Pace, on the naval power of Athens; the latter of the two is undoubtedly his own undisguised sentiment'

After hearing Gray on Isocrates and Aristotle, let us hear him on Froissart :—

'I rejoice you have met with Froissart, he is the Herodotus of a barbarous age; had he but had the luck of writing in as good a language, he might have been immortal. His locomotive disposition (for then there was no other way of learning things), his simple curiosity, his religious credulity, were much like those of the old Grecian. When you have *tant chevauché* as to get to the end of him, there is Monstrelet waits to take you up, and will set you down at Philip de Commines; but previous to all these, you should have read Villehardouin and Joinville.'

Those judgments, with their true and clear ring, evince the high quality of Gray's mind, his power to command and use his learning. But Gray was a poet; let us hear him on a poet, on Shakespeare. We must place ourselves in the full midst of the eighteenth century and of its criticism; Gray's friend, West, had praised Racine for using in his dramas 'the language of the times and that of the purest sort'; and he had added: 'I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage, but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakespeare.' Gray replies :—

'As to matter of style, I have this to say: The language of the age is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself, to which almost every one that has written has added something In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics.—

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass"—

and what follows. To me they appear untranslateable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated.'

It is impossible for a poet to lay down the rules of his own art with more insight, soundness, and certainty. Yet at that moment in England there was perhaps not one other man, besides Gray, capable of writing the passage just quoted.

Gray's quality of mind, then, we see; his quality of soul will no less bear inspection. His reserve, his delicacy, his distaste for many of the persons and things surrounding him in the Cambridge of that day,—'this silly, dirty place,' as he calls it,—have produced

an impression of Gray as being a man falsely fastidious, finical, effeminate. But we have already had that grave testimony to him from the Master of Pembroke Hall: 'The thoughts I have of him will last, and will be useful to me the few years I can expect to live.' And here is another to the same effect from a younger man, from Gray's friend Nicholls :—

'You know,' he writes to his mother, from abroad, when he heard of Gray's death, 'that I considered Mr Gray as a second parent, that I thought only of him, built all my happiness on him, talked of him for ever, wished him with me whenever I partook of any pleasure, and flew to him for refuge whenever I felt any uneasiness. To whom now shall I talk of all I have seen here? Who will teach me to read, to think, to feel? I protest to you, that whatever I did or thought had a reference to him. If I met with any chagrins, I comforted myself that I had a treasure at home; if all the world had despised and hated me, I should have thought myself perfectly recompensed in his friendship. There remains only one loss more; if I lose you, I am left alone in the world. At present I feel that I have lost half of myself.'

Testimonies such as these are not called forth by a fastidious effeminate weakling; they are not called forth, even, by mere qualities of mind; they are called forth by qualities of soul. And of Gray's high qualities of soul, of his *σπουδαιότης*, his excellent seriousness, we may gather abundant proof from his letters. Writing to Mason who had just lost his father, he says :—

'I have seen the scene you describe, and know how dreadful it is; I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts; the deeper it is engraved the better.'

And again, on a like occasion to another friend :—

'He who best knows our nature (for he made us what we are) by such afflictions recalls us from our wandering thoughts and idle merriment, from the insolence of youth and prosperity, to serious reflexion, to our duty, and to himself; nor need we hasten to get rid of these impressions. Time (by appointment of the same Power) will cure the smart and in some hearts soon blot out all the traces of sorrow; but such as preserve them longest (for it is partly left in our own power) do perhaps best acquiesce in the will of the chastiser.'

And once more to Mason, in the very hour of his wife's death; Gray was not sure whether or not his letter would reach Mason before the end :—

'If the worst be not yet past, you will neglect and pardon me; but if the last struggle be over, if the poor object of your long anxieties be no longer sensible to your kindness or to her own sufferings, allow me, at least in idea, (for what could I do, were I present, more than this?) to sit by you in silence and pity from my heart not her, who is at rest, but you, who lose her. May He, who made us, the Master of our pleasures and of our pains, support you! Adieu.'

Seriousness, character, was the foundation of things with him; where this was lacking he was always severe, whatever might be offered to him in its stead. Voltaire's literary genius charmed him, but the faults of Voltaire's nature he felt so strongly that when his young friend Nicholls was going abroad in 1771, just before Gray's death, he said to him: 'I have one thing to beg of you which you must not refuse.' Nicholls answered: 'You know you have only to command; what is it?' 'Do not go to see Voltaire,' said Gray; and then added: 'No one knows the mischief that man will do.' Nicholls promised compliance with Gray's injunction, 'but what,' he asked, 'could a visit from me signify?' 'Every tribute to such a man signifies,' Gray answered. He admired Dryden, admired him, even, too much; had too much felt his influence as a poet. He told Beattie 'that if there was any excellence in his own numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet'; and writing to Beattie afterwards he recurs to Dryden, whom Beattie, he thought, did not honour enough as a poet: 'Remember Dryden,' he writes, 'and be blind to all his faults.' Yes, his faults as a poet; but on the man Dryden, nevertheless, his sentence is stern. Speaking of the Poet-Laureateship, 'Dryden,' he writes to Mason, 'was as disgraceful to the office from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses.' Even where crying blemishes were absent, the want of weight and depth of character in a man deprived him, in Gray's judgment, of serious significance. He says of Hume: 'Is not that naïveté and good-humour, which his admirers celebrate in him, owing to this, that he has continued all his days an infant, but one that has unhappily been taught to read and write?'

And with all this strenuous seriousness, a pathetic sentiment, and an element, likewise, of sportive and charming humour. At Keswick, by the lakeside on an autumn evening, he has the accent of the *Rêveries*, or of Obermann, or Wordsworth:—

'In the evening walked down alone to the lake by the side of Crow Park after sunset and saw the solemn colouring of light draw on, the last gleam

of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore. At distance heard the murmur of many water-falls, not audible in the day-time. Wished for the Moon, but she was *dark to me and silent, hid in her vacant interlunar cave.*'

Of his humour and sportiveness his delightful letters are full; his humour appears in his poetry too, and is by no means to be passed over there. Horace Walpole said that 'Gray never wrote anything easily but things of humour; humour was his natural and original turn.'

Knowledge, penetration, seriousness, sentiment, humour, Gray had them all; he had the equipment and endowment for the office of poet. But very soon in his life appear traces of something obstructing, something disabling; of spirits failing, and health not sound; and the evil increases with years. He writes to West in 1737 :—

'Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay and pay visits and will even affect to be jocose and force a feeble laugh with me; but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world.'

The tone is playful, Gray was not yet twenty-one. 'Mine,' he tells West four or five years later, 'mine, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather *Leucocholy*, for the most part; which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state.' But, he adds in this same letter :—

'But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has something in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est*; for it believes, nay, is sure of everything that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and on the other hand excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasurable; from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it.'

Six or seven years pass, and we find him writing to Wharton from Cambridge thus :—

'The spirit of laziness (the spirit of this place) begins to possess even me, that have so long declaimed against it. Yet has it not so prevailed, but that I feel that discontent with myself, that *ennui*, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings Time will settle my conscience, time will reconcile my languid companion to me; we shall smoke, we shall tipple, we shall doze

together, we shall have our little jokes, like other people, and our long stories. Brandy will finish what port began; and, a month after the time, you will see in some corner of a London Evening Post, "Yesterday died the Rev Mr. John Gray, Senior-Fellow of Clare Hall, a facetious companion, and well-respected by all who knew him."'

The humorous advertisement ends, in the original letter, with a Hogarthian touch which I must not quote. Is it Leucocholy or is it Melancholy which predominates here? at any rate, this entry in his diary, six years later, is black enough:—

'*Insomnia crebra, atque expergiscenti surdus quidam doloris sensus; frequens etiam in regione sterni oppressio, et cardialgia gravis, fere sempiterna.*'

And in 1757 he writes to Hurd:—

'To be employed is to be happy. This principle of mine (and I am convinced of its truth) has, as usual, no influence on my practice. I am alone, and *ennuyé* to the last degree, yet do nothing. Indeed I have one excuse, my health (which you have so kindly enquired after) is not extraordinary. It is no great malady, but several little ones, that seem brewing no good to me'

From thence to the end his languor and depression, though still often relieved by occupation and travel, keep fatally gaining on him. At last the depression became constant, became mechanical 'Travel I must,' he writes to Dr. Wharton, 'or cease to exist. Till this year I hardly knew what *mechanical* low spirits were; but now I even tremble at an east wind.' Two months afterwards, he died.

What wonder, that with this troublous cloud, throughout the whole term of his manhood, brooding over him and weighing him down, Gray, finely endowed though he was, richly stored with knowledge though he was, yet produced so little, found no full and sufficient utterance, '*never*,' as the Master of Pembroke Hall said, '*spoke out.*' He knew well enough, himself, how it was with him.

'My *verve* is at best, you know' (he writes to Mason), 'of so delicate a constitution, and has such weak nerves, as not to stir out of its chamber above three days in a year.' And to Horace Walpole he says: 'As to what you say to me civilly, that I ought to write more, I will be candid, and avow to you, that till fourscore and upward, whenever the humour takes me, I will write; because I like it, and because I like myself better when I do so. If I do not write much, it is because I cannot.' How simply said, and

how truly also! Fain would a man like Gray speak out if he could, he 'likes himself better' when he speaks out; if he does not speak out, 'it is because I cannot.'

Bonstetten, that mercurial Swiss who died in 1832 at the age of eighty-seven, having been younger and livelier from his sixtieth year to his eightieth than at any other time in his life, paid a visit in his early days to Cambridge, and saw much of Gray, to whom he attached himself with devotion. Gray, on his part, was charmed with his young friend; 'I never saw such a boy,' he writes; 'our breed is not made on this model.' Long afterwards, Bonstetten published his reminiscences of Gray. 'I used to tell Gray,' he says, 'about my life and my native country, but *his* life was a sealed book to me; he never would talk of himself, never would allow me to speak to him of his poetry. If I quoted lines of his to him, he kept silence like an obstinate child. I said to him sometimes: "Will you have the goodness to give me an answer?" But not a word issued from his lips.' *He never spoke out.* Bonstetten thinks that Gray's life was poisoned by an unsatisfied sensibility, was withered by his having never loved; by his days being passed in the dismal cloisters of Cambridge, in the company of a set of monastic book-worms, 'whose existence no honest woman ever came to cheer.' Sainte-Beuve, who was much attracted and interested by Gray, doubts whether Bonstetten's explanation of him is admissible; the secret of Gray's melancholy he finds rather in the sterility of his poetic talent, 'so distinguished, so rare, but so stinted;' in the poet's despair at his own unproductiveness.

But to explain Gray, we must do more than allege his sterility, as we must look further than to his reclusion at Cambridge. What caused his sterility? Was it his ill-health, his hereditary gout? Certainly we will pay all respect to the powers of hereditary gout for afflicting us poor mortals. But Goethe, after pointing out that Schiller, who was so productive, was 'almost constantly ill,' adds the true remark that it is incredible how much the spirit can do, in these cases, to keep up the body. Pope's animation and activity through all the course of what he pathetically calls 'that long disease, my life,' is an example presenting itself signally, in Gray's own country and time, to confirm what Goethe here says. What gave the power to Gray's reclusion and ill-health to induce his sterility?

The reason, the indubitable reason as I cannot but think it, I have already given elsewhere. Gray, a born poet, fell upon an

age of prose. He fell upon an age whose task was such as to call forth in general men's powers of understanding, wit and cleverness, rather than their deepest powers of mind and soul. As regards literary production, the task of the eighteenth century in England was not the poetic interpretation of the world, its task was to create a plain, clear, straightforward, efficient prose. Poetry obeyed the bent of mind requisite for the due fulfilment of this task of the century. It was intellectual, argumentative, ingenious; not seeing things in their truth and beauty, not interpretative. Gray, with the qualities of mind and soul of a genuine poet, was isolated in his century. Maintaining and fortifying them by lofty studies, he yet could not fully educe and enjoy them; the want of a genial atmosphere, the failure of sympathy in his contemporaries, were too great. Born in the same year with Milton, Gray would have been another man; born in the same year with Burns, he would have been another man. A man born in 1608 could profit by the larger and more poetic scope of the English spirit in the Elizabethan age; a man born in 1759 could profit by that European renewing of men's minds of which the great historical manifestation is the French Revolution. Gray's alert and brilliant young friend, Bonstetten, who would explain the void in the life of Gray by his having never loved, Bonstetten himself loved, married, and had children. Yet at the age of fifty he was bidding fair to grow old, dismal and torpid like the rest of us, when he was roused and made young again for some thirty years, says M. Sainte-Beuve, by the events of 1789. If Gray, like Burns, had been just thirty years old when the French Revolution broke out, he would have shown, probably, productiveness and animation in plenty. Coming when he did and endowed as he was, he was a man born out of date, a man whose full spiritual flowering was impossible. The same thing is to be said of his great contemporary, Butler, the author of the *Analogy*. In the sphere of religion, which touches that of poetry, Butler was impelled by the endowment of his nature to strive for a profound and adequate conception of religious things, which was not pursued by his contemporaries, and which at that time, and in that atmosphere of mind, was not fully attainable. Hence, in Butler too, a dissatisfaction, a weariness, as in Gray; 'great labour and weariness, great disappointment, pain and even vexation of mind.' A sort of spiritual east wind was at that time blowing; neither Butler nor Gray could flower. They *never spoke out.*

Gray's poetry was not only stinted in quantity by reason of the age wherein he lived, it suffered somewhat in quality also. We have seen under what obligation to Dryden Gray professed himself to be; 'if there was any excellence in his numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet.' It was not for nothing that he came when Dryden had lately 'embellished,' as Johnson says, English poetry; had 'found it brick and left it marble.' It was not for nothing that he came just when 'the English ear,' to quote Johnson again, 'had been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry had grown more splendid.' Of the intellectualities, ingenuities, personifications, of the movement and diction of Dryden and Pope, Gray caught something, caught too much. We have little of Gray's poetry, and that little is not free from the faults of his age. Therefore it was important to go for aid, as we did, to Gray's life and letters, to see his mind and soul there, and to corroborate from thence that high estimate of his quality which his poetry, indeed, calls forth, but does not establish so amply and irresistibly as one could desire.

For a just criticism it does, however, clearly establish it. The difference between genuine poetry and the poetry of Dryden, Pope, and all their school, is briefly this; their poetry is conceived and composed in their wits, genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul. The difference between the two kinds of poetry is immense. They differ profoundly in their modes of language, they differ profoundly in their modes of evolution. The poetic language of our eighteenth century in general is the language of men composing *without their eye on the object*, as Wordsworth excellently said of Dryden; language merely recalling the object, as the common language of prose does, and then dressing it out with a certain smartness and brilliancy for the fancy and understanding. This is called 'splendid diction.' The evolution of the poetry of our eighteenth century is likewise intellectual; it proceeds by ratiocination, antithesis, ingenious turns and conceits. This poetry is often eloquent, and always, in the hands of such masters as Dryden and Pope, clever; but it does not take us much below the surface of things, it does not give us the emotion of seeing things in their truth and beauty. The language of genuine poetry, on the other hand, is the language of one composing with his eye on the object; its evolution is that of a thing which has been plunged in the poet's soul until it comes forth naturally and necessarily. This sort of evolution is infinitely

simpler than the other, and infinitely more satisfying; the same thing is true of the genuine poetic language likewise. But they are both of them, also, infinitely harder of attainment; they come only from those who, as Emerson says, 'live from a great depth of being.'

Goldsmith disparaged Gray who had praised his *Traveller*, and indeed in the poem on the *Alliance of Education and Government* had given him hints which he used for it. In retaliation let us take from Goldsmith himself a specimen of the poetic language of the eighteenth century.

'No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale'—

there is exactly the poetic diction of our prose century! rhetorical, ornate,—and, poetically, quite false. Place beside it a line of genuine poetry, such as the

'In cradle of the rude, imperious surge'

of Shakespeare; and all its falseness instantly becomes apparent.

Dryden's poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew is, says Johnson, 'undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced.' In this vigorous performance Dryden has to say, what is interesting enough, that not only in poetry did Mrs. Killigrew excel, but she excelled in painting also. And thus he says it:—

'To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For Painture near adjoining lay—
A plenteous province and alluring prey.
A Chamber of Dependencies was framed
(As conquerors will never want pretence
When arm'd, to justify the offence),
And the whole fief, in right of Poetry, she claim'd.'

The intellectual, ingenious, superficial evolution of poetry of this school could not be better illustrated. Place beside it Pindar's

αἰὼν ἀσφαλὴς
οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὔτ' Αἰακίδᾳ παρὰ Πηλεῖ,
οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ . . .

'A secure time fell to the lot neither of Peleus the son of Æacus nor of the godlike Cadmus; howbeit these are said to have had, of all mortals, the supreme of happiness, who heard the golden snooded Muses sing,—on the mountain the one heard them, the other in seven-gated Thebes.'

There is the evolution of genuine poetry, and such poetry kills Dryden's the moment it is put near it.

Gray's production was scanty, and scanty, as we have seen, it could not but be. Even what he produced is not always pure in diction, true in evolution. Still, with whatever drawbacks, he is alone or almost alone (for Collins has something of the like merit) in his age. Gray said himself that 'the style he aimed at was extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical.' Compared, not with the work of the great masters of the golden ages of poetry, but with the poetry of his own contemporaries in general, Gray's may be said to have reached, in style, the excellence at which he aimed; while the evolution, also, of such a piece as his *Progress of Poesy*, must be accounted not less noble and sound than its style.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Ode on the Spring.

Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
  Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
  And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
  The untaught harmony of spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
  Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
  A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
  O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
  (At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
  How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care;
  The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air
  The busy murmur glows!
The insect-youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
  And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some shew their gayly-gilded trim
  Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
  Such is the race of Man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
  Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter thro' life's little day,
  In Fortune's varying colours drest:
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by Age, their airy dance
  They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear, in accents low,
  The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
  A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
  No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
  We frolic while 'tis May.

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
  That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
  Her Henry's holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
  Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
  His silver-winding way:

Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
  Ah, fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
  A stranger yet to pain!

I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, father Thames, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green,
The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave,
With pliant arm, thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmuring labours ply
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer, of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas! regardless of their doom
The little victims play;
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see, how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand,
To sieze their prey, the murderous band!
Ah, tell them, they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart;
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath
A griesly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,

Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo! Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemn'd alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
The unfeeling for his own.
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more;—where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

HYMN TO ADVERSITY.

Daughter of Jove, relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, designed,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt at others' woe

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb arrayed,
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,
Dread goddess, lay thy chastening hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Not circled with the vengeful band
(As by the impious thou art seen)
With thundering voice, and threatening mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty:

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound, my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive
Teach me to love, and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a Man.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

I. 1.

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers that round them blow
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong.
Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar

I. 2.

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day;

With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating,
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move
The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

II. 1.

Man's feeble race what ills await!
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of fate!
The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?
Night and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky;
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of war.

II. 2.

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers wildly sweet,
Their feather cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
The unconquerable Mind, and freedom's holy flame.

II. 3.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of anguish!
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Every shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.
'This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy!
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.'

III. 2.

Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of the abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:

The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more—
Oh lyre divine, what daring spirit
Wakes thee now? Tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,
With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

THE BARD.

I. 1.

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail

To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!'
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Gloster stood aghast in speechless trance:
'To arms!' cried Mortimer, and couched his quivering lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er cold Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
'Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.

Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
  Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
  Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
  On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
  Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

II. 1.

'Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race.
  Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roof that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king!
  She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
  From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of heaven. What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with flight combined,
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind.

II. 2.

'Mighty victor, mighty lord!
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
  No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
  Is the sable warrior fled?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noontide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
  While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
  Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey

II. 3.

'Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare,
  Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
  Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
  A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
  Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
  Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
  Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
  Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
Above, below, the rose of snow,
  Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
The bristled boar in infant-gore
  Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

'Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
  Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.)
Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.

But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!
Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail!

III. 2.

'Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play.
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of heaven her many-coloured wings.

III. 3.

'The verse adorn again
Fierce war, and faithful love,
And truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.
In buskined measures move
Pale grief, and pleasing pain,
With horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice, as of the cherub-choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.

Enough for me ; with joy I see
The different doom our fates assign.
Be thine despair, and sceptred care,
To triumph, and to die, are mine.'
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

'The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne:—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

The Epitaph.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to misery (all he had) a tear,
He gained from heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune;
He had not the method of making a fortune:
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;
No very great wit, he believed in a God:
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.

IMPROMPTU, ON LORD HOLLAND'S SEAT AT KINGSGATE.

Old, and abandoned by each venal friend,
Here Holland formed the pious resolution
To smuggle a few years, and strive to mend
A broken character and constitution.

On this congenial spot he fixed his choice;
Earl Goodwin trembled for his neighbouring sand;
Here sea-gulls scream, and cormorants rejoice,
And mariners, though shipwrecked, dread to land.

Here reign the blustering North and blighting East,
No tree is heard to whisper, bird to sing;
Yet Nature could not furnish out the feast,
Art he invokes new horrors still to bring.

Here mouldering fanes and battlements arise,
Turrets and arches nodding to their fall,
Unpeopled monast'ries delude our eyes,
And mimic desolation covers all.

'Ah!' said the sighing peer, 'had Bute been true,
Nor Mungo's, Rigby's, Bradshaw's friendship vain,
Far better scenes than these had blest our view,
And realized the beauties which we feign:

'Purged by the sword, and purified by fire,
Then had we seen proud London's hated walls;
Owls would have hooted in St. Peter's choir,
And foxes stunk and littered in St. Paul's.'

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

[Born at Cambridge in 1715; educated at Winchester and at Clare Hall, Cambridge His poems were collected in 1754, and again in 1774. He became Poet Laureate in 1758, and died in 1785, in London.]

William Whitehead, who must not be confused with his clever and disreputable namesake, Paul Whitehead, the poet of the orgies of Medmenham, succeeded Cibber in the laureateship when Gray declined that doubtful honour. He was the perpetual butt of the satire of Churchill, who, as Campbell says, 'completely killed his poetical character.' Indeed his poetry is for the most part tame and conventional enough; yet here and there he emerges from the ruck of Georgian poetasters and becomes noticeable. *Variety, a Tale for Married People*, which is too long for quotation, is an excellent story in verse—with a moral, of course, as a *conte* should have—told in a light and flowing style not unworthy of Gay. *The Enthusiast, an Ode*, is here given, because of the admirable way in which it epitomises the debate —it is a perennial debate, but the eighteenth century took one side and we take the other—between Nature and Society.

'O bards, that call to bank and glen,
Ye bid me go to Nature to be healed;
And lo! a purer fount is here revealed,
My lady-nature dwells in hearts of men:'

—when the modern poet writes in this way, we note him as breaking the poetical concert of our age. But the doctrine is one which the poets of Pope's century were for ever enforcing; even Cowper, antithesis to Pope as he was, enforced it; and this little ode of Whitehead's is so happy a rendering of their argument that it is worthy of being rescued from the oblivion which has almost overwhelmed its author.

EDITOR.

THE ENTHUSIAST. AN ODE.

Once—I remember well the day,
'Twas ere the blooming sweets of May
Had lost their freshest hues,
When every flower and every hill
In every vale had drunk its fill
Of sunshine and of dews.

In short, 'twas that sweet season's prime
When spring gives up the reins of time
To summer's glowing hand,
And doubting mortals hardly know
By whose command the breezes blow
Which fan the smiling land.

'Twas then, beside a green-wood shade
Which clothed a lawn's aspiring head,
I urged my devious way,
With loitering steps regardless where,
So soft, so genial was the air,
So wondrous bright the day.

And now my eyes with transport rove
O'er all the blue expanse above,
Unbroken by a cloud!
And now beneath delighted pass,
Where winding through the deep-green grass
A full-brimmed river flowed.

I stop, I gaze, in accents rude,
To thee, serenest solitude,
Burst forth th' unbidden lay;
'Begone vile world! the learned, the wise,
The great, the busy, I despise,
And pity even the gay.

These, these are joys alone, I cry,
'Tis here, divine philosophy,
  Thou deign'st to fix thy throne!
Here contemplation points the road
Through nature's charms to nature's God!
  These, these are joys alone!

Adieu, ye vain low-thoughted cares,
Ye human hopes, and human fears,
  Ye pleasures and ye pains!'
While thus I spake, over my soul
A philosophic calmness stole,
  A stoic stillness reigns.

The tyrant passions all subside,
Fear, anger, pity, shame and pride,
  No more my bosom move;
Yet still I felt, or seemed to feel
A kind of visionary zeal
  Of universal love.

When lo! a voice, a voice I hear!
'Twas Reason whispered in my ear
  These monitory strains:
'What mean'st thou, man? wouldst thou unbind
The ties which constitute thy kind,
  The pleasures and the pains?

The same almighty power unseen,
Who spreads the gay or solemn scene
  To contemplation's eye,
Fixed every movement of the soul,
Taught every wish its destined goal,
  And quickened every joy.

He bids the tyrant passions rage,
He bids them war external wage,
  And combat each his foe:
Till from dissensions concords rise,
And beauties from deformities,
  And happiness from woe.

Art thou not man, and dar'st thou find
A bliss which leans not to mankind?
Presumptuous thought and vain!
Each bliss unshared is unenjoyed,
Each power is weak unless employed
Some social good to gain.

Shall light and shade, and warmth and air,
With those exalted joys compare
Which active virtue feels,
When on she drags, as lawful prize,
Contempt and indolence, and vice,
At her triumphant wheels?

As rest to labour still succeeds,
To man, whilst virtue's glorious deeds
Employ his toilsome day,
This fair variety of things
Are merely life's refreshing springs,
To soothe him on his way.

Enthusiast go, unstring thy lyre,
In vain thou sing'st if none admire,
How sweet soe'er the strain.
And is not thy o'erflowing mind,
Unless thou mixest with thy kind,
Benevolent in vain?

Enthusiast go, try every sense,
If not thy bliss, thy excellence,
Thou yet hast learned to scan;
At least thy wants, thy weakness know,
And see them all uniting show
That man was made for man.'

MARK AKENSIDE.

[Born November 9th, 1721; studied medicine at Edinburgh and Leyden; practised as a physician at Northampton; received from his friend Jeremiah Dyson an annual allowance of £300; removed to London, 1748; appointed one of the Physicians to the Queen; wrote various medical tracts and lectures; died June 23rd, 1770. *The Pleasures of Imagination* was published in January 1744; *Odes on Several Subjects*, 1745. The unfinished recast of *The Pleasures of Imagination* appeared after Akenside's death in his *Poems*, 1772.]

'Reason clad in strains
Of harmony, selected minds to inspire.'

These words, from one of Akenside's Odes, define his own poetry, or at least what he desired it to be. He was a witness for high aims in verse; for the ideal, as some call it; for the union of imagination and reason. There was in Akenside's time much dull brutality of living, much gross time-serving. He, the Newcastle butcher's son, held his head aloft; when others reeled and spoke thick, he offered libations to the memory of ancient sages or patriots, and intoned hymns to Virtue and Honour. And to inspire a life-long friendship, such as that of Dyson, to whom he owed his well-being, his leisure and his ease of mind, implies the presence in his character of some solid worth, some genuine elevation. His verse is in keeping with his life. Much verse was manufactured in his day on trivial occasions of passing interest; some of this was the more piquant for its zest of indecency. Much metrical satire was written; it was not long since the *Dunciad* had stung the dullards not to death but to more zealous moods of dulness, and soon Churchill was to show how in rougher style to belabour antagonists with the knotty cudgel. Akenside wrote odes which may be called occasional, but he always contrived to add dignity to his poem by giving it something of a general character. If ever he became a satirist, it was in the solemn manner of one devoted before all else to principles. It was his choice to be at once poet and

philosophic teacher, or, as he would perhaps have liked to be called, bard and sage. In the preceding age poetry and philosophy had stood apart; Dryden aimed at pleasure, Locke at truth. But now under happy Hanoverian freedom, poetry might dare to expatiate over all the great affairs of the world and of human life; it might approach philosophy and embrace it, and from such an union surely the highest offspring of the spirit of man must arise. Nor, Akenside would say, was philosophy now the tentative and uninspiring research of the *Essay on Human Understanding*. Locke's pupil Shaftesbury, a man of aspiring moral temper and elegant culture, who had drunk deep at the well-heads of truth in ancient Greece, was the newer master; both in politics and philosophy the Gothic darkness and tyranny had disappeared. A happier period had dawned of liberty and light, of Plato and the *Characteristics*, of enthusiasm and taste, of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

Honour is due to Akenside for his homage to the mind and to things of the mind. And it would be unjust to say that his enthusiasm was not sincere. Since, however, he lived as poet so much among ideas, since apart from these ideas his poetry ceases to exist, one cannot but ask, Were his ideas true? Were they the best ideas? Do they still survive? And again, Did Akenside present his ideas in the best way, in a way at once philosophical and poetic? Did he indeed effect the union of reason and imagination?

It must be answered that Akenside's theory as a whole will not bear investigation, that some of his ideas are commonplace, some fantastic. His psychology is that of Addison's essays on the Imagination; his morals and metaphysics are those of Shaftesbury. Akenside was inferior to Addison, not perhaps in power of analysis, but in delicacy of perception, in pliancy of feeling, in good sense. He was inferior to Shaftesbury in the quality of his moral enthusiasm. Shaftesbury's fine illumination comes to us reflected from a surface somewhat hard and cold; it is enthusiasm still, but it is enthusiasm which cannot subsist without rhetoric. For Akenside's moral elevation was self-conscious, a dignity of attitude assumed deliberately, a constructed elevation. His manner, we are told, was stiff and pompous; he was too oracular, and took a jest very ill. He was deficient on the side of common human sympathy; he lacked geniality. He felt himself to be a 'superior person,' and he was so in fact; but he had the kind of superior fatuousness that such persons are readily betrayed into. His tone is too high-

pitched; his ideas are too much in the air; they do not nourish themselves in the common heart, in the common life of man. Still Akenside really lifts up his head and tries to breathe empyreal gales. And if the doctrines of amiable deism, the optimist's view of life, final causes, the unity of goodness, truth and beauty, hardly seem to us to solve the riddles of the world, such solutions had certainly an attraction for some of the finest minds of the first half of the eighteenth century.

'The author's aim,' Akenside says in introducing his chief poem, 'was not so much to give formal precepts, or enter into the way of direct argumentation, as, by exhibiting the most engaging prospects of nature, to enlarge and harmonise the imagination.' A noble aim—but Akenside's theory and his descriptions somehow do not help each other as they ought. It is possible to set forth abstract truth with so much clearness and such exquisiteness of form, that its light may charm the eye as various colour charms. Truth again, in a mind like Plato's, may incarnate itself in a myth of the imagination, involuntarily and almost inevitably. Then the body and the soul of truth are indeed one living, breathing organism. But Akenside sets forth his truth in a series of illustrations; the doctrine is a peg on which he hangs a picture, and after you have admired, he comes forward to tell you that the picture is less interesting than the peg. The kind of truth which Akenside presents almost invites the expositor to a frigid style. A theory of beauty, and not beauty itself, save as an illustration; phrases about the sublime, a definition of moral loveliness;—it were easier to write poetically about sines and cosines. No treatise on the Attributes has ever won a lover for God.

Akenside's verse has been described as laborious; in reality it swims on only too gallantly. Its periods are rhetorical, like those of a lecturer with full command of his subject and conscious of superiority to his hearers. He does not brood, or meditate, or enquire; he expounds. Hence his frequent interrogative, his address to the reader, his 'lo!' and his 'behold!' It is not verse which delays, or coils upon itself like a stream in some rocky chalice when happy and loving most its own beauty; Akenside's verse is the verse of rhetorical exposition.

His odes have been rated below their true worth. They are not lyrics in the sense that Shelley's *Skylark* is lyrical; they are not melodious cries. But they have dignity of sentiment, and that not feigned; they present lofty thoughts in language of animated

seriousness and in well-measured verse. The *Hymn to the Naiads* has delighted so many cultured readers that the high rank generally assigned to it among Akenside's poems must be maintained; but it has the faults of its author's longer work. Nothing that he has written is in style so pure and strong as the *Inscriptions*. Their narrow limits did not give time for the rise of rhetorical excitement. They have, as is fitting, a marmoreal purity and permanence.

The recast of *The Pleasures of Imagination* does not gain on the original poem. Fine audacities of expression are struck away; the philosophical analysis becomes more minute and laboured. And if we are spared the incredible allegory of Euphrosyne and Nemesis, and the dreary sprightliness of the theory of ridicule, there are added passages which make amends to the injured Goddess of Dulness.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

FROM 'THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.'

Say, why was man so eminently raised
Amid the vast creation? why ordained
Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame,
But that the Omnipotent might send him forth,
In sight of mortal and immortal powers
As on a boundless theatre, to run
The great career of justice; to exalt
His generous aim to all diviner deeds;
To chase each partial purpose from his breast;
And through the mists of passion and of sense,
And through the tossing tide of chance and pain,
To hold his course unfaltering, while the voice
Of Truth and Virtue, up the steep ascent
Of Nature, calls him to his high reward,—
The applauding smile of Heaven? Else wherefore burns
In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession? wherefore darts the mind
With such resistless ardour to embrace
Majestic forms, impatient to be free;
Spurning the gross control of wilful might;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils;
Proud to be daring? Who but rather turns
To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame?
Who that from Alpine heights his labouring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey
Nilus or Ganges rolling his bright wave
Through mountains, plains, through empires black with shade,
And continents of sand, will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet? The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing

Beneath its native quarry. Tired of earth,
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Through fields of air; pursues the flying storm;
Rides on the vollied lightning through the heavens;
Or, yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long track of day. Then high she soars
The blue profound, and hovering round the sun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light, beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The fated rounds of time. Thence, far effused
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets, through its burning signs,
Exulting, measures the perennial wheel
Of Nature, and looks back on all the stars,
Whose blended light as with a milky zone
Invests the orient. Now amazed she views
The empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,
Beyond this concave heaven, their calm abode;
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
Has travelled the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
Even on the barriers of the world untired
She meditates the eternal depth below;
Till, half recoiling, down the headlong steep
She plunges; soon o'erwhelmed and swallowed up
In that immense of being. There her hopes
Rest at the fated goal. For, from the birth
Of mortal man, the sovran Maker said,
That not in humble nor in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robes, nor Pleasure's flowery lap,
The soul should find enjoyment; but, from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.

ON THE WINTER SOLSTICE, 1740.

I.

The radiant ruler of the year
At length his wintry goal attains;
Soon to reverse the long career,
And northward bend his steady reins.
Now, piercing half Potosi's height,
Prone rush the fiery floods of light,
Ripening the mountain's silver stores,
While in some cavern's horrid shade,
The panting Indian hides his head,
And oft the approach of eve implores.

II.

But lo, on this deserted coast
How pale the sun! how thick the air!
Mustering his storms, a sordid host,
Lo, Winter desolates the year.
The fields resign their latest bloom;
No more the breezes waft perfume,
No more the streams in music roll:
But snows fall dark or rains resound;
And, while great Nature mourns around,
Her griefs infect the human soul.

III.

Hence the loud city's busy throngs
Urge the warm bowl and splendid fire;
Harmonious dances, festive songs,
Against the spiteful heaven conspire.
Meantime, perhaps with tender fears,
Some village-dame the curfew hears,
While round the hearth her children play:
At morn their father went abroad;
The moon is sunk, and deep the road;
She sighs, and wonders at his stay.

IV.

But thou, my lyre, awake, arise,
And hail the sun's returning force;
Even now he climbs the northern skies,
And health and hope attend his course.
Then louder howl the aërial waste,
Be earth with keener cold embraced,
Yet gentle hours advance their wing;
And Fancy, mocking Winter's might,
With flowers, and dews, and streaming light,
Already decks the new-born spring.

V.

O fountain of the golden day!
Could mortal vows promote thy speed,
How soon before thy vernal ray
Should each unkindly damp recede!
How soon each hovering tempest fly,
Whose stores for mischief arm the sky,
Prompt on our heads to burst amain;
To rend the forest from the steep,
Or, thundering o'er the Baltic deep,
To whelm the merchant's hopes of gain!

VI.

But let not man's unequal views
Presume o'er Nature and her laws;
'Tis his with grateful joy to use
The indulgence of the sovran Cause;
Secure that health and beauty springs
Through this majestic frame of things,
Beyond what he can reach to know,
And that Heaven's all-subduing will,
With good, the progeny of ill,
Attempereth every state below.

VII.

How pleasing wears the wintry night,
Spent with the old illustrious dead!
While by the taper's trembling light
I seem those awful scenes to tread

Where chiefs or legislators lie,
Whose triumphs move before my eye,
In arms and antique pomp arrayed;
While now I taste the Ionian song,
Now bend to Plato's godlike tongue
Resounding through the olive shade.

VIII.

But should some cheerful, equal friend,
Bid leave the studious page a while,
Let mirth on wisdom then attend,
And social ease on learned toil;
Then while, at love's uncareful shrine,
Each dictates to the god of wine
Her name whom all his hopes obey,
What flattering dreams each bosom warm,
While absence, heightening every charm,
Invokes the slow-returning May!

IX.

May, thou delight of heaven and earth,
When will thy genial star arise?
The auspicious morn, which gives thee birth
Shall bring Eudora to my eyes.
Within her sylvan haunt behold,
As in the happy garden old,
She moves like that primeval fair:
Thither ye silver-sounding lyres,
Ye tender smiles, ye chaste desires,
Fond hope and mutual faith, repair.

X.

And if believing love can read
His better omens in her eye,
Then shall my fears, O charming maid,
And every pain of absence die:
Then shall my jocund harp, attuned
To thy true ear, with sweeter sound

Pursue the free Horatian song;
Old Tyne shall listen to my tale,
And echo down the bordering vale,
The liquid melody prolong.

For a Grotto.

To me, whom in their lays the shepherds call
Actæa, daughter of the neighbouring stream,
This cave belongs. The fig-tree and the vine,
Which o'er the rocky entrance downward shoot,
Were placed by Glycon. He with cowslips pale,
Primrose and purple lychnis, decked the green
Before my threshold, and my shelving walls
With honeysuckle covered. Here, at noon,
Lulled by the murmur of my rising fount,
I slumber: here my clustering fruits I tend,
Or from the humid flowers at break of day
Fresh garlands weave, and chase from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious. Enter in,
O Stranger, undismayed. Nor bat nor toad
Here lurks; and, if thy breast of blameless thoughts
Approve thee, not unwelcome shalt thou tread
My quiet mansion: chiefly if thy name
Wise Pallas and the immortal Muses own.

CHRISTOPHER SMART.

[CHRISTOPHER SMART was born at Shipbourne in Kent on April 11, 1722. He was educated at Durham School and at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, becoming a Fellow in 1745. In 1753 he married and came to live in London, where his careless habits soon brought him into grave difficulties. He was for some time out of his mind, and it was during his confinement, in an interval of sanity, that the *Song to David* was written. In 1770 he closed a life in which he had known all forms of disappointment and unhappiness. His poems were first collected in 1753, and a posthumous edition in two volumes was published in 1791. The *Song to David* appeared in a separate quarto in 1763, and was republished in 1819 by the Rev. R. Harvey.]

The posthumous Editor of Smart's poems makes an apology for the entire exclusion of the *Song to David* and some other pieces on the ground that 'they were written after the author's confinement, and bear for the most part melancholy proofs of the recent estrangement of his mind. Such poems however,' he adds, 'have been selected from his pamphlets and inserted in the present work as were likely to be acceptable to the reader.' The volumes so introduced contain a curious assemblage of quite worthless verses; Seatonian prize-poems, epigrams, birthday addresses, imitations of Pope and Gay, and all else that might be expected from a facile and uninspired versifier of that date. Two generations ago Smart's name was familiar to schoolboys from his translation of Horace into prose; a work about as worthy of immortality as were his imitative verses. It is only in our own day that attention has been recalled to the single poem by which he deserves to be not only remembered, but remembered as a poet who for one short moment reached a height to which the prosaic muse of his epoch was wholly unaccustomed. There is nothing like the *Song to David* in the eighteenth century; there is nothing out of which it might seem

to have been developed. It is true that with great appearance of symmetry it is ill-arranged and out of proportion; its hundred stanzas weary the reader with their repetitions and with their epithets piled up on a too obvious system. But in spite of this touch of pedantry, it is the work of a poet; of a man so possessed with the beauty and fervour of the Psalms and with the high romance of the psalmist's life that in the days of his madness the character of David has become a 'fixed idea' with him, to be embodied in words and dressed in the magic robe of verse when the dark hour has gone by. There are few episodes in our literary history more interesting than this of the wretched bookseller's hack, with his mind thrown off its balance by drink and poverty, rising at the instant of his deepest distress to a pitch of poetic performance unimagined by himself at all other times, unimagined by all but one or two of his contemporaries, and so little appreciated by the public that when an edition of his writings was called for it was sent into the world with this masterpiece omitted.

EDITOR.

A Song to David.

O Thou that sit'st upon a throne,
With harp of high majestic tone,
To praise the King of kings;
And voice of heaven-ascending swell,
Which, while its deeper notes excel,
Clear as a clarion rings:

To bless each valley, grove and coast,
And charm the cherubs to the post
Of gratitude in throngs;
To keep the days on Zion's mount,
And send the year to his account
With dances and with songs:

O servant of God's holiest charge,
The minister of praise at large,
Which thou may'st now receive;
From thy blest mansion hail and hear,
From topmost eminence appear
To this the wreath I weave.

Great, valiant, pious, good, and clean,
Sublime, contemplative, serene,
Strong, constant, pleasant, wise!
Bright effluence of exceeding grace;
Best man!—the swiftness and the race,
The peril, and the prize!

Great—from the lustre of his crown,
From Samuel's horn and God's renown,
Which is the people's voice;
For all the host, from rear to van,
Applauded and embraced the man—
The man of God's own choice.

Valiant—the word and up he rose—
The fight—he triumphed o'er his foes,
  Whom God's just laws abhor;
And armed in gallant faith he took
Against the boaster, from the brook,
  The weapons of the war.

Pious—magnificent and grand;
'Twas he the famous temple planned
  (The seraph in his soul);
Foremost to give his Lord his dues,
Foremost to bless the welcome news,
  And foremost to condole.

Good—from Jehudah's genuine vein,
From God's best nature good in grain,
  His aspect and his heart;
To pity, to forgive, to save;
Witness Engedi's conscious cave,
  And Shimei's blunted dart.

Clean—if perpetual prayer be pure,
And love, which could itself inure
  To fasting and to fear—
Clean in his gestures, hands, and feet,
To smite the lyre, the dance complete,
  To play the sword and spear.

Sublime—invention ever young,
Of vast conception, towering tongue
  To God th' eternal theme;
Notes from yon exaltations caught,
Unrivalled royalty of thought
  O'er meaner strains supreme.

Contemplative—on God to fix
His musings, and above the six
  The sabbath-day he blest;
'Twas then his thoughts self-conquest pruned,
And heavenly melancholy tuned,
  To bless and bear the rest.

Serene—to sow the seeds of peace,
Remembering, when he watched the fleece,
How sweetly Kidron purled—
To further knowledge, silence vice,
And plant perpetual paradise
When God had calmed the world.

Strong—in the Lord, who could defy
Satan, and all his powers that lie
In sempiternal night;
And hell, and horror, and despair
Were as the lion and the bear
To his undaunted might.

Constant—in love to God the truth,
Age, manhood, infancy and youth—
To Jonathan his friend
Constant, beyond the verge of death,
And Ziba and Mephibosheth
His endless fame attend.

Pleasant—and various as the year;
Man, soul, and angel, without peer,
Priest, champion, sage, and boy,
In armour or in ephod clad,
His pomp, his piety was glad;
Majestic was his joy.

Wise—in recovery from his fall,
Whence rose his eminence o'er all,
Of all the most reviled;
The light of Israel in his ways,
Wise are his precepts, prayer and praise
And counsel to his child.

His muse, bright angel of his verse,
Gives balm for all the thorns that pierce,
For all the pangs that rage;
Blest light, still gaining on the gloom,
The more than Michal of his bloom,
Th' Abishag of his age.

He sung of God—the mighty source
Of all things—the stupendous force
  On which all strength depends;
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes
All period, power and enterprise
  Commences, reigns, and ends.

Angels—their ministry and meed,
Which to and fro with blessings speed,
  Or with their citterns wait;
Where Michael with his millions bows,
Where dwells the seraph and his spouse,
  The cherub and her mate.

Of man—the semblance and effect
Of God and Love—the Saint elect
  For infinite applause—
To rule the land, and briny broad,
To be laborious in his laud,
  And heroes in his cause.

The world the clustering spheres He made,
The glorious light, the soothing shade,
  Dale, champaign, grove and hill;
The multitudinous abyss,
Where secrecy remains in bliss,
  And wisdom hides her skill.

Trees, plants, and flowers—of virtuous root;
Gem yielding blossom, yielding fruit,
  Choice gums and precious balm;
Bless ye the nosegay in the vale,
And with the sweetness of the gale
  Enrich the thankful psalm.

Of fowl—e'en every beak and wing
Which cheer the winter, hail the spring,
  That live in peace or prey;
They that make music, or that mock,
The quail, the brave domestic cock,
  The raven, swan, and jay.

Of fishes—every size and shape
Which nature frames of light escape,
  Devouring man to shun:
The shells are in the wealthy deep,
The shoals upon the surface leap,
  And love the glancing sun.

Of beasts—the beaver plods his task,
While the sleek tigers roll and bask,
  Nor yet the shades arouse;
Her cave the mining coney scoops;
Where o'er the mead the mountain stoops
  The kids exult and browse.

Of gems—their virtue and their price,
Which hid in earth from man's device,
  Their darts of lustre sheathe;
The jasper of the master's stamp,
The topaz blazing like a lamp
  Among the mines beneath.

* * * * *

O David, highest on the list
Of worthies, on God's ways insist,
  The genuine word repeat:
Vain are the documents of men,
And vain the flourish of the pen
  That keeps the fool's conceit.

Praise above all—for praise prevails.
Heap up the measure, load the scales,
  And good to goodness add:
The generous soul her favour aids,
But peevish obloquy degrades;
  The Lord is great and glad

For adoration all the ranks
Of angels yield eternal thanks,
And David in the midst;
With God's good poor, which, last and least
In man's esteem, thou to thy feast,
O blessed bridegroom, bidst.

For adoration seasons change,
And order, truth, and beauty range,
Adjust, attract, and fill:
The grass the polyanthus checks;
And polished porphyry reflects,
By the descending rill.

Rich almonds colour to the prime
For adoration; tendrils climb,
And fruit-trees pledge their gems;
And Iris[1] with her gorgeous vest
Builds for her eggs her cunning nest,
And bell-flowers bow their stems.

* * * * *

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,
And drops upon the leafy limes;
Sweet Hermon's fragrant air:
Sweet is the lily's silver bell,
And sweet the wakeful tapers smell
That watch for early prayer.

Sweet the young nurse with love intense,
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence;
Sweet when the lost arrive:
Sweet the musician's ardour beats,
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,
The choicest flowers to hive.

[1] The humming bird

Sweeter in all the strains of love
The language of thy turtle dove
Paired to thy swelling chord;
Sweeter with every grace endued
The glory of thy gratitude
Respired unto the Lord.

Strong is the horse upon his speed;
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,[1]
Which makes at once his game:
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;
Strong thro' the turbulent profound
Shoots xiphias[2] to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole
His chest against the foes;
Strong, the gier-eagle on his sail.
Strong against tide th' enormous whale
Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air,
And in the sea, the man of prayer;
And far beneath the tide;
And in the seat to faith assigned,
Where ask is have, where seek is find,
Where knock is open wide.

Beauteous the fleet before the gale;
Beauteous the multitudes in mail,
Ranked arms and crested heads:
Beauteous the garden's umbrage mild,
Walk, water, meditated wild,
And all the bloomy beds.

[1] The kite. [2] The sword-fish

Beauteous the moon full on the lawn;
And beauteous, when the veil's withdrawn,
The virgin to her spouse:
Beauteous the temple decked and filled,
When to the heaven of heavens they build
Their heart-directed vows.

Beauteous, yea beauteous more than these,
The shepherd-king upon his knees
For his momentous trust;
With wish of infinite conceit,
For man, beast, mute, the small and great,
And prostrate dust to dust.

Precious the bounteous widow's mite;
And precious, for extreme delight,
The largess from the churl:
Precious the ruby's blushing blaze,
And alba's[1] blest imperial rays,
And pure cerulean pearl.

Precious the penitential tear;
And precious is the sigh sincere,
Acceptable to God:
And precious are the winning flowers,
In gladsome Israel's feast of bowers,
Bound on the hallowed sod.

More precious that diviner part
Of David, even the Lord's own heart,
Great, beautiful, and new;
In all things where it was intent,
In all extremes, in each event
Proof—answering true to true.

[1] Rev xxi 11 (?)

Glorious the sun in mid career;
Glorious th' assembled fires appear;
  Glorious the comet's train:
Glorious the trumpet and alarm;
Glorious th' almighty stretched-out arm;
  Glorious th' enraptured main:

Glorious the northern lights astream;
Glorious the song, when God's the theme;
  Glorious the thunder's roar:
Glorious hosanna from the den;
Glorious the catholic amen;
  Glorious the martyr's gore:

Glorious—more glorious is the crown
Of Him that brought salvation down,
  By meekness call'd thy Son;
Thou at[1] stupendous truth believed,
And now the matchless deed's achieved,
  Determined, dared, and done.

[1] *Or* that (?).

WILLIAM FALCONER.

[Born 11th of February, 1732; lost with the crew of the Aurora, last heard of on 27th December, 1769, at the Cape of Good Hope. *The Shipwreck* was published in 1762.]

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1755, appeared a versified complaint, *On the Uncommon Scarcity of Poetry*, by a Sailor. The scarcity still prevailed when seven years later a sailor—the same perhaps who had written the complaint—startled English readers by his discovery of a new epic theme. The Muse, as Falconer imagines her, visits him in no olive-grove, or flowery lawn, but in a glimmering cavern beside the sea; his lyre is tuned to

> 'The long surge that foams through yonder cave,
> Whose vaults remurmur to the roaring wave.'

There was largeness, and freedom and force in the subject he had chosen; and what is best in his treatment of it was learnt direct from the waves and winds. No one before Falconer had conceived or told in English poetry the long and passionate combat between the sea, roused to fury, and its slight but dexterous rival, with the varying fortunes of the strife. He had himself, like his Arion, been wrecked near Cape Colonna, on the coast of Greece; like Arion, he was one of three who reached the shore and lived. For the material of his brief epic he needed but to revive in his imagination the sights, the sounds, the fears, the hopes, the efforts of five days the most eventful and the most vivid of his life. *The Shipwreck* is not a descriptive poem; it is a poem of action; each buffet of the sea, each swift turning of the wheel is a portion of the attack or the defence; and as the catastrophe draws near, as the ship scuds past Falconera, as the hills of Greece

rise to view, as the pitiless cliffs of St. George grow clear, and the sound of the breakers is heard, the action of the poem increases in swiftness and intensity.

Falconer was a skilful seaman; unhappily he was not a great poet. The reality, the unity, the largeness of his theme lend him support; and he is a faithful and energetic narrator. But the spirits of tempest and of night needed for their interpreter one of stronger and subtler speech than Falconer. Nor was it possible to render into orderly couplets after Pope the vast cadences, the difficult phrases of ocean. The poet's diction is the artificial diction of eighteenth-century verse, handled with none of that exquisite art shown by some cultured writers of the time. And into the midst of the commonplace poetic vocabulary bounces suddenly a rattling row of nautical terms suitable only for the *Marine Dictionary*. Phœbus and Clio must lend a hand to brail up the mizen, or belay the topping-lift.

The persons—Albert prudent and bold, the rough Rodmond, the tender Arion—are drawn in simple outlines. 'Some part of the love-story of Palemon,' says Campbell, 'is rather swainish.' But Falconer's love-sentiment is as genuine as any other part of the feeling of his poem; and a sailor writing on gentle themes becomes perhaps naturally a swain. The seal of fidelity was set upon Falconer's sea-poem by death—an unknown death in some unknown sea.

EDWARD DOWDEN

FROM 'THE SHIPWRECK,' CANTO III.

In vain the cords and axes were prepared,
For every wave now smites the quivering yard ;
High o'er the ship they throw a dreadful shade,
Then on her burst in terrible cascade ;
Across the foundered deck o'erwhelming roar,
And foaming, swelling, bound upon the shore.
Swift up the mountain billow now she flies,
Her shattered top half buried in the skies ;
Borne o'er a latent reef the hull impends,
Then thundering on the marble crag descends :
Her ponderous bulk the dire concussion feels,
And o'er upheaving surges wounded reels—
Again she plunges ! hark ! a second shock
Bilges the splitting vessel on the rock—
Down on the vale of death, with dismal cries,
The fated victims shuddering cast their eyes
In wild despair ; while yet another stroke
With strong convulsion rends the solid oak :
Ah Heaven !—behold her crashing ribs divide
She loosens, parts, and spreads in ruin o'er the tide.

Oh, were it mine with sacred Maro's art
To wake to sympathy the feeling heart,
Like him, the smooth and mournful verse to dress
In all the pomp of exquisite distress ;
Then, too severely taught by cruel fate,
To share in all the perils I relate,
Then might I with unrivalled strains deplore
The impervious horrors of a leeward shore.

As o'er the surf the bending main-mast hung,
Still on the rigging thirty seamen clung :
Some on a broken crag were struggling cast,
And there by oozy tangles grappled fast ;

Awhile they bore the o'erwhelming billows' rage,
Unequal combat with their fate to wage;
Till all benumbed, and feeble, they forego
Their slippery hold, and sink to shades below:
Some, from the main yard-arm impetuous thrown
On marble ridges, die without a groan:
Three with Palemon on their skill depend,
And from the wreck on oars and rafts descend;
Now on the mountain-wave on high they ride,
Then downward plunge beneath the involving tide,
Till one, who seems in agony to strive,
The whirling breakers heave on shore alive:
The rest a speedier end of anguish knew,
And pressed the stony beach—a lifeless crew!
Next, O unhappy chief! the eternal doom
Of Heaven decreed thee to the briny tomb:
What scenes of misery torment thy view!
What painful struggles of thy dying crew!
Thy perished hopes all buried in the flood
O'erspread with corses! red with human blood!
So pierced with anguish hoary Priam gazed,
When Troy's imperial domes in ruin blazed;
While he, severest sorrow doomed to feel,
Expired beneath the victor's murdering steel—
Thus with his helpless partners to the last,
Sad refuge! Albert grasps the floating mast.
His soul could yet sustain this mortal blow,
But droops, alas! beneath superior woe;
For now strong nature's sympathetic chain
Tugs at his yearning heart with powerful strain;
His faithful wife, for ever doomed to mourn
For him, alas! who never shall return;
To black adversity's approach exposed,
With want, and hardships unforeseen, enclosed;
His lovely daughter, left without a friend
Her innocence to succour and defend,
By youth and indigence set forth a prey
To lawless guilt, that flatters to betray—

While these reflections rack his feeling mind,
Rodmond, who hung beside, his grasp resigned;
And, as the tumbling waters o'er him rolled,
His outstretched arms the master's legs enfold:
Sad Albert feels their dissolution near,
And strives in vain his fettered limbs to clear,
For death bids every clenching joint adhere:
All faint, to Heaven he throws his dying eyes,
And, 'Oh protect my wife and child!' he cries—
The gushing streams roll back the unfinished sound,
He gasps! and sinks amid the vast profound.
Five only left of all the shipwrecked throng
Yet ride the mast which shoreward drives along;
With these Arion still his hold secures,
And all assaults of hostile waves endures:
O'er the dire prospect as for life he strives,
He looks if poor Palemon yet survives—
'Ah wherefore, trusting to unequal art,
Didst thou, incautious! from the wreck depart?
Alas! these rocks all human skill defy;
Who strikes them once, beyond relief must die:
And now sore wounded, thou perhaps art tost
On these, or in some oozy cavern lost:'
Thus thought Arion, anxious gazing round
In vain, his eyes no more Palemon found—
The demons of destruction hover nigh,
And thick their mortal shafts commissioned fly:
When now a breaking surge, with forceful sway,
Two, next Arion, furious tears away;
Hurled on the crags, behold they gasp, they bleed!
And groaning, cling upon the elusive weed;
Another billow bursts in boundless roar!
Arion sinks! and memory views no more.
Ha! total night and horror here preside,
My stunned ear tingles to the whizzing tide;
It is their funeral knell! and gliding near
Methinks the phantoms of the dead appear!
But lo! emerging from the watery grave
Again they float incumbent on the wave,

Again the dismal prospect opens round,—
The wreck, the shore, the dying and the drowned!
And see! enfeebled by repeated shocks,
Those two, who scramble on the adjacent rocks,
Their faithless hold no longer can retain,
They sink o'erwhelmed! and never rise again.
Two with Arion yet the mast upbore,
That now above the ridges reached the shore;
Still trembling to descend, they downward gaze
With horror pale, and torpid with amaze:
The floods recoil! the ground appears below!
And life's faint embers now rekindling glow:
Awhile they wait the exhausted waves' retreat,
Then climb slow up the beach with hands and feet—
O Heaven! delivered by whose sovereign hand
Still on destruction's brink they shuddering stand,
Receive the languid incense they bestow,
That, damp with death, appears not yet to glow;
To Thee each soul the warm oblation pays
With trembling ardour of unequal praise;
In every heart dismay with wonder strives,
And hope the sickened spark of life revives,
Her magic powers their exiled health restore,
Till horror and despair are felt no more.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

[Born at Pallas, county of Longford, Ireland, on the 10th of November, 1728; died in his chambers in Brick Court, London, on the 4th of April, 1774. *The Traveller* was published in December 1764; *The Deserted Village*, May 1770. The ballad *The Hermit* first appeared in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1776. *The Haunch of Venison*, written about 1771, was first published after its author's death, 1776; *Retaliation*, Goldsmith's last work, was also of posthumous publication, 1774.]

The poems of Goldsmith make but a small fragment of his work; they are, however, more finely wrought and of a costlier material than the rest. 'I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail Muses,' he said, 'they would let me starve.' And so he turned to the booksellers' task-work, bestowing on that task-work a grace which was all his own; and, the drudgery ended, he took his wages and was light of heart. But poetry belonged to his higher self, to his affections, to his imagination. Goldsmith could not have written *The Deserted Village* to the order of Griffiths or Newbery; and it is told—nor is the story incredible—that he went back with the note for one hundred pounds in his pocket, and insisted that his publisher should not ruin himself by paying 'five shillings a couplet.' The rustic maid Poetry whom he loved was not quite penniless; still Goldsmith felt that the attachment was imprudent, and she was none the less dear to his foolish heart on that account:

> 'Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
> My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,
> Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
> That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so.'

His poems won for Goldsmith friendships and fame, yet he felt truly that his was not a poetic age. The keenest intellects and the most powerful imaginations of the time found their proper utterance in prose. The high tragedy of that period is *Clarissa*; the broadest and brightest study of the *comédie humaine* is *Tom Jones*. Johnson in his essays had dignified the minor morals of Addison, and breathed into them the spirit of a courageous melancholy. Burke by breadth of vision and largeness of character was

transforming the political pamphlet from a thing of party to a thing for mankind. Hume had shown how the facts of history may be artfully disposed, and their ragged edges smoothed away, until a graceful narrative emerges from the confusion. Gibbon was already projecting the lines of his Roman road through the centuries. It was the age of prose. The poets themselves had turned critics, making but timid experiments in verse; the more exquisite their culture, the less was their poetic courage. One or two indeed might appear more robust, but by a well-instructed eye their force was seen to be but turbulence. As for the rest they handed their verses around in manuscript; then perhaps contributed them to a poetical miscellany; finally, collected them in a tiny volume, or a quarto pamphlet of ample margin.

Goldsmith, whose genius slumbered late, was in no hurry to be a poet, and he looked carefully to make sure of himself and of his way. With a happy instinct he discerned his own gift, and it was his virtue, amid all his wanderings, and with all his seeming recklessness, to be faithful to that gift. Should he apply his humour to base uses and follow in the steps of Churchill? Goldsmith affected no airs of dignity in what he wrote, and did not fear that word of reproach in his day, *low*; but his gentle heart, his kindly wisdom, made it impossible for him to follow Churchill. He did not covet the reputation of a literary bully; his was no loud contentious voice; if he hated anything, he hated the rage of party spirit. But might he not accept Gray as a master? Goldsmith has left on record his estimate of Gray, and the words express a qualified enthusiasm, a certain official admiration as critic. But in truth, to please him poetry should address the heart, and he felt cold towards the fastidious flights of *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poetry*. He ventured to hint to Gray the advice that Isocrates used to give his scholars, *study the people*. Pindar had been popular—Pan himself was seen dancing to his melody. The seeming obscurity, the sudden transitions, the hazardous epithet of that mighty master had been caught by Gray; the directness, the life, the native energy of classical poetry he had not discovered. And Gray's imitators, what did they produce but 'tawdry things . . . in writing which the poet sits down without any plan, and heaps up splendid images without any selection'? Last, there was the didactic essay or epistle in verse. Should Goldsmith become the successor of Akenside? Goldsmith highly esteemed the didactic poem; he looked on it as characteristic of England.

But, at least, let it be written in our old rhymed couplet, not in pedantic blank-verse; and as for the pompous epithet, the licentious transposition, the unnatural construction, let these be reformed altogether. Why too should dulness be an essential of didactic poetry? Goldsmith could not endure its 'disgusting solemnity of manner'; he loved innocent gaiety, and found much wisdom in that agreeable trifling which often 'deceives us into instruction.'

With such views, and at a time of life when all his powers were ripe and mellow, Goldsmith published his *Traveller*. Some fragments, perhaps a first sketch of the poem, had been sent from Switzerland to his brother Henry in 1755. *The Traveller*, as we know it, is an attempt to unite the didactic with the descriptive poem. But Goldsmith does not begin with theory, and proceed to illustrate his theory by a series of pictures. He begins with a sigh for kindred and for home. The poem is personal; the reflections, except perhaps the closing ones, which came from Johnson, are such as naturally arose in his mind in the days of his wandering. It would have been easy to have thrown *The Traveller* into the form of an Essay on the Happiness of Nations, or *The Deserted Village* into that of an Epistle on the Dangers of Luxury, and then the wanderer sounding his flute beside the Loire might have risen to the stature of a philosophic spectator with a classical name; sweet Auburn might have appeared as minor term of a syllogism concerned with the abuse of wealth. Goldsmith chose a simpler method, more wholesome and sweet. He had actually smiled at sight of the old dames of the province in their quaint French caps leading out the little boys and girls to foot it while he piped; he had turned away disappointed from the Carinthian peasant's inhospitable door; he had breasted the keen air with the Alpine herdsman; he had lazily stared from the towing-path at the Dutchman squat on his brown canal-boat. Seeking neither wealth, nor advancement, nor toilful learning, unencumbered by possessions of his own, he had looked on all with a sympathetic eye, an open heart, an innocent delight in human gladness, a kindly smile at human frailty, a sigh and a tear for human woe; and from all he had gathered a store of gentle wisdom, of dear remembrance. He needed only to select from his recollections whatever was most full of charm, what was gayest, tenderest, most pleasantly coloured, and with these to mingle some natural thoughts, some natural feelings. Surely an easy thing; and yet none except Goldsmith had the secret how to do this, to unite such various elements

into a delightful whole,—description, reflection, mirth, sadness, memory and love. No one like Goldsmith could pass so tranquilly from grave to gay, still preserving the delicate harmony of tone. No one like Goldsmith knew how to be at once natural and exquisite, innocent and wise, a man and still a child.

The naturalness and ease of his poetry are those of an accomplished craftsman. His verse, which flows towards the close of the period with such a gentle yet steady advance, is not less elaborated than that of Pope, and Goldsmith conceived his verse more in paragraphs than in couplets. His subdued brilliancy was perhaps harder to attain than the point and polish of *The Rape of the Lock*. His artless words were, each one, delicately chosen; his simple constructions were studiously sought. Cooke, Goldsmith's neighbour in the Temple, speaks of the Doctor's slowness in writing poetry 'not from tardiness of fancy, but from the time he took in pointing the sentiment, and polishing the versification.' In writing *The Deserted Village* the Doctor, as Cooke again tells us, 'first sketched a part of his design in prose, in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him; he then sat down carefully to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject; and if sometimes he would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, these he would take singular pains afterwards to revise, lest they should be found unconnected with his main design.' When Cooke entered the Doctor's chamber one morning Goldsmith with some elation read aloud to him the ten lines beginning

> 'Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
> Seats of my youth, when every sport could please.'

'Come, let me tell you this is no bad morning's work,' he said; 'and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a Shoemaker's Holiday with you.'

Whether *The Traveller* or *The Deserted Village* be the more admirable poem, whether Auburn be an English village or the Irish Lissoy, or both in one, whether Goldsmith's political economy be solid or sentimental, it is perhaps not necessary once more to discuss. Perhaps Auburn bordered on Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, and the doctrines concerning agricultural and commercial prosperity were suited to that neighbourhood. It would be pleasant to hear Jaques and Touchstone discuss them, taking opposite sides. Certainly Auburn is English, but certainly too

Paddy Byrne kept school there, and Uncle Contarine or Henry Goldsmith occupied the rectory. In whatever shire or county situated, we know Auburn better than any other village; its sweet confusion of rural sounds is in our ears; we have seen its children hanging on the venerable preacher's gown; we have played truant from the stern schoolmaster, and trembled in his presence; we know the clicking of the ale-house clock, and have felt the old, plain pathos of the woodman's ballad! And we grieve that Auburn is departed. It may be a weak retreat into the age of sentiment and simplicity and Rousseau; perhaps we ought rather exult in the triumphs of modern civilisation and the progress of modern science. Still the flowers of an old garden-croft smell sweet, and the hawthorn bush is white under which lovers whisper.

The ballad of *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Haunch of Venison*, and *Retaliation* mark the extremes of Goldsmith's somewhat limited range in verse. Any reader of the ballad who pleases may make a wry face, along with Kenrick of Grub Street, at the insipidity of Dr. Goldsmith's negus, and may seek elsewhere some livelier liquor. We feel differently, for we have heard this ballad in the open air from Mr. Burchell's manly throat, while Sophia in her new ribbons languished in the hay. To us, the love-lorn stranger is an eighteenth-century cousin—and so perhaps a little modish—of Rosalind and Viola. Those earlier disguisers bore themselves no doubt more gallantly, with more of saucy archness; but none was more sweetly discovered than Goldsmith's pretty pilgrim by her mantling blush, and bashful glance, and rising breast. In *The Haunch of Venison* we have a miniature farce, and Goldsmith good-naturedly includes himself among the persons to be laughed at. *Retaliation* is the most mischievous, and the most playful, the friendliest and the faithfulest of satires. How much better we know Garrick because Goldsmith has shown him to us in his acting off the stage! And do we as often think of Reynolds in any attitude as in that of smiling non-listener to the critical coxcombs:

> 'When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.'

Would that portraits of Johnson and Boswell had been added!

EDWARD DOWDEN.

FROM 'THE DESERTED VILLAGE.'

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn:
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall,
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,

Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
Nor surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;

But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watchdog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.

The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write and cypher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran—that he could gauge;
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For even though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth, and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place;
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendour! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found,
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

FROM 'RETALIATION.'

Here lies our good Edmund[1], whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it, too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,
To persuade Tommy Townshend[2] to lend him a vote:
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool; for a drudge disobedient;
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.
In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed, or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

* * * * * *

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can,
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;
As an actor, confessed without rival to shine:
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,
And beplastered with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turned and he varied full ten times a day:
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick,
If they were not his own by finessing and trick:
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame;
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who peppered the highest, was surest to please.

[1] Edmund Burke.

[2] Mr. T. Townshend, M.P for Whitchurch, afterwards Lord Sydney

But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys[1], and Woodfalls[2] so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub-street re-echo the shouts that you raised,
While he was be-Rosciused, and you were bepraised!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel and mix with the skies:
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will,
Old Shakspeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

* * * * * *

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind;
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart:
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing:
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet[3], and only took snuff.

STANZAS ON WOMAN.

When lovely Woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

[1] Hugh Kelly, author of *False Delicacy*, &c. Died 1777.
[2] William Woodfall, printer of the *Morning Chronicle*. Died 1803.
[3] Sir Joshua Reynolds was deaf and used an ear-trumpet.

THOMAS WARTON.

[THOMAS WARTON was born in 1728 at Basingstoke, of which town his father (Thomas Warton, Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1718 to 1728) was vicar. He was educated at first by his father, and in 1743 became a member of Trinity College, Oxford, of which society he became a Fellow in 1751. He was Professor of Poetry from 1757 to 1767, and became Poet-Laureate on the death of Whitehead in 1785. He died in 1790. His poems, published separately from time to time, were collected in 1777, and again, in two vols. 8vo., in 1802.]

Thomas Warton is in his poetry chiefly imitative, as was natural in so laborious a student of our early poetical literature. The edition of his poems which was published by his admirer and his brother's devoted pupil, Richard Mant, offers a curious example of a poet 'killed with kindness'; for the apparatus of parallel passages from Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and others, is enough to ruin any little claim to originality which might have been put forward for him. The *Pleasures of Melancholy* is a cento of *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *The Faerie Queene*; the *Ode on the Approach of Summer* is a mere echo of *L'Allegro*. Again, the influence of Gray makes itself far too strongly felt in Warton's elegiac poems and odes. But there are reasons why his genial figure should not be altogether excluded from a representative English anthology. It has often been said that his *History of English Poetry*, with Percy's *Reliques*, turned the course of our letters into a fresh channel; but what is more noticeable here is that his own poetry—or much of it, for he is not always free from the taint of pseudo-classicalism—instinctively deals with materials like those on which the older writers had drawn. In reaction against the didactic and critical temper of the earlier half of his century, he is a student of nature; he is even an 'enthusiast,' in Whitehead's sense. He has two passions, well expressed in the

two sonnets here given—the passion for 'antiquity' and the passion for nature; for the Bodleian Library and for

> 'The field, the forest, green and gay,
> The dappled slope, the tedded hay;'

and, we may add, for Oxford, his home for forty-seven years, at whose service he was always ready to place his invention, his humour, and his gift of satire. The real Warton is to be looked for in the writings in which these passions find their vent; in the *History*, in the *Sonnets* (a form of composition which he revived among us), and in the *Humorous Pieces*; not in the 'quit-rent odes' which were wrung from him by the unhappy necessities of his laureateship.

EDITOR

FROM 'THE TRIUMPH OF ISIS[1].'

Let Granta boast the patrons of her name,
Each splendid fool of fortune and of fame:
Still of preferment let her shine the queen,
Prolific parent of each bowing dean:
Be hers each prelate of the pampered cheek,
Each courtly chaplain, sanctified and sleek:
Still let the drones of her exhaustless hive
On rich pluralities supinely thrive:
Still let her senates titled slaves revere,
Nor dare to know the patriot from the peer;
No longer charmed by Virtue's lofty song,
Once heard sage Milton's manly tones among,
Where Cam, meandering thro' the matted reeds,
With loitering wave his groves of laurel feeds.
'Tis ours, my son, to deal the sacred bay,
Where honour calls, and justice points the way;
To wear the well-earned wreath that merit brings,
And snatch a gift beyond the reach of kings.
Scorning and scorned by courts, yon Muse's bower
Still nor enjoys, nor seeks, the smile of power.
Though wakeful Vengeance watch my crystal spring,
Though Persecution wave her iron wing,
And, o'er yon spiry temples as she flies,
'These destined seats be mine,' exulting cries;
Fortune's fair smiles on Isis still attend:
And, as the dews of gracious heaven descend
Unasked, unseen, in still but copious showers,
Her stores on me spontaneous Bounty pours.
See, Science walks with recent chaplets crowned;
With fancy's strain my fairy shades resound;
My Muse divine still keeps her customed state,
The mien erect, and high majestic gait:

[1] This poem was written when Warton was an undergraduate, in answer to Isis, an Elegy,' by Mason.

Green as of old each olived portal smiles,
And still the Graces build my Grecian piles:
My Gothic spires in ancient glory rise,
And dare with wonted pride to rush into the skies.

FROM 'THE FIRST OF APRIL.'

Scant along the ridgy land
The beans their new-born ranks expand:
The fresh-turned soil with tender blades
Thinly the sprouting barley shades:
Fringing the forest's devious edge,
Half robed appears the hawthorn hedge;
Or to the distant eye displays
Weakly green its budding sprays.

The swallow, for a moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green:
From the gray moor, on feeble wing,
The screaming plovers idly spring:
The butterfly, gay-painted soon,
Explores awhile the tepid noon;
And fondly trusts its tender dyes
To fickle suns, and flattering skies.

Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,
If a cloud should haply lower,
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,
Mute on a sudden is the lark;
But when gleams the sun again
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,
And from behind his watery veil
Looks through the thin descending hail;
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,
Salutes the blithe return of light,
And high her tuneful track pursues
Mid the dim rainbow's scattered hues.

Where in venerable rows
Widely waving oaks inclose
The moat of yonder antique hall,
Swarm the rooks with clamorous call;
And to the toils of nature true,
Wreath their capacious nests anew.

Musing through the lawny park,
The lonely poet loves to mark
How various greens in faint degrees
Tinge the tall groups of various trees;
While, careless of the changing year,
The pine cerulean, never sere,
Towers distinguished from the rest,
And proudly vaunts her winter vest.

Within some whispering osier isle,
Where Glym's low banks neglected smile;
And each trim meadow still retains
The wintry torrent's oozy stains:
Beneath a willow, long forsook,
The fisher seeks his customed nook;
And bursting through the crackling sedge,
That crowns the current's caverned edge,
He startles from the bordering wood
The bashful wild-duck's early brood.

O'er the broad downs, a novel race,
Frisk the lambs with faltering pace,
And with eager bleatings fill
The foss that skirts the beaconed hill.

His free-born vigour yet unbroke
To lordly man's usurping yoke,
The bounding colt forgets to play,
Basking beneath the noon-tide ray,
And stretched among the daisies pied
Of a green dingle's sloping side:
While far beneath, where nature spreads
Her boundless length of level meads,

In loose luxuriance taught to stray
A thousand tumbling rills inlay
With silver veins the vale, or pass
Redundant through the sparkling grass.

Yet, in these presages rude,
Midst her pensive solitude,
Fancy, with prophetic glance,
Sees the teeming months advance;
The field, the forest, green and gay,
The dappled slope, the tedded hay;
Sees the reddening orchard blow,
The harvest wave, the vintage flow;
Sees June unfold his glossy robe
Of thousand hues o'er all the globe;
Sees Ceres grasp her crown of corn,
And Plenty load her ample horn.

SONNET WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF DUGDALE'S 'MONASTICON.'

Deem not devoid of elegance the sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
Of painful pedantry the poring child,
Who turns, of these proud domes, th' historic page,
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely styled,
Intent. While cloistered Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictured stores.
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

TO THE RIVER LODON.

Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath thy azure sky, and golden sun,
Where first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive Memory traces back the round,
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road;
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature:
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestowed

CHARLES CHURCHILL.

[CHARLES CHURCHILL was born in Westminster in 1731, and died at Boulogne in 1764. A poor London curate, who eked out his salary by teaching, he made a hit by his *Rosciad*, a satire on contemporary actors, in 1761, and during the brief residue of his life abandoned himself to literature and dissipation.]

The celebrity of the smart versemaking of Churchill marks a low point in English taste. It nearly secured him a poet's monument in Westminster Abbey; and it actually secured a poet's rank for a petulant rhymer without a spark of the poet's imagination, of cold heart, natural bad taste, and very little knowledge of that narrow world which he so impudently lampooned. Nothing in Churchill reveals a gleam of genial feeling, or justifies the suspicion that he could take any pleasure in what refines or elevates. If we may believe his own account of himself, nature had given him little enough, beyond an ugly face, a sour temperament, and a bitter tongue. Yet he was not dissatisfied. He was very willing to be taken for what he was: and if he could not win liking and respect, he was content to be feared. In all this there must have been something of affectation. Yet it is only too clear that the coarse texture of his mind was impermeable to the kindlier and worthier influences of his time. What it most readily absorbed was that hatred of authority in general which keen observers saw widely spread in England long before it convulsed society in France: and poverty, obscurity, and habits of monotonous toil, sadly evinced by the industry with which he practised his new-found trade, had even in youth embittered a sour nature, and made him a Jacobin at heart. At all aristocracy, social, political, and intellectual, Churchill railed with vicious delight. The artificiality of his times revolted him with better reason. But with all his boasting of

nature and originality, few writers have less of the true spirit of either. The nature which he really followed was the coarse and narrow nature within him; and his originality consisted mainly in ostentatiously abandoning proportion and propriety. His success was due to his capacity of absorption and imitation. He had studied Dryden and Pope minutely, and learnt the trick of octosyllabic singsong from Butler and Swift. But the knowledge of man, the power of burlesque, the skilful play of jest and earnest, which are the essentials of true satire, were denied to Churchill. His whole stock in trade was his volubility, his bitterness of soul, and his knack of rhyme: and he cast over what he wrote something of the ungenial seriousness of his clerical calling. His address to Truth suggests that he knew where his strength and his weakness lay.

'But come not with that easy mien
By which you won the lively Dean,
Nor yet assume that strumpet air
Which Rabelais taught thee first to wear,
Nor yet that arch ambiguous face
With which Cervantes gave thee grace:
But come in sacred vesture clad,
Solemnly dull, and truly sad
Far from thy seemly matron train
Be idiot mirth, and laughter vain!
For wit and humour, which pretend
At once to please us and amend,
They are not for my present turn,
Let them remain in France with Sterne'

The Ghost, Book II.

The description of his muse, with which the following selection commences, is truthful enough. The neglect of his style was no studied air, but arose from natural slovenliness, from imperfect command over brain and pen, and no doubt from unwillingness to strike out lines which produced him half-a-crown a copy when the total of a sheet was made up. The poverty of Churchill's mind is curiously illustrated by the poem on the *Cock Lane Ghost*, a subject which might perhaps have supplied Dryden with materials for a hundred lines. Churchill spins it out to over four thousand. His field was limited to the narrow topics of the town and his ambition was to be the censor of its manners and the scourge

of its vices. But he failed to become the Dryden or the Juvenal of his age. All interest in his writings has disappeared with their ephemeral incidents and conditions: and that which has redeemed him from oblivion is his boisterous energy, his brazen effrontery, his extraordinary command of common pedestrian English, and the sharp relief in which he stands out among the formal poetasters of his day, and which perhaps entitles him to be regarded as a precursor of the better school of poetry which arose with Burns, Cowper, and Wordsworth. Cowper, we know, had a real admiration for him [1]. His earliest work, the *Rosciad*, is his best, because in it he most adhered to good models. His later works will serve the student as a rich mine of all sorts of errors in taste and judgment. In proportion as he abandoned himself to his own guidance, his work degenerated, and the poverty of his thought appeared; and in three years he had literally written himself out. But in all that he wrote there is a certain fierce manliness which wins attention, and even sympathy for his untutored brain and unsoftened heart, and this effect is heightened by the story of his life and death. No writer requires to be read with more caution by those who seek in literature a reflection of history and politics. The exaggerated Whiggism of Churchill betrays a want of political knowledge and judgment, and it did not save him from being deceived by the gross imposture of *The Patriot King*. His adulation of Pitt was part of the cant of the day: but Wilkes, the idol of the mob, was the object of his real sympathies, and Wilkes repaid him with patronage. The pair were well matched, and Churchill might be described as the Wilkes of poetry.

E. J. PAYNE.

[1] Cf. the lines given on p. 436

DESCRIPTION OF HIS MUSE.

[From *The Prophecy of Famine.*]

Me, whom no muse of heavenly birth inspires,
No judgment tempers when rash genius fires:
Who boast no merit but mere knack of rhyme,
Short gleams of sense, and satire out of time,
Who cannot follow where trim Fancy leads
By 'prattling streams,' o'er 'flower-empurpled meads':
Who often, but without success, have prayed
For apt alliteration's artful aid:
Who would, but cannot, with a master's skill,
Coin fine new epithets, which mean no ill—
Me, thus uncouth, thus every way unfit
For pacing poesy, and ambling wit,
TASTE with contempt beholds, nor deigns to place
Among the lowest of her favoured race!

CHARACTERS OF ACTORS.

[From *The Rosciad.*]

Havard and Davies.

Here Havard, all serene, in the same strains,
Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs and complains:
His easy vacant face proclaim'd a heart
Which could not feel emotions, nor impart.
With him came mighty Davies. (On my life,
That Davies hath a very pretty wife!)
Statesman all over! In plots famous grown!
He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone

Yates.

In characters of low and vulgar mould,
Where nature's coarsest features we behold,
Where, destitute of every decent grace,
Unmannered jests are blurted in your face,
There Yates with justice strict attention draws,
Acts truly from himself, and gains applause.

But when, to please himself or charm his wife,
He aims at something in politer life,
When, blindly thwarting nature's stubborn plan,
He treads the stage by way of gentleman,
The clown, who no one touch of breeding knows,
Looks like Tom Errand dressed in Clincher's clothes.
Fond of his dress, fond of his person grown,
Laugh'd at by all, and to himself unknown,
From side to side he struts, he smiles, he prates,
And seems to wonder what's become of Yates.

Foote.

By turns transformed into all kind of shapes,
Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts, and scrapes:
Now in the centre, now in van or rear,
The Proteus shifts, bawd, parson, auctioneer.
His strokes of humour, and his burst of sport,
Are all contained in this one word—distort.
Doth a man stutter, look asquint, or halt?
Mimics draw humour out of nature's fault:
With personal defects their mirth adorn,
And hang misfortunes out to public scorn.
Ev'n I, whom nature cast in hideous mould,
Whom having made, she trembled to behold,
Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
And find that nature's errors are my own.

Quin.

His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,
Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage.

* * * * * *

In fancied scenes, as in life's real plan,
He could not, for a moment, sink the man.
In whate'er cast his character was laid,
Self still, like oil, upon the surface played:
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in,
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 't was Quin.

DESCRIPTION OF JOHNSON

[From *The Ghost.*]

Pomposo, insolent and loud,
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
Whose very name inspires an awe,
Whose every word is sense and law.
(For what his greatness hath decreed,
Like laws of Persia and of Mede,
Sacred through all the realm of Wit,
Must never of repeal admit)
Who, cursing flattery, is the tool
Of every fawning, flattering fool;
Who wit with jealous eye surveys,
And sickens at another's praise:
Who, proudly seiz'd of learning's throne,
Now damns all learning but his own.
Who scorns those common wares to trade in,
Reas'ning, convincing, and persuading,
But makes each sentence current pass
With 'puppy,' 'coxcomb,' 'scoundrel,' 'ass':
(For 'tis with him a certain rule
That folly's proved when he calls 'Fool!')
Who to increase his native strength
Draws words six syllables in length,
With which, assisted with a frown
By way of club, he knocks us down:

* * * * *

His comrades' terrors to beguile,
Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile:
Features so horrid, were it light,
Would put the devil himself to flight.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

[From *Gotham.*]

List'ning uxorious, whilst a woman's prate
Modelled the church, and parcelled out the state:

Whilst, in the state not more than women read,
High-churchmen preached, and turned his pious head·
Tutored to see with ministerial eyes,
Forbid to hear a loyal nation's cries:
Made to believe (what can't a favourite do?)
He heard a nation, hearing one or two:
Taught by state-quacks himself secure to think,
And out of danger e'en on danger's brink:
Whilst power was daily crumbling from his hand,
Whilst murmurs ran through an insulted land,
(As if to sanction tyrants Heav'n was bound!)
He proudly sought the ruin which he found.

* * * * * *

Unhappy Stuart! (harshly though that name
Grates on my ear) I should have died with shame,
To see my king before his subjects stand,
And at their bar hold up his royal hand:
At their command to hear the monarch plead,
By their decrees to see that monarch bleed.
What though thy faults were many and were great?
What though they shook the basis of the state?
In royalty secure thy person stood,
And sacred was the fountain of thy blood.
Vile ministers, who dared abuse their trust,
Who dared seduce a King to be unjust,
Vengeance, with justice leagued, with power made strong,
Had nobly crushed: the King could do no wrong.
Yet grieve not, Charles; nor thy hard fortunes blame,
They took thy life, but they secured thy fame.
Had'st thou in peace and years resigned thy breath.
At nature's call—had'st thou lain down in death
As in a sleep—thy name, by Justice borne
On the four winds, had been in pieces torn.
Pity, the virtue of a generous soul,
(Sometimes the vice) hath made thy memory whole
Misfortune gave what virtue could not give,
And bade the tyrant slain the martyr live.

JAMES BEATTIE.

[JAMES BEATTIE was born at Laurencekirk in 1735, and died at Aberdeen in 1803. He published his first volume of poems in 1761, *The Judgment of Paris* in 1765, and *Some Lines on the Proposed Monument to Churchill* in 1766. The first part of *The Minstrel* appeared in 1770, the second in 1774.]

Beattie is perhaps the most difficult poet of the eighteenth century for a nineteenth-century reader to criticise sympathetically. His original poetical power was almost *nil*. But he had a delicate and sensitive taste, and was a diligent student of the works of Gray and Collins on the one hand, and of the ballads which Percy had just published on the other. His earlier poems are merely so many variations on the *Elegy* and the *Ode on the Passions*. His *Judgment of Paris* and his *Lines on Churchill* are perhaps those of his works in which he was least indebted to others, and they are almost worthless intrinsically, besides being (at least the Churchill lines) in the worst possible taste. As for *The Minstrel*, it is certainly a most remarkable poem. The author has shown his judgment in prefixing no argument to either book, for in truth neither admits of one. The poem has neither head nor tail, and the central figure of the youthful Edwin is a mere peg on which to hang descriptive passages, moral disquisitions, and digressions of every kind. The general effect upon the modern reader is exactly that of a sham ruin or a Gothic edifice of the Wyatt period. Yet the poem was, and long continued to be, extremely popular; and it gave the impulse in many cases to the production of much better work than itself. In fact it exactly reflected the vague and ill-instructed craving of the age for the dismissal of artificial poetry and for a return to nature, and at the same time to the romantic style. This fact must always give it an interest which its elegant second-hand imagery, its feeble Werterisms, and above all its extraordinary incoherence, may on closer acquaintance fail to sustain.

Beattie would have been a poet if he could, and his sedulous efforts and gentle sensibility sometimes bring him within sight, though at a long distance, of the promised land. But he never reaches it, and his best work is only made up of reminiscences of others' visits and of far-off echoes of the heavenly music.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

FROM 'THE MINSTREL,' Book I.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening, wandered down the vale.
There would he dream of graves and corses pale;
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright
With instantaneous gleam illumed the vault of night.

Anon in view a portal's blazoned arch
Arose; the trumpet bid the valves unfold,
And forth an host of little warriors march
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire,
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-robed minstrels wake the warbling wire.
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;

To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze ;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along : with many-coloured rays
Of tapers, gems and gold, the echoing forests blaze

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scar'd'st the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer ! who oft hath reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill !
O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let harmony aye shut her gentle ear :
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear !

Forbear, my Muse. Let Love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine
Who feels from every change amusement flow ?
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are born

But who the melodies of morn can tell ?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side,
The lowing herd ; the sheep-fold's simple bell ;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley ; echoing far and wide,
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above,
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide ;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tower.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme!
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptured heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

[THOMAS CHATTERTON was born at Bristol on the 20th of November, 1752. From 1767 to 1770 he produced a mass of poetry, the more noticeable portions of it being the pseudo-antique *Rowley Poems* which were collected after his death by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1777. He died by his own hand in London on the 24th of August, 1770, aged 17 years and 9 months.]

Chatterton has been neglected of late years, but Mr. Skeat's modernised version of the 'Rowley' Poems will, very likely, direct as much attention to them as can be afforded by an age embarrassed already by the wealth it has inherited and by the luxuriance of its own poetic growths. And if in the following selections I have not availed myself of Mr. Skeat's modernised text, but have rather chosen a text of my own, it has been from no defective appreciation of the acuteness, the industry, and the learning apparent in every page of his edition, but because he sometimes seems to miss that peculiar musical movement governing Chatterton's ear, which often renders it impossible to replace, by any modern word whatsoever, an archaism or pseudo-archaism of his, whether invented by himself or found in Bailey or Speght. Dominated as he commonly was by eighteenth-century movements, Chatterton yet showed at times an originality of ear that has never been appreciated. As far as I know, indeed, his metrical inventiveness has never been perceived—certainly it has never been touched upon—by any of his critics, from Tyrwhitt downwards. Yet it seems necessary to touch upon it here—technical as the enquiry may seem—or how can we gauge the undeniable influence Chatterton has had, both as to spirit and as to form, upon the revival in the present century of the romantic temper—that temper, without which English poetry can scarcely perhaps

hold a place at all when challenged in a court of universal criticism?

This influence has worked primarily through Coleridge, who (partly, it may be, from Chatterton's connexion with Bristol) was profoundly impressed both by the tragic pathos of Chatterton's life and by the excellence, actual as well as potential, of his work. And when we consider the influence Coleridge himself had upon the English romantic movement generally, and especially upon Shelley and Keats, and the enormous influence these latter have had upon subsequent poets, it seems impossible to refuse to Chatterton the place of the father of the New Romantic school. As to the romantic spirit, it would be difficult to name any one of his successors in whom the high temper of romance has shown so intense a life. And, as to the romantic form, it is matter of familiar knowledge, for instance, that the lyric octo-syllabic movement of which Scott made such excellent use in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and which Byron borrowed from him, was originally borrowed (or rather stolen) by Scott from Coleridge, whose *Christabel*, while still in manuscript, was recited in the hearing of Scott by Coleridge's friend Stoddart. Coleridge afterwards, when *Christabel* was published in 1816, speaks of the anapaestic dance with which he varies the iambic lines, as being 'founded on a new principle'; and he has been much praised, and very justly, for such effects as this:—

> 'And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
> And nothing else saw she thereby,
> Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
> Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall'

That this 'new principle' was known to Chatterton is seen in the following extract, which has exactly the Christabel ring—the ring which Scott only half caught and which Byron failed to really catch at all.

> 'But when he threwe downe his asenglave,
> Next came in Syr Botcher bold and brave,
> The dethe of manie a Saracenn,
> There thought him a devil from Hell's black den,
> Ne thinking that anie of mortalle menne
> Could send so manie to the grave.
> For his life to John Rumsee he render'd his thanks
> Descended from Godred the King of the Manks'

With regard to octo-syllabics with anapaestic variations, it may be said no doubt that some of the miracle-plays (such as *The Fall of Man*) are composed in this movement, as is also one of the months in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*; but the irregularity in these is, like that of the Border ballads, mostly the irregularity of makeshift, while Chatterton's *Unknown Knight*, like *Christabel*, and like Goethe's *Erl King*, has several variations introduced (as Coleridge says of his own) 'in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.' The 'new principle,' in short, was Chatterton's.

Again, in the mysterious suggestiveness of remote geographical names—a suggestiveness quite other than the pomp and sonority which Marlowe and Milton so loved—the world-involving echoes of *Kubla Khan* seem to have been caught from such lines as these in Chatterton's African eclogue *Narva and Mored:*

> 'From Lorbar's cave to where the nations end . . . .,
> Explores the palaces on Lira's coast,
> Where howls the war song of the chieftain's ghost . . . .,
> Like the loud echoes on Toddida's sea,
> The warrior's circle, the mysterious tree'

And turning to the question of Chatterton's influence upon Keats, it is not only indirectly through Coleridge that the rich mind of Keats shows signs of having drunk at Chatterton's fountain of romance: there is a side of Chatterton which Keats knew and which Coleridge did not.

It is difficult to express in words wherein lies the entirely spiritual kinship between Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity* and Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*, yet I should be sceptical as to the insight of any critic who should fail to recognise that kinship. Not only are the beggar and the thunderstorm depicted with the sensuous sympathy and melodious insistance which is the great charm of *The Eve of St. Agnes*, but the movement of the lines is often the same. Take for instance the description of Keats's bedesman, 'meagre, barefoot, wan,' which is, in point of metrical movement, identical with Chatterton's description of the alms-craver, 'withered, forwynd, dead.'

More obvious perhaps, yet not more essentially true, is the likeness between the famous passage in Keats's *Isabella*, beginning—

> 'For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
> And went all naked to the hungry shark,' &c.,

and these four lines in Chatterton's *Narva and Mored*—

> 'Where the pale children of the feeble sun
> In search of gold through every climate run,
> From burning heat to freezing torments go,
> And live in all vicissitudes of woe.'

It was perfectly fit therefore that Keats should dedicate his *Endymion* to the memory of Thomas Chatterton. Not that Keats or Coleridge stole from Chatterton: no two poets had less need to steal from any one. But the whole history of poetry shows that poetic methods are a growth as well as an inspiration.

So steeped indeed was Chatterton in romance, that, except in the case of the *African Eclogues*, his imagination seems to be never really alive save when in the dramatic masquerade of the monk of Bristol. And here we touch the very core and centre of Chatterton's genius—his artistic identification. This is what I mean: Pope 'lisped in numbers, for the numbers came'; and the *Ode to Solitude* written at twelve, shows how early may begin to stir the lyrical impulse—the impulse to give voice to the emotions of the soul that is born to express. The young Chatterton on a summer's day would lie down on the grass and gaze for hours at the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, not in order to gather and focus for expression the personal emotions caused by the spectacle, as the child Cowley or the child Pope might have done, but in order to reproduce the picturesque antique life he imagined to have once moved there; and, as metrical language is but the ideal and quintessential form in which a writer embodies that which in the world around him is ideal and quintessential, Chatterton 'lisped in numbers' too. Not that his egotism was less intense than theirs: far from it. Such energy as his can only exist as the outcome of that enormous egotism which is at the heart of all lyric production. Yet his dramatic instinct was stronger still.

Here indeed is the keynote of Chatterton's work, and, if we will consider it, of his life too. As a youthful poet showing that power of artistic self-effacement which is generally found to be incompatible with the eager energies of poetic youth,—as a producer, that is to say, of work purely artistic and in its highest reaches unadulterated by lyric egotism,—the author of the Rowley Poems (if we leave out of consideration his acknowledged pieces), however inferior to Keats in point of sheer beauty, stands alongside him in our literature, and stands with him alone.

In his childhood, so occupied was Chatterton's mind by the impression upon it of the external world through the senses, that for a long time it refused to be distracted by the common processes of education. Up to about his seventh or eighth year he could not be taught his letters, and even then this was effected through his delight in colour. To use his mother's words, 'he fell in love' with the illuminated letters upon an old piece of French music; and afterwards 'took to' the picturesque characters of a black letter Bible, and so learned to read. And this passion for art was universal in its scope: poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and even heraldry,—from each and all of these he drew such delights as are undreamed of save by the truly artistic mind.

Now with Keats it was not till he came at the very last to write *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *La belle Dame sans merci*, that he produced anything so purely objective as Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity*, given on page 409 of these selections. Yet, here is the difficulty in criticising Chatterton's work: the circumstances attending the production of such purely objective and impersonal poetry as the Rowley Poems were so exceptional that, unlike the poetry of Keats—unlike any other purely artistic poetry—it must be read entirely in connexion with the poet's life. This indeed is as necessary, in order to fully appreciate it, as though the impulse had been that of pure personal emotion such as we get in Shelley's lyrics and in the more passionate outpourings of Burns. For, with Chatterton, far more than with any other poet of the representative kind, the question, What was the nature of his artistic impulse? is mixed up with the question, What was the nature of the man? Do these Rowley poems show the vitalising power which only genius can give? and if they do, was Chatterton's impulse to exercise that power the impulse of the dramatic poet having 'the yearning of the Great Vish'nu to create a world'? or, was it that of the other class of artists, whose skill lies in 'those more facile imitations of prose, promissory notes,' among whom Horace Walpole would place him? For neither the assailants nor the defenders of Chatterton's character seem to see that between these two conclusions there is no middle one. Either Chatterton was a born forger, having, as useful additional endowments, poetry and dramatic imagination almost unmatched among his contemporaries, or he was a born artist, who, before mature vision had come to show him the power and the sacredness

of moral conscience in art, was so dominated by the artistic conscience—by the artist's yearning to represent, that, if perfect representation seemed to him to demand forgery, he needs must forge.

If the latter supposition is the true one, it does not, to be sure, excuse the delinquencies that shocked the ingenuous author of *The Castle of Otranto*—that work of 'Neapolitan origin' and mediaeval translation,—but it explains an apparent anomaly in Nature: it gives a kind of harmony to a character which has hitherto been considered so inharmonious; it clears Nature of the impeachment of having endowed a man possessing the instincts of a common forger, with human characteristics so noble and so precious as poetic genius, lofty intelligence, 'courage to do or die,' the pride that gives in to death but not to men, joined to a depth of filial affection, a loyalty to kindred, such as stirs within us the deepest emotion whenever we recall the name of Chatterton—Chatterton, the premature man who was also to the last the loving child, who, a few days before his death, went out from his forlorn garret in Brooke Street to spend in presents for his mother and sister those precious pence that would have saved him from famine, and England from the loss of a son so noble and so gifted as he.

The barest outline of his story will show what I mean:—The posthumous child of a poor subchanter of Bristol Cathedral, whose family had been sextons for a century and a half, Chatterton may be said to have succeeded to poverty by inheritance, and to have been reared, from his cradle, beneath the shadow of that wing which is apt to cow genius if it does not silence it—apt to stifle that haughty independence and pride which mostly accompanies genius, and of which Chatterton had more than any poet in our literature, or perhaps in any other. Yet, if the cards of life were so far against him, he was on the other hand dowered by Nature with her very choicest gifts. To a physique healthy and, according to all accounts, beautiful,—possessing indeed that quality of 'strangeness' which Bacon says is essential to the highest beauty,—were added a precocity only less wonderful than the energy which accompanied it,—an intelligence which all the world, including those who reject his claims to the highest poetical gifts, have agreed to call prodigious. It was this precocity indeed which at first attracted attention to him, and which has now caused the reaction against him.

Art has nothing to do with prodigies. But Chatterton's precocity has, like everything else in connexion with him, been misunder-

stood. It did not develop itself in earliest childhood; and when it did snow, there was in it nothing one-sided, nothing diseased, as in the painful precocity which in some children repels rather than attracts. It is important to bear this in mind in estimating Chatterton; for assuredly it may be said of the human race, more emphatically than of any other, that any departure from the laws of growth of a species is not to be taken as a sign that the individual will exhibit, at maturity, any unusual amount or intensity of the qualities by which the species is denoted. If an oak sapling should show a rapidity of growth equal to that of a poplar, we should not be driven to infer therefrom that the mature tree would show a firmer texture of wood than an ordinary oak, or a greater power of producing acorns: how, then, can we expect to see other laws at work in man? But that incisive and masculine force of intellect which astonishes us in Chatterton did not show itself till puberty, and might therefore have been, for anything that experience teaches us to the contrary, the first outburst of a unique energy that would have gone on developing and gathering strength with years.

At the age of five the attempt to teach him even his letters had failed, and at six and a half his mother and sister still 'thought he was an absolute fool.' When close upon his eighth year he was admitted to Colston's Blue-coat School, Bristol. While absorbing, as a sponge absorbs water, all the knowledge to be got there, he ran through three circulating libraries; and it was then that he began to show that passion for poetry and antiquities which soon began to dominate his life. The first form, as far as is known, taken by this passion was a strange one, that of a hoax played upon a pompous pewterer of Bristol, named Burgum, for whom Chatterton fabricated a false pedigree of great antiquity, with a poem written by one of the pewterer's ancestors, *The Romaunte of the Cnyghte*. This proving a complete success, though rewarded only with a crown-piece, Chatterton was induced to try his hand at the same kind of work again, and produced an imaginary account of the opening of Bristol Bridge in the time of Henry II, which deceived all the local antiquaries. This was followed by *The Ryse of Peynctyne in Englande wroten by T. Rowlie* 1469 *for Master Canynge*, which deceived Horace Walpole, to whom he sent it; and finally a mass of pseudo-antique poetry, consisting of dramas, epic fragments and dramatic lyrics, which, under the

name of the 'Rowley Poems' gave rise after his death to almost as much angry discussion as the Ossian poetry itself. Some of this work was achieved at school, but most of it after he had been removed from school to the office of a Bristol attorney. A boyish freak resulted in his quitting Bristol for London, on the 24th of April, 1770, and beginning life there as a literary adventurer on a capital of something under five pounds, at a time when the struggle of London literary life was only less dire than it had been thirty years previously, when even the burly figure of Dr. Johnson was nearly succumbing.

He turned to every kind of literary work,—poems, essays, stories, political articles and squibs, burlettas, and even songs for the music gardens of the time at a few pence each. In May and June 1770, he had articles in *The Freeholder's Magazine*, *The Town and Country Magazine*, *The London Museum*, *The Political Register*, *The Court and City Magazine*, and even *The Gospel Magazine*. Among all the literary adventurers of his time there was none perhaps so indomitable as he. Yet, all the while, he cherished as fondly as ever those visions of the past that came to him from St. Mary Redcliffe as he lay dreaming on the grass at Bristol. He was half starving when he wrote *The Ballad of Charity*, which for reserved power and artistic completeness, no youthful poet has ever approached. Nor did he attack London, as other literary adventurers have done, from the bookseller's shop alone. His sagacity as a man of the world was as wonderful as his literary genius. The penniless country boy, living on a crust in Shoreditch, knew that to conquer London he must conquer the one or two magnates at whose feet the great city was content to lie. Thousands of ambitious Londoners of that day would have given much for an introduction to the potent Lord Mayor Beckford: before Chatterton had been in London two months he had achieved this, and had so impressed the great man, that Chatterton's future seemed assured. But before Beckford had time to hold out a hand to the young adventurer he suddenly died. This blow seemed fatal to a poor boy with starvation even then staring him in the face. But he fought bravely on, and would have ended victorious but for his pride. That which had been his strength was his weakness now. He would not stoop to conquer, and the time was come when it was necessary to stoop. To live by literature then was almost an impossibility, and he had determined to live by literature or die.

With a masterful pride, for which no parallel can be found, he had already quitted his friends in Shoreditch, lest they should become too familiar with his straits, and taken a garret at 39 Brooke Street, Holborn, where he produced a quantity of literary matter which under any circumstances would have been astonishing, but which is almost incredible if his landlady's story is true, that he was living sometimes on one loaf a week, 'bought stale to make it last longer.' At last, when starvation seemed inevitable, he did make one frantic attempt to obtain the post of ship surgeon, but this failing, he refused to try the commercial world, and steadily rejecting the gift of a penny or a meal from neighbours who tried in vain to help him, he struggled with famine as long as it was possible, and then, on the evening of the 24th of August, 1770, he retired to his garret, locked himself in, tore up all his manuscripts, and poisoned himself with arsenic.

It is not to make capital out of the painful interest attaching to Chatterton's life that I glance at it here on his behalf. Assuredly the personal interest in a poet having such a story as his, is what the critic has specially to guard against in trying to find his proper place in the firmament of our poetic literature. To divest 'the marvellous boy' of that sensational kind of interest which has been associated with his name for more than a century, and at the same time to do justice to an intelligence which Malone compared with Shakspeare's, and a genius which inspired Wordsworth and Coleridge with awe, would require an exhaustive study of that most puzzling chapter of literary history—the chapter that deals with literary forgery. And my defence of him is simply this; that, if such a study were prosecuted, we should find that in matters of literary forgery, besides the impulse of the mere mercenary impostor—as Chatterton appears to empirical critics like Warton—besides the impulse of the masquerading instinct, so strong in men of the Ireland and Horace Walpole type, there is another impulse altogether, the impulse of certain artistic natures to represent, such as we see in Sir Walter Scott (when tampering with the historical ballads), and such as we see in Chatterton when, struggling in his dark garret with famine and despair, he turns from the hack-work that at least might win him bread, to write *The Ballad of Charity*, the most purely artistic work perhaps of his time.

W. THEODORE WATTS.

An Excellent Ballad of Charity.

In Virginè the sultry Sun 'gan sheene
And hot upon the meads did cast his ray:
The apple ruddied from its paly green,
And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;
The pied chelàndry[1] sang the livelong day:
'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year,
And eke the ground was dight in its most deft aumere[2]

The sun was gleaming in the mid of day,
Dead still the air and eke the welkin blue,
When from the sea arist in drear array
A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodland drew,
Hiding at once the Sunnè's festive face;
And the black tempest swelled and gathered up apace

Beneath an holm, fast by a pathway side
Which did unto Saint Godwyn's convent lead,
A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,
Poor in his view, ungentle in his weed,
Long breast-full of the miseries of need.
Where from the hailstorm could the beggar fly?
He had no housen there, nor any convent nigh.

Look in his gloomèd face; his sprite there scan,
How woe-begone, how withered, sapless, dead!
Haste to thy church-glebe-house, accursèd man,
Haste to thy coffin, thy sole slumbering-bed[3]!
Cold as the clay which will grow on thy head
Are Charity and Love among high elves;
The Knights and Barons live for pleasure and themselves.

[1] Goldfinch.
[2] Used by Chatterton as 'mantle.'
[3] 'Dortoure bedde.' '*Dourtoure*, a sleeping room'—*Chatterton.*

The gathered storm is ripe; the big drops fall;
The sunburnt meadows smoke and drink the rain;
The coming ghastness doth the cattle appal,
And the full flocks are driving o'er the plain;
Dashed from the clouds, the waters gush[1] again;
The welkin opes, the yellow levin flies,
And the hot fiery steam in the wide flame-lowe[2] dies.

List! now the thunder's rattling clamouring[3] sound
Moves slowly on, and then upswollen clangs,
Shakes the high spire, and lost, dispended, drown'd,
Still on the affrighted ear of terror hangs;
The winds are up; the lofty elm-tree swangs;
Again the levin and the thunder pours,
And the full clouds are burst at once in stormy showers.

Spurring his palfrey o'er the watery plain,
The Abbot of Saint Godwyn's convent came;
His chapournette was drenchèd with the rain,
His painted girdle met with mickle shame;
He backwards[4] told his bederoll at the same.
The storm increasèd, and he drew aside,
With the poor alms-craver near to the holm to bide.

His cope was all of Lincoln cloth so fine,
With a gold button fastened near his chin;
His autremete[5] was edged with golden twine,
And his peak'd shoe a lordling's might have been;
Full well it showed he counted cost no sin:
The trammels of the palfrey pleased his sight,
For the horse-milliner[6] his head with roses dight.

[1] Here Chatterton's text-word is 'flott,' and his gloss 'fly.' 'Gush' seems more appropriate.

[2] 'lowings'—flames —*Chatterton.*

[3] 'Clymmynge,' noisy.—*Chatterton.* 'Clamouring' is adopted as nearer in sound to his text-word.

[4] 'To signify cursing.'—*Chatterton.*

[5] 'A loose white robe worn by priests.'—*Chatterton.*

[6] Steevens, being in Bristol in 1776, saw 'horse-milliner' inscribed over a shop door, outside which stood a wooden horse decked with ribbons.

'An alms, Sir Priest!' the drooping pilgrim said,
'O let me wait within your convent-door
Till the sun shineth high above our head
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er.
Helpless and old am I, alas! and poor:
No house, nor friend, nor money in my pouch;
All that I call my own is this my silver crouch[1].

'Varlet,' replied the Abbot, 'cease your din;
This is no season alms and prayers to give;
My porter never lets a beggar in;
None touch my ring who not in honour live.'
And now the sun with the black clouds did strive,
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray:
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode away.

Once more the sky was black, the thunder roll'd:
Fast running o'er the plain a priest was seen,
Not dight full proud nor buttoned up in gold;
His cope and jape[2] were grey, and eke were clean;
A Limitour[3] he was, of order seen;
And from the pathway side then turnèd he,
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen tree.

'An alms, Sir Priest,' the drooping pilgrim said,
'For sweet Saint Mary and your order's sake!'
The Limitour then loosened his pouch-thread
And did thereout a groat of silver take;
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake.
'Here, take this silver, it may ease thy care;
We are God's stewards all,—nought of our own we bear.

'But ah! unhappy pilgrim, learn of me,
Scarce any give a rentroll to their Lord:
Here, take my semicope,—thou'rt bare, I see;

[1] 'Cross, crucifix.'—*Chatterton.*
[2] A short surplice worn by friars of inferior class.—*Chatterton.*
[3] A licensed begging friar.—*Chatterton*

'Tis thine; the Saints will give me my reward!'
He left the pilgrim and his way aborde[1].
Virgin and holy Saints who sit in gloure[2],
Or give the mighty will, or give the good man power!

ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

When England, reeking[3] from her deadly wound,
From her galled neck did pluck the chain away,
Kenning her liegeful sons fall all around,
(Mighty they fell,—'twas Honour led the fray,)
Then in a dale, by eve's dark surcote grey,
Two lonely shepherds did abrodden[4] fly,
(The rustling leaf doth their white hearts affray,)
And with the owlet trembled and did cry.
First Robert Neatherd his sore bosom stroke,
Then fell upon the ground, and thus yspoke.

Robert.

'Ah, Ralph! if thus the hours do come along,
If thus we fly in chase of further woe,
Our feet will fail, albeit we be strong,
Nor will our pace swift as our danger go.
To our great wrongs we have upheapèd moe,—
The Barons' war! Ah, woe and well-a-day!
My life I have, but have escapèd so
That life itself my senses doth affray.
O Ralph! come list, and hear my gloomy[5] tale,
Come hear the baleful doom of Robin of the Dale.

Ralph.

Say to me nought; I ken thy woe in mine,
Oh! I've a tale that Sathanas[6] might tell!
Sweet flowerets, mantled meadows, forests fine[7],—
Groves far-off-kenn'd around the Hermit's cell,—

[1] 'Went on.'—*Chatterton*
[2] 'Glory.'—*Chatterton.*
[3] 'Smeethynge,' smoking.—*Chatterton.*
[4] 'Abrodden,' abruptly.—*Chatterton.*
[5] 'Dernie,' sad.—*Chatterton.*
[6] 'Sabalus,' the Devil.'—*Chatterton*
[7] 'Dygne,' good, neat.—*Chatterton.*

The sweet-strung viol[1] dinning in the dell,—
The joyous dancing in the hostel-court,—
Eke the high song and every joy,—farewell!
Farewell the very shade of fair disport!
Impestering trouble on my head doth come:—
No one kind Saint to ward the aye-increasing doom!

Robert.

Oh! I could wail my kingcup-deckèd leas,
My spreading flocks of sheep all lily-white,
My tender applings and embodied trees,
My parker's-grange far spreading to the sight,
My tender kyne, my bullocks strong in fight,
My garden whitened with the cumfrey-plant,
My flower-Saint-Mary[2] glinting with the light,
My store of all the blessings Heaven can grant.
I am enhardened unto sorrow's blow:
Inured[3] unto the pain, I let no salt tear flow

Ralph.

Here will I still abide till Death appear;
Here, like a foul-empoisoned deadly tree
Which slayeth every one that cometh near,
So will I grow to this place fixedly[4].
I to lament have greater cause than thee,
Slain in the war my dear-loved father lies.
Oh! I would slay his murderer joyously[5],
And by his side for aye close up mine eyes.
Cast out from every joy, here will I bleed;
Fall'n is the cullis-gate[6] of my heart's castle-stead

Robert.

Our woes alike, alike our doom shall be,
My son, mine only son, all death-cold[7] is!
Here will I stay and end my life with thee,—
A life like mine a burden is, I wis.

[1] 'Swote ribible,' sweet violin.—*Chatterton.* [2] Marygold.—*Chatterton.*
[3] 'Hantend,' accustomed.—*Chatterton.*
[4] 'Soe wille I, fyxed unto thys place, gre'—*Chatterton.*
[5] 'Oh! joieous I hys mortherer would slea.'—*Chatterton.*
[6] Portcullis.—*Chatterton.* [7] 'Ystorven,' dead.—*Chatterton*

Even from the cot flown now is happiness:
Minsters alone can boast the holy Saint:
Now doth our England[1] wear a bloody dress,
And with her champions' gore her visage paint.
Peace fled, Disorder shows her face dark-brow'd[2],
And through the air doth fly in garments stained with blood.

ECLOGUE THE THIRD.

A Man; a Woman; Sir Roger.

Wouldst thou ken Nature in her better part?
Go, search the cots and lodges of the hind;
If they have any, it is rough-made art;
In them you see the naked form of kind.
Haveth your mind a liking of a mind?
Would it ken everything as it might be?
Would it hear phrase of vulgar from the hind,
Without wiseacre words and knowledge free?
If so, read this, which I disporting penn'd:
If nought beside, its rhyme may it commend.

Man.

But whither, fair maid, do ye go?
O where do ye bend your way?
I will know whither you go,
I will not be answered nay.

Woman.

To Robin and Nell, all down in the dell,
To help them at making of hay.

Man.

Sir Roger, the parson, hath hired me there;
Come, come, let us trip it away:
We'll work, and we'll sing, and we'll drink of strong beer,
As long as the merry summer's day.

[1] 'Doeth Englonde'—*Chatterton*

[2] 'Peace fledde, disorder sheweth her dark rode.' ('Rode,' complexion.) —*Chatterton.*

Woman.

How hard is my doom to work!
Much is my woe!
Dame Agnes, who lies in the kirk,
With coif of gold,
With golden borders, strong, untold,
What was she more than me, to be so?

Man.

I ken Sir Roger from afar,
Tripping over the lea:
I will ask why the lordè's son
Is more than me.

Sir Roger.

The sultry sun doth hie apace his wain;
From every beam a seed of life doth fall.
Quickly heap up the hay upon the plain:
Methinks the cocks are 'ginning to grow tall.
This is alike our doom: the great, the small,
Must wither and be shrunken by death's dart.
See, the sweet floweret hath no sweet at all;
It with the rank weed beareth equal part.
The craven, warrior, and the wise be blent
Alike to dry away with those they did lament.

Man.

All-a-boon, Sir Priest, all-a-boon!
By your priestship, now say unto me,
Sir Gaufryd the knight, who liveth hard by,
Why should he than me be more great
In honour, knighthood, and estate?

Sir Roger.

Cast round thine eyes upon this hayèd lea;
Attentively look o'er the sun-parched dell;
An answer to thy burden-song here see;
This withered floweret will a lesson tell:

It rose, it blew, it flourished and did well,
Looking askance upon the neighbour green;
Yet with the green disdained its glory fell,—
Eftsoons it shrank upon the day-burnt plain.
Did not its look, the while it there did stand,
To crop it in the bud move some dread hand?

Such is the way of life: the lord's rich rent[1]
Moveth the robber him therefore to slay.
If thou hast ease, the shadow of content,
Believe the truth, there's none more whole than thee
Thou workest: well, can that a trouble be?
Sloth more would jade thee than the roughest day.
Couldst thou the secret part of spirits see,
Thou wouldst eftsoons see truth in what I say.
But let me hear thy way of life, and then
Hear thou from me the lives of other men.

Man.

I rise with the Sun,
Like him to drive the wain,
And ere my work is done
I sing a song or twain.
I follow the plough-tail
With a long jubb of ale.
* * * *
On every Saint's high-day
With the minstrel am I seen,
All a-footing it away
With maidens on the green.
But oh! I wish to be more great
In worship, tenure, and estate.

Sir Roger.

Hast thou not seen a tree upon a hill,
Whose boundless branches reach afar to sight?
When furious tempests do the heaven fill,
It shaketh dire, in dole and much affright;

[1] The loverde's ente ' (lord's purse).—*Chatterton's text and gloss.*

What while the humble floweret lowly dight
Standeth unhurt, unquashèd by the storm.
Such picture is of Life: the man of might
Is tempest-chafed, his woe great as his form:
Thyself, a floweret of a small account,
Wouldst harder feel the wind, as higher thou didst mount.

MINSTRELS' MARRIAGE-SONG.

[From *Œlla, a Tragical Interlude.*]

First Minstrel.

The budding floweret blushes at the light:
The meads are sprinkled with the yellow hue;
In daisied mantles is the mountain dight;
The slim[1] young cowslip bendeth with the dew;
The trees enleafèd, into heaven straught,
When gentle winds do blow, to whistling din are brought

The evening comes and brings the dew along;
The ruddy welkin sheeneth to the eyne;
Around the ale-stake minstrels sing the song;
Young ivy round the doorpost doth entwine;
I lay me on the grass; yet, to my will,
Albeit all is fair, there lacketh something still.

Second Minstrel.

So Adam thought, what time, in Paradise,
All heaven and earth did homage to his mind.
In woman and none else man's pleasaunce lies,
As instruments of joy are kind with kind[2].
Go, take a wife unto thine arms, and see,
Winter and dusky hills will have a charm for thee.

[1] 'Nesh,' tender.—*Chatterton.*

[2] 'Ynn womman alleyne mannès pleasaunce lyes,
As instruments of joie were made the kynde.'
Chatterton

Third Minstrel.

When Autumn stript and sunburnt doth appear,
With his gold hand gilding the falling leaf,
Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,
Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf;
When all the hills with woody seed are white;
When levin-fires and gleams do meet from far the sight;—

When the fair apples, red as even-sky,
Do bend the tree unto the fruitful ground;
When juicy pears and berries of black dye
Do dance in air and call the eyes around;
Then, be it evening foul or evening fair,
Methinks my joy of heart is shadowed with some care.

Second Minstrel.

Angels are wrought to be of neither kind;
Angels alone from hot desire are free;
There is a somewhat ever in the mind,
That, without woman, cannot stillèd be:
No saint in cell, but, having blood and cheer[1],
Doth find the spirit joy in sight of woman fair.

Women are made not for themselves but man,—
Bone of his bone and child of his desire;
They from an useless member first began,
Y-wrought with much of water, little fire;
Therefore they seek the fire of love, to heat
The milkiness of kind, and make themselves complete.

Albeit, without women, men were peers
To savage kind, and would but live to slay;
Yet woman oft the spirit of peace so cheers,—
Dowered with angelic joy, true angels they[2].
Go, take thee straightway to thy bed a wife;
Be banned, or highly blest, in proving marriage-life.

[1] 'Tere' health —*Chatterton*

[2] 'Tochelod yn Angel joie heie (*they*) Angeles bee'—*Chatterton.*

THE ACCOUNTE OF W. CANYNGE'S FEAST.

BY WILLIAM CANYNGE.[1]

Thorowe the halle the bell han sounde;
  Byelecoyle[2] doe the Grave beseeme[3];
The ealdermenne doe sytte arounde,
  Ande snoffelle[4] oppe the cheorte[5] steeme.
Lyche asses wylde ynne desarte waste
Swotelye the morneynge ayre doe taste.

Syke keene theie ate; the minstrels plaie,
  The dynne of angelles doe they keepe:
Heie stylle the guestes ha ne to saie,
  Butte nodde yer thankes ande falle aslape.
Thus echone daie bee I to deene,
Gyf Rowley[6], Iscamm[7], or Tyb. Gorges[8] be ne seene.

MINSTREL'S ROUNDELAY.

[From *Ælla.*]

O sing unto my roundelay,
  O drop the briny tear with me,
Dance no more at holy-day,
  Like a running river be.
    My love is dead,
    Gone to his death-bed,
      All under the willow-tree.

[1] The above piece is given in Chatterton's original spelling, as a sample.
[2] Fair welcome.—*Chatterton* (Bel-acceuil.—*Tyrwhitt.*)
[3] Becomes.—*Chatterton.*
[4] Snuff up.—*Chatterton.*
[5] Cheerful.—*Chatterton.*
[6] The names of Canynge's favourite poets and friends, as developed in Chatterton's Rowleian system.

Black his locks as the winter night,
White his skin[1] as the summer snow,
Red his face as the morning light,
Cold he lies in the grave below.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout,
O he lies by the willow-tree!
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed.
All under the willow-tree.

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
In the briar'd dell below,
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares as they go.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true love's shroud;
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud.
My love is dead
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid:
Not one holy Saint to save
All the coldness of a maid!
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

[1] 'Rode,' complexion.—*Chatterton.*

With my hands I'll gird[1] the briars
Round his holy corse to grow[2].
Elfin Faëry, light your fires;
Here my body still shall bow[2].
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,
Drain my heartè's blood away;
Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night or feast by day.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree[3].

[1] 'Dente,' fasten.—*Chatterton.* [2] 'Gre,' 'bee.'—*Chatterton.*

[3] The original concludes with the following quatrain:—

'Water-witches crowned with reytes,
Bear me to your lethal tide.
I die! I come! My true love waits!
Thus the damsel spake, and died'

In spite of the words 'reytes' (water-flags) and 'lethal' (deadly), this stanza is a false eighteenth-century note, strangely out of harmony with the almost completely sustained tone of the rest of this noble ditty; it is moreover an awkward break-down in metre. I have ventured to transfer it from the text to this foot-note. A word may be needed as to my modernized text: wherever Chatterton's gloss-word has been adopted instead of his text-word, this is done without notification. Now and then the rhyme or clearness of phrase compelled substitution: this has been specified in the notes in every case of the least importance.

WILLIAM COWPER.

[WILLIAM COWPER was born at the rectory, Great Berkhamstead, Nov. 26, 1731. His father, the rector of the parish, was a nephew of Lord Chancellor Cowper; his mother was Ann Donne, of the family of Dr. John Donne, the celebrated Dean of St. Paul's. Cowper was educated at a private school and afterwards at Westminster, where Vincent Bourne was a master, and Warren Hastings, Robert Lloyd, Colman, and Churchill were among the boys. After leaving Westminster he became a member of the Middle Temple and was articled to a solicitor, a Mr. Chapman, one of his fellow clerks being Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor. During his three years under Mr. Chapman, he saw much of the family of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, with one of whose daughters, Theodora, he formed a deep attachment. Another daughter, Harriet, afterwards Lady Hesketh, was in the later years of his life one of his warmest friends. The engagement of marriage with Theodora was not sanctioned by her father: and this disappointment, with other troubles, seems to have greatly affected Cowper, and to have prepared the way for his first attack of insanity, which took place in 1763. The immediate cause was the excitement occasioned by his appointment to two clerkships in the House of Lords, at the hands of his uncle, Major Cowper. His malady was intensified by the injudicious handling he received from his cousin, Martin Madan, a strong Calvinist, and it was only after a stay of fifteen months under the care of the amiable physician and verse-writer, Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, at St. Alban's, that he recovered. He did not resume work in London, but went to live at Huntingdon. There he fell in with the Unwins, and there began their lifelong intimacy. After Mr Unwin's death (1767) Cowper removed with Mrs. Unwin to Olney, where they remained till 1786. The peace of Cowper's life at Olney was shaken in 1773 by a second attack of melancholia, which lasted for sixteen months. Before and after that time he corresponded freely with many friends; he joined with John Newton, curate-in-charge at Olney, in composing the *Olney Hymns* (published 1779); but it was not till December 1780 that he began seriously to write poetry, having deserted the art since the days of his early love-verses to 'Delia.' His first volume, containing *Table Talk, Conversation, Retirement,* and the other didactic poems, was published in 1782; his second, containing *The Task, Tirocinium,* and among others the ballad of *John Gilpin*

(which had been published in a newspaper, and had become famous through the recitations of Henderson the actor), appeared in 1785. The subjects of both *John Gilpin* and *The Task* were suggested to Cowper by Lady Austen, a fascinating person who for some years was on intimate terms with him and Mrs. Unwin. Afterwards he began his translation of Homer, which was completed and published in 1791. The last years of his life, from 1791 to 1800, were years of great misery. Mrs Unwin was paralytic from 1791 to her death in 1796; he himself was suffering from hopeless dejection, regarding himself, as he had done since his first attack, as an outcast from God. He died at East Dereham, in Norfolk, April 25, 1800.]

The pathos of Cowper's life and his position in our poetical history will always lend a special interest to his work, even though it is no longer possible to regard a poet limited as he was as a poet of the first order. He was an essentially original writer, owing much of course, as every writer must owe, to the subtle influences of his time, but deriving as little as ever poet derived from literary study. 'I have not read more than one English poet for twenty years, and but one for thirteen years,' he says in one of his letters of the year 1782; and though that would seem to be an exaggeration, it is akin to a truth—that in mature life at least, he cared little for reading English poetry, and owed little to it. It is true that he formed his blank verse on the model of Milton, and that Churchill, 'the great Churchill,' gave him a pattern in the use of the heroic couplet which he soon surpassed; but essentially he stands alone, as remote from the stream of eighteenth-century verse as his life at Olney was remote from the public life of his day. The poet of *Retirement* and *The Task* is the beginning of a new order in poetry; he is one of the first symptoms, if not the originator, of the revolution in style which is soon to become a revolution in ideas. The 'clear, crisp English' of his verse is not the work of a man who belongs to a school, or who follows some conventional pattern. It is for his amusement, he repeats again and again in his letters, that he is a poet; just as it has been for his amusement that he has worked in the garden and made rabbit-hutches. He writes because it pleases him, without a thought of his fame or of contriving what the world will admire. *The Task*, his most characteristic poem, is indeed a work of great labour; but the labour is not directed, as Pope's labour was directed, towards methodising or arranging the material, towards working up the argument, towards forcing the ideas into the most striking situations. The labour is in the cadences and the

language; as for the thoughts, they are allowed to show themselves just as they come, in their natural order, so that the poem reads like the speech of a man talking to himself. To turn from a poem of Cowper's to a poem of Pope's, or even of Goldsmith's, is to turn from one sphere of art to quite another, from unconscious to conscious art. 'Formal gardens in comparison with woodland scenery,' as Southey said; and how much that means! It means that the day of critical and so-called classical poetry is over; that the day of spontaneous, natural, romantic poetry has begun. Burns and Wordsworth are not yet, but they are close at hand.

The time at which Cowper, then fifty years of age, was writing and publishing his first volume, was not a time of mental stagnation in England, nor a time when poetry was not in fashion. On the contrary, it was an epoch of great mental activity; it was the epoch of Adam Smith and Hume, of Gibbon and Robertson, of Brindley and Watt. More than that, it was the epoch at which two great rival Collections of the British poets—the first that had ever been made—were being published with much success. But it was an epoch at which nothing of any value was being produced in poetry; Gray, Goldsmith, Chatterton were dead, and they had left no successors. Cowper has preserved for us with no small pride the letter in which 'one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters' of the age, Dr. Franklin, acknowledges the receipt of his volume, sent by a common friend. 'The relish for the reading of poetry had long since left me, but there is something so new in the manner, so easy and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once.' If we wish to appreciate what Dr. Franklin meant by this 'something so new in the manner,' we have only to turn to any of the volumes which contain what passed current as poetry at the moment; to the volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for example, or (to go back a few years) to some of the Collections or volumes of Miscellanies that the publishers of the time were fond of issuing. Dodsley's is one instance; another is Pearch's *Collection of Poems by several hands*, printed in four volumes in 1768-70. Much of the space is occupied by the work of well-known writers, that has survived and has always been celebrated—the work of Collins and Johnson for example. But the crowd, the forgotten crowd that fill the bulk of the volumes, they are the

writers who represent the average poetical level of the time, the level out of which Cowper suddenly emerged to charm Dr. Franklin. Mr. Cawthorne, Mr. Emily, Mr. Cunningham, Miss Carter, Mrs. Greville, and a hundred others, are the channels into which the river of eighteenth-century verse diffused itself before it was finally lost in the sand. It is harmless enough, this verse; it is not 'noise and nonsense,' like the Della Cruscan productions of twenty years later; but it is incurably *banal*, it wholly lacks distinction. When the excellent Miss Carter, the translator of Epictetus, has to write an *Ode to Melancholy* (and odes to Melancholy, to Concord, to Ambition, are the staple of the volumes) she begins:—

> 'Come, melancholy, silent pow'r,
> Companion of my lonely hour,
> To sober thought confin'd;
> Thou sweetly-sad ideal guest,
> In all thy soothing charms confest,
> Indulge my pensive mind!'

When Mr. Henley writes an *Ode to Evening*, he can choose no more individual metre than that in which Collins had written *his* Ode a few years before. The publishers of the Collection speak of it with pride, as representing 'an age in which literary merit so much abounds'; but the candid modern reader finds the merit to be but the merit of a more than Chinese uniformity. Poor Robert Lloyd, Cowper's and Colman's friend, was nearer the mark when he said, just at this time,—

> 'Write what we will, our works bespeak us
> *Imitatores, servum pecus.*
> Tale, elegy, or lofty ode,
> We travel on the beaten road:
> The proverb still sticks closely by us—
> *Nil dictum quod non dictum prius.*'

In what precisely does this 'something so new in the manner of Cowper's work consist? There is much debate among modern critics as to the answer to this question, which really is the question of Cowper's place in our literary history: some[1] claiming for him a kinship with Rousseau, a spirit like that of Byron and Shelley—a revolutionary spirit that he certainly would not have claimed for himself; others—and this is the common view—agreeing with Mr. Arnold that he is 'the precursor of Words-

[1] Taine, Stopford Brooke, Pattison

worth.' It would be truer to say that in his own curious and limited way Cowper contains both these elements, the Byronic and the Wordsworthian element; and that in so doing he embodies all the intellectual influences that were silently working around him towards the evolution of modern England. An interesting writer[1] has characterised the tendencies of poetry in the latter half of the eighteenth century as 'love of natural description and attempts at a more vivid and wider delineation of human character and incident'; two tendencies which, we may add, are but different forms of one—of the revolt against convention both in art and society. The joy in natural objects, of which we have found traces in many writers since Thomson, begins to be linked with a sense of the brotherhood of mankind; to the religious mind (and the wide reach of the religious revival must be remembered) this sense of brotherhood and this sense of natural beauty being sharpened and strengthened by the belief in the near presence of the Creator and the Father of all. Cowper is the artist who has expressed in a new and permanent form this complex sentiment. He is the poet of the return to nature, and he is the poet of the simple human affections; both nature and humanity being of interest to him because of their divine source, and because of that alone. 'We are placed in the world,' he seems to say, 'by an omnipotent and irresponsible Being, on whose will our life and death, our health and sickness, our prosperity and adversity at every moment depend, and who decides at his pleasure the fate of empires and the issues of political events. The world as he made it is good, but the corruption of man has done much to spoil it. "God made the country and man made the town"; and though man cannot live without society, his vices are such that his towns soon become centres of corruption. Hence true beauty is to be found only in unadulterate Nature; true pleasures only in the fields and woods, and in the simple offices of rural and domestic life. To watch Nature at her work; to meditate; to cultivate sympathy with those creatures that are, so to speak, most fresh from Nature's hand—with animals and the poor and the friends of your home—this is the only rational way to happiness; and to advocate this life is the poet's work. On the other hand, he may emphasise his teaching by contrast; by denouncing vice, by satire genial or severe; by drawing in outlines that all may recognise the harm of a departure from Nature.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, July 1862.

The poet is a teacher and an advocate; his business is to wean the world from worldliness to God.'

At fifty years of age, then, and under the influence of his friend of fifteen years, Mrs. Unwin, Cowper began to realise his own powers as a poet, and systematically to carry into practice this theory of the poet's duty. Already in 1776 the gloom of his second period of insanity had begun to roll away; he renewed his broken correspondence; he took to busying himself about the garden and the house at Olney. His brightest and most active years are those that follow—the fifteen years that begin with the renewal of his correspondence and end with the publication of his *Homer*. It was about 1780 that he began to find his glazing and his carpentering, and even his landscape-drawing not enough; to find it unsatisfying

> 'To raise the prickly and green coated gourd,'

and to look for a more solid occupation than

> 'Weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit,
> Or twining silken threads on ivory reels.'

He asked for some employment more permanently exciting, and he found it in versifying on the themes set by Mrs. Unwin. What pleasure he gained from his new occupation is told in part in the poems themselves, and is reiterated in those volumes of narrative, humour, chat, argument, criticism, which are the daily record of Cowper's mind, and which so completely justify the title that Southey claimed for him of 'the best letter-writer in the English language.' In his poems, indeed, Cowper has revealed himself with a winning *naveté* that is almost without example; and when we add to the autobiographical passages in *Retirement* and *The Task* the friendly confidences of the letters, we find that there remains nothing for the critic to interpret. Cowper explains himself with a simple frankness that makes half his charm.

For example, the letters abound with passages which show on the one hand the pleasure that he derived from his newly-found gift of writing, and on the other the moral and religious aim that he believed himself to be fulfilling in his poetry. 'The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses,' he says to William Unwin[1]; 'it made me a carpenter, a bird-cage maker, a gardener, and has lately taught me to draw.' Again, in a latter to Newton[2]:

[1] April 6, 1780.

[2] Dec. 21, 1780.

'At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divest it from sad subjects and to fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.'

In a later letter to the same friend[1], which refers still more painfully to his mental distress, he says :—

'God knows that my mind having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world, and its opinion of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavoured to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God give me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain.'

And again, as a reason for publishing,

'If I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success to make an amusement of it.'

Of course, however, as the second of these extracts shows, he has a deeper reason for writing than this ; the preacher's and the moralist's reason, that appears so clearly in every page of his poems. 'My sole drift is to be useful,' he writes to his cousin Mrs. Cowper[2] ; 'a point however which I know I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining.' To Lady Austen, in his well-known letter in verse, he appears as

> 'I, who scribble rhyme
> To catch the triflers of the time,
> And tell them truths divine and clear
> Which, couched in prose, they will not hear.'

To Unwin he speaks of his first volume as

> 'A page
> That would reclaim a vicious age'

Table Talk, the opening poem, is, it will be remembered, an argument to prove that the true field of poetry is the beauty of religion, till then an unexplored land ; and that the poet's true function is to

[1] Aug. 6, 1785. [2] Oct. 19, 1781

'Spread the rich discovery, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight'

And in the beautiful lines which close *Retirement*, he claims the position of a teacher of mankind :—

'Me poetry (or rather notes that aim
Feebly and faintly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse;
Content if thus sequestered I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's, praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own'

From the Letters too we can learn much of Cowper's method of composition ; enough at least to correct the first impression which we might derive from his poetry, that it was the work of a rapid and even careless writer. 'If there lives a man who stands clear of the charge of careless writing, I am that man,' he says to Lady Hesketh, in answer to some criticisms of his *Homer* made by General Cowper. His facility is unquestionable ; but it is a fact that he composed slowly. He took *Nulla dies sine linea* for a motto, and when once he had taken up the profession of a poet he persevered in it, contenting himself, when Minerva was unwilling, with three lines of *The Task* as a day's production, and thinking three lines better than nothing. When the translation of Homer was in hand the work went on with the utmost regularity. 'I have, as you well know,' he tells Unwin, 'a daily occupation—forty lines to translate, a task which I never excuse myself when it is possible to perform it. Equally sedulous am I in the matter of transcribing, so that between both my morning and evening are for the most part completely engaged.' Transcribing however he thought 'slavish work, and of all occupations that which I dislike the most'; and accordingly he was glad when friends relieved him by copying some of the *Homer*. He deferred to the criticism of those about him, and was glad when his publisher, Johnson, suggested an alteration in a phrase. When Newton, of whom to the last he seems to have stood somewhat in awe, condemned a passage, Cowper consented with the best grace to remove it :— 'I am glad you have condemned it ; and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me'.[1] In effect we may say that

[1] Nov. 27, 1781.

during the five years which ended with the publication of *The Task*, and to a certain extent during the years when Cowper was employed on this *Homer*, the writing and recasting of his poetry filled all his mind. The 'pleasure in poetic pains which only poets know' was known to him conspicuously among poets; the critical spirit within him, that independent and fastidious taste for which he is so remarkable, found full exercise; and in the excitement of doing his true work in the most perfect way he seems to have almost forgotten the cloud which had overshadowed him and was soon to return.

The Letters, again, tell us much of Cowper's opinions of other poets. We have already quoted the passage in which he speaks of his scanty reading of them—'not more than one English poet for twenty years.' As Southey remarks, this probably means that he had not read more than one with minute care; with such care as he afterwards spent on Glover's *Athenaid*, when by way of preparing to review it he 'made an analysis of the first twelve books.' In his youth he had evidently been a reader of poetry, and he had an excellent memory. When Johnson's collection was sent to him in 1779 he found that the best poets were 'so fresh in his memory' that the collection taught him nothing. He is fond of mentioning Churchill, the admiration of his early manhood, with something more than respect; here and there he has an acute remark about Pope, as when he says 'never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united[1].' He often falls foul of Johnson, 'a great bear, in spite of all his learning and penetration.' He dissents from his view of Prior, and argues with great skill for a proper recognition of Prior's real poetical merits[2], while he is so enraged by the Doctor's attack on Milton that he breaks into the cry, 'O, I could thrash his old jacket till his pension jingled in his pocket!' All this shows that Cowper had a clear taste of his own in poetry, a *goût vif et franc*, as Sainte-Beuve calls it in his excellent criticism of him, but it does not show that he was a student of English poetry, any more than his quotations from Swift and Rabelais show that he read much and often in their books, or than the Horatian turn of his didactic pieces shows that he was always reading Horace. The truth is, as we have all along implied, that Cowper is original if the word means anything. 'My descriptions,' he writes of *The Task*, 'are all from nature;—not one

[1] Jan. 5, 1782. [2] Jan. 17, 1782.

of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience ;—not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural. In my numbers, which I varied as much as I could (for blank verse without variety of numbers is no better than bladder and string), I have imitated nobody, though sometimes perhaps there may be an apparent resemblance ; because at the same time that I would not imitate, I have not affectedly differed.'

It is this originality, this veracity, this exact correspondence of the phrase with the feeling, and of both with the object, that marks out Cowper. We sometimes hear it said that he owed much, especially in versification, to Churchill ; if he owed anything, it was so much 'bettered in the borrowing' that it is hard to discover the debt. The very foundation of his poetry is his close observation of men and things : the same close observation that fills his letters with happily touched incidents of village life, with characters sketched in a sentence, furnishes the groundwork of *The Task* and the satires. The snow-covered fields, the waggon toiling through the drifts, 'the distant plough slow moving,' the garden, the fireside ; the gipsies, the village thief, the clerical coxcomb, Dubius, Sir Smug—of all these he gives us not only finished pictures, but pictures finished in the presence of the object and not in the studio. 'The Flemish masters have met their match!' says Sainte-Beuve, as he quotes with delight one of these descriptions of Cowper's ; might we not say with even greater truth, 'The English landscape painters have found their pattern'?

Yet it is undoubtedly true that Cowper is little read by the very class which is most given to the reading of poetry, and most competent to judge it. He is a favourite with the middle classes ; he is not a favourite with the cultivated classes. What are the limitations of his genius which prevent his acceptance with them? Mr. Arnold, who long ago called Cowper 'that most interesting man and excellent poet,' perhaps sums them up when he speaks of Cowper's 'morbid religion and lumbering movement.' If we are to look to poetry for the successful 'application of ideas to life,' we shall look in vain to *The Task* ; for the ideas are those of an inelastic puritanism, that would maim and mutilate life in the name of religion. 'Were I to write as many poems as Lope de Vega or Voltaire,' says Cowper, 'not one of them would be without this tincture,'—this puritanic tincture. He began with the resolve to make religion poetical, and he succeeded in making

poetry religious, but religious after a manner which his excellent editor, Mr. Benham, himself a clergyman, calls 'hard and revolting.' And the same temper which led him to measure the Unseen with the foot-rule of Calvinistic orthodoxy, led him to visit the science, the politics, even the characters which he did not understand, with a censure like that of the Syllabus. 'It would be hard,' says Mr. Benham, 'to find a more foolish and mischievous piece of rant than that contained in *The Garden*'—in the lines where Cowper reviles the geologist and the historian; and we might extend the same sentence to his promiscuous denunciations of London life, of the amusements of ordinary people, even of the game of chess. When the Commemoration of Handel takes place, he joins with Newton in crying *Idolatry!* When he writes his *Review of Schools*, it never occurs to him that boys may get good as well as harm from each other's society, and that there may be desirable elements of character that cannot be acquired in 'some pious pastor's humble cot.' When he turns, as he often does, to politics, his amiable Whiggism is sorely tried by current events, by the lack of great men, and by the miscarriage of the American war. He believes that 'the loss of America will be the ruin of England,' but consoles himself with the thought that the surrender of Cornwallis was 'fore-ordained,' and that the end of the world is approaching. 'My feelings are all of the intense kind,' he says in one of his letters; and the Nemesis of intensity is narrowness.

Again, in curious contrast to the neatness and ease of his rhymed couplets, there is unquestionably a 'lumbering movement' in Cowper's blank verse; heaviness, difficulty, coming sometimes from the necessity that he was under of adorning trivialities, sometimes from a want of mastery over the language.

> 'Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
> They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
> Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.'

—There are too many commas, the reader cannot help crying. Sometimes, again, we find a worse than Wordsworthian nudity of phrase—

> 'The violet, the pink, the jessamine,
> I pricked them into paper with a pin';

sometimes an intolerable instance of the quasi-heroic—

> 'The stable yields a stercoraceous heap';

or a positive barbarism, as here, in *Tirocinium*—

> 'Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
> A ubiquarian presence and control?'

We find frequent descents into prose, and rarely indeed a compensating ascent into the higher music of the great poets. How should we find such ascents, indeed, in Cowper? They demand some moving force of passion, or some inspiring activity of ideas, and for neither of these can we look to him. The only passion that really moved him was the morbid passion of despair, when the cloud that obscured his brain pressed heavy upon him; and it was only when he wrote under this influence that he produced masterpieces, such as that noble and terrible poem, *The Castaway*, and the lines of self-description in *The Task*. His ideas, too, have not the inspiring activity necessary to produce great poetry; they are not vital ideas; they are seen to be less and less in harmony with the facts of the world as the years go on. We read Cowper, indeed, not for his passion or for his ideas, but for his love of nature and his faithful rendering of her beauty; for his truth of portraiture, for his humour, for his pathos; for the refined honesty of his style, for the melancholy interest of his life, and for the simplicity and the loveliness of his character.

EDITOR

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF POETRY.

[From *Table Talk.*]

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art;
Language above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,—
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,—
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent, a God the theme.
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as His love,
Man lavished all his thoughts on human things,
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings,
But still while virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined,
Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crowned
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reeled,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.
Anacreon, Horace, played in Greece and Rome
This Bedlam part; and, others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned
The proud Protector of the power he gained,
Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face

Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judged every effort of the Muse a crime;
Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste:
But when the second Charles assumed the way,
And arts revived beneath a softer day,
Then like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarmed with a scribbling herd as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
From these a long succession in the rage
Of rank obscenity debauched their age,
Nor ceased, till ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song,
That lewdness had usurped and worn so long.
Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,
That neither gave nor would endure offence,
Whipped out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.
In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour, in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well-disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)

Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.
A. Are we then left—*B.* Not wholly in the dark:
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser who disdains the road
Snuffs up the wind and flings himself abroad.
Contemporaries all surpassed, see one,
Short his career, indeed, but ably run.
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours,
And, like a scattered seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took too often there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdained the rules he understood,
The laurel seemed to wait on his command,
He snatched it rudely from the Muses' hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and give scent to every flower,
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads

The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads;
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes,
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown
With artless airs and concerts of her own;
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought,
Fancy that from the bow that spans the sky
Brings colours dipt in heaven that never die,
A soul exalted above earth, a mind
Skilled in the characters that form mankind,—
And as the sun, in rising beauty dressed,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close,
An eye like his to catch the distant goal,
Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys,—
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penned,
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,
Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread;
Satire has long since done his best, and curst
And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst;
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;

And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.

GRACE AND THE WORLD.

[From *Hope.*]

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures;
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, 'Do this, and live.'
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold:
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not:
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, expressed
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create!
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound;
And beaus, adepts in every thing profound,

Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of the levelled tube excites,
Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;
The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat
His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.
'Adieu,' Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
'Adieu to all morality, if Grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
With nice attention, in a righteous scale,
And save or damn as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus the important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side;
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And God is merciful—sets all to rights.
Thus, between justice, as my prime support,
And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.'
'I never will believe,' the colonel cries,
'The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
Who make the good Creator on their plan
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with, even because they must,

Be punished with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene),
My creed is, He is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest."
'Right,' says an ensign, 'and for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealing should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be concealed:
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
A hand as liberal as the light of day.
The soldier thus endowed, who never shrinks
Nor closets up his thought, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug,' he cries (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug),
'Your office is to winnow false from true;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, what think you?'
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
'Fallible man,' the church-bred youth replies,
'Is still found fallible, however wise;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,

Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charmed me most
Was—well-a-day, the title page was lost;
The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is.—To which, of my own store,
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I waive just now, for conversation sake.'—
'Spoke like an oracle!' they all exclaim,
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honoured name.

Characters and Sketches.

[From *Conversation.*]

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
(For opposition gives opinion strength,)
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably disposed to death.
Oh thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame;
No,—there I grant the privilege I claim.

A disputable point is no man's ground,
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapped again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived,—and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right;
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly, 'To be sure—no doubt.'
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man,—
Yes, you may catch him tripping if you can.
He would not with a peremptory tone
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were called by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not;
What he remembers seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.
Yet though he tease and baulk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme

A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool;
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach;
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind and deaf and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay,
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride:
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump;
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn,
And, though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite,
And those the most where neither has a right.
The Point of Honour has been deemed of use,
To teach good manners and to curb abuse;
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polished manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom, barbarous still and rude,
We are restrained indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard indeed, if nothing will defend[1]
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace

[1] forbid.

Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low,
That men engage in it compelled by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source:
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fixed eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,
On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No
A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not affront me,—and no other can.
Were I empowered to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well-loaded fists;
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue;
Then each might show to his admiring friends
In honourable bumps his rich amends,
And carry in contusions of his skull
A satisfactory receipt in full.

* * * * * *

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose;
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touched with the magnet, had attracted his.
His whispered theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain
Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again;
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk

With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
'Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now.'
I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree show?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
But we that make no honey, though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort
What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
Quite as absurd, though not so light as he:
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop; significant and budge;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge;
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock it never is at home:
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage;
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love;
But when unpacked, your disappointment groans
To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones
Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us in recitals of disease
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed.
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot

Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much:
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,—
Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
You fall at once into a lower key,—
That's worse, the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night;
He shakes with cold;—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish;
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish:
He takes what he at first professed to loathe,
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder, if he can—
Alas! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less.
Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is—to be displeased.

An Afternoon Call.

[From the Same.]

The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
'Yes, Ma'am,' and 'No, Ma'am,' uttered softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go:
Each individual, suffering a constraint,
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,

As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed;
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

DEJECTION AND RETIREMENT. THE RETIRED STATESMAN

[From *Retirement.*]

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN[1], whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove,
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fixed, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,

[1] The celebrated Dr. William Heberden (1710-1800).

Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for Pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least:
Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close hammered steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat;
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit, that puppet-prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul, that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing:
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at its expense, is slender praise;
He, that has not usurped the name of man,
Does all, and deems too little all, he can
To assuage the throbbings of the festered part,
And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes;
Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright;
The screws reversed (a task which if He please
God in a moment executes with ease)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,

Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye
That passes all he sees unheeded by:
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels;
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.
To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek Him, in his favour life is found;
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound:
Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull Earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth;
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.
'Ye groves,' the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,
'My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your grey possessor hide,

Receive me languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once, (ah those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I pressed
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts, that, while they seem to stay
A fallen empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice:
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.'
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumbered Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free:
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize:
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,

Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in freedom's smile expressed,
In freedom lost so long, now repossessed ;
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that, whether dressed or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never marked her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild-roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,
Seem all created since he travelled last.
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening-watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires ;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ;
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near ;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend :
A man whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place .

Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence,
On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occurred, not duly weighed,
He sighs—for, after all, by slow degrees
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there:
With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

What to Read.

[From the same.]

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves;
Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show;
Nor his[1] who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust;
Nor those of learned philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as learning without false pretence,
The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use;
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die!

[1] Voltaire

The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame;
Till farce itself, most mournfully *jejune*,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,
And novels (witness every month's Review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.

A COMPARISON. ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY[1].

Sweet stream, that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng,
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blessed where'er she goes;
Pure-bosomed as that watery glass,
And heaven reflected in her face!

THE JACKDAW.

[From the Latin of Vincent Bourne.]

There is a bird who by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

[1] Miss Shuttleworth.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather;
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the raree-show
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its businesses,
Are no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—'Caw.'

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
And sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.

BOADICEA. AN ODE.

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

Sage beneath a spreading oak
  Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
Every burning word he spoke
  Full of rage and full of grief:

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

'Rome shall perish,—write that word
  In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish hopeless and abhorred,
  Deep in ruin as in guilt.

'Rome, for empire far renowned,
  Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground,—
  Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

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

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

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

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

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rushed to battle, fought and died,
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

'Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!'

[Extracts from *The Task*; Book I, *The Sofa.*]

RELISH OF FAIR PROSPECT.

Oh! may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The Sofa suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a Sofa, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And still remember, nor without regret,
Of hours that sorrow since has much endeared,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering, penniless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,

Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.
No Sofa then awaited my return,
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare,
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfered yet; nor yet impaired
My relish of fair prospect: scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire,
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned

The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy.
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

CRAZY KATE. THE GIPSIES.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again. And now she roams

The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tattered still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed.
I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloined
From his accustomed perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature, and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self banished from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft,
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,

Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal the effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

[From Book II, *The Timepiece.*]

ENGLAND.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deformed
With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all-essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight,—when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough

In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen
Each in his field of glory: one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling Victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown
If any wronged her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

[From Book III, *The Garden.*]

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had Himself
Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore,
And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.

Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams.

[From Book IV, *The Winter Evening.*]

THE POST. THE FIRESIDE IN WINTER.

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,

Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh the important budget! ushered in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

* * * * * *

O Winter! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered air with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou holdest the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,

And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powdered pert, proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out,
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still;
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.

SNOW.

I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share:

I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb ; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently performed
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade that feared the chilling blast
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathise with others, suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogged wheels ; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half shut eyes and puckered cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both

He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
O happy! and in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.
The learnèd finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse ; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;
The waggon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

EARLY LOVE OF THE COUNTRY AND OF POETRY

But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early strayed
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too
The firstborn efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,

The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too, enamoured of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favoured lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley! and though now reclaimed
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools;
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemployed, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.

[From Book VI, *The Winter Walk at Noon.*]

MEDITATION IN WINTER.

The night was winter in his roughest mood,
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive

The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed:
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hoodwinked. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,

And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,
Not shy as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

THE POET IN THE WOODS.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander; neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarmed
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollowed deep,
Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dear Joseph,—Five and twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour, and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days),
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And were I called to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it, then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.
'Go, fellow!—whither?'—turning short about—
'Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.'
''Tis but a step, sir; just at the street's end.'—
'For what?'—'An please you, sir, to see a friend.'—
'A friend!' Horatio cried, and seemed to start—
'Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.'

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps, his confidence just then betrayed,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;

Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time, an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed, that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare:
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out
O happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON, ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

That ocean you of late surveyed,
Those rocks, I too have seen,
But I afflicted and dismayed,
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretched before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me the waves that ceaseless broke
  Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
  Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
  And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-tossed, and wrecked at last,
  Come home to port no more.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.—WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.

Toll for the brave!
  The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
  Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
  Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
  And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
  And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
  With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
  Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
  His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
  No tempest gave the shock,
She sprang no fatal leak;
  She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath this walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

On the Death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bullfinch.

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
Oh share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassined by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among
The egg was laid from which he sprung;
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blessed,
Well-taught, he all the sounds expressed
Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed,—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole; all seemed secure;
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long backed, long tailed, with whiskered snout,
And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seemed to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went,—
Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood.—
He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh, had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn;—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remained to tell
The cruel death he died.

The Acquiescence of Pure Love.

[From the French of Madame Guyon.]

Love! if Thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare Thy fires;
Plunged in the depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languished here;
Yet all my thoughts Thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
  My life or death, appoint me pain or ease:
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
  In ease or health no real good she sees.

One Good she covets, and that Good alone;
  To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
  And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee.

That we should bear the cross is Thy command,
  Die to the world, and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
  As pleased when shipwrecked as when safe on shore.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blessed be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.
  Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.
  My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;

The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes
That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar.'
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—

Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tost,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies!
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine:
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charmed me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.[1]

TO MARY.

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

[1] *Note to Ed. of* 1803. Mr. Cowper afterwards altered the last stanza in the following manner:—

'The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.'

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light.
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

THE CASTAWAY.

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife.
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevailed,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delayed not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried 'Adieu!'

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

SCOTCH MINOR SONG-WRITERS

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE passion for song-writing which seized upon Scotland in the eighteenth century may be compared—if small things may be compared with great—with the passion for play-writing which seized upon England in the latter days of Queen Elizabeth and throughout the reign of her successor. In both periods we have a supreme outcome, the plays of Shakespeare in the one case and the poetry of Burns in the other; but the excitement by which the powers of these central figures were stimulated was general. When Burns came into the world the competition was universal for the prize which fell to the lot of masterful genius, and throughout his lifetime all classes in Scotland were eager to distinguish themselves as song-writers. Ambition did not always light upon faculty, but the ambition was everywhere. If we look at the results of the lyric movement in Scotland during the eighteenth century, it is surprising to see how very various were the conditions in life of the authors and authoresses of the best songs, the songs which took root and still survive. Peers, members of the Supreme Court of Law, diplomatists, lairds, clergymen, schoolmasters, men of science, farmers, gardeners, compositors, pedlars—all were trying their hands at patching old songs and making new songs. The writer of *Auld Robin Gray* was a daughter of the Earl of Balcarres; the writer of *Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes*, which stands first in Miss Aitken's Selection of the choicest lyrics of Scotland, was an Ayrshire 'lucky' who kept an alehouse and sold whisky without a licence. And it was not merely in the south of Scotland that this passion for song-writing made itself felt; it was as active in the north of Scotland as in the south.

The contributors to Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* form one of the earliest groups of song-writers in the eighteenth century. They were not called into existence by Ramsay's

example; in fact Ramsay speaks of himself as the poetical disciple of one of the most notable of them, William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, a gay boisterous lieutenant, who is supposed to have left a picture of himself in the song *Willie was a wanton wag*. There was another William Hamilton in the set, Hamilton of Bangour, whose songs were of a more serious cast. The mournful ballad of *The Braes of Yarrow* is his composition. Another of Ramsay's 'ingenious young gentlemen' was Robert Crawfurd, of Drumsoy, who found words for the air of 'Tweedside' which have become inseparable from that tender melody. David Mallet, who claimed to be the author of *Edwin and Emma*, made his beginning in letters as the author of *The Birks of Invermay*, a pastoral song, which has kept its place among less artificial favourites. Lady Grissell Baillie, daughter of the Earl of Marchmont, also contributed to the *Tea-Table Miscellany*. The humour of the song *Were na my heart licht*, as well as the subject, is one among many illustrations of the closeness of the sympathy between the Scotch aristocracy and the peasantry. Perhaps the example of the Stuart kings had something to do with establishing this tradition. The first and the fifth of the line had a pronounced liking for putting the humours of the vulgar into verse.

Very little of real worth, however, was produced by Allan Ramsay's group. Their sentiment is affected, smirking, lackadaisical; and their humour, except when it takes the form of description, factitious and forced. Very few of the songs of the *Tea-Table Miscellany* took any lasting hold of the people—a sure proof of their artificiality. Historically they are the result of studies in Restoration and Queen Anne literature, with selections from which the productions of the native poets challenged competition in the *Miscellany*; and we seem to be aware in reading them of a certain consciousness of imitation and pride of rivalry. The authors seem to have one eye on their subject and another on their models. There is much less of this in the writings of a somewhat later Northern group of singers, whether from temperament or because they were farther from the Modern Athens and its ambitions. The songs of George Halket, a Jacobite schoolmaster, author of *Whirry, Whigs, awa'*, and *Logie o' Buchan*; Alexander Ross, the author of *The Fortunate Shepherdess*, a 'stickit Minister' and for fifty-two years a schoolmaster contented and tuneful on his stipend of twenty pounds a year; John Skinner, the author of *Tullochgorum*, a persecuted Episcopalian clergyman

in Aberdeenshire; and Alexander Geddes, a Roman Catholic priest in Morayshire,—the songs of these local poets were more spontaneous, and proved themselves to have a correspondingly greater vitality. Of Skinner's songs in particular, few in number but all real in their impulse, full of verve and manly strength of heart and intellect, Burns was an ardent admirer. In one of those complimentary epistles which it was the fashion of the day for poets to interchange, Burns regretted that he had not been able to pay in person 'a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw—*Tullochgorum's my delight!*' and hailed Skinner as the sole surviving possessor of that 'certain something' which to his mind distinguished old Scotch songs 'not only from English songs but from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language.' Burns was also much struck with the pathos of *The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn*; he would have seen another quality in it if he had been in the secret, preserved by tradition, that the Ewie lamented was a whisky still captured by the exciseman; but the fact that to any one not in this secret the lament should have seemed so natural and touching, is an evidence of the delicacy with which the humorous double-meaning is sustained.

Burns was perhaps prejudiced by the direct unaffected strength of Skinner's songs, and the large-hearted philosophy of life which inspired them, into paying him a compliment that the technical excellence of his verse hardly warrants. Among Burns's contemporaries there were certainly others besides Skinner who possessed the secret of the certain indescribable something which makes a song a permanent addition to popular literature. Burns himself speaks of one of the most enduring of Scotch songs, *There's nae luck about the house*, which was first sung upon the streets and sold in a broadsheet about 1771 or 1772, as 'one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots or any other language.' It is still one of the mainstays and props of homely sentiment in Scotland. Its authorship is uncertain, but the weight of evidence assigns it to a poor schoolmistress, Jean Adams, who closed an unfortunate career in an almshouse. Another song of equally enduring qualities, *Auld Robin Gray*, which became popular about the same date, was believed for some time by antiquaries to be as old as the time of David Rizzio, but proved to be the work of a girl hardly out of her teens, Lady Ann Lindsay, daughter of the Earl of Balcarres. The same mistake of ascribing popular songs to remote antiquity

was made in the case of *Ca the Yowes to the Knowes*, a pastoral song in a very different key of sentiment, which was really written by Isabel, or Tibbie, Pagan, an Ayshire cottager, described as a woman of deformed person, saturnine temper, and dissolute habits, rendered formidable by her sarcastic wit and attractive by her powers of song. Two plaintive songs, to the air of *The Flowers of the Forest*, were from the first assigned to their true authors, Miss Jane Elliot, sister of the Sir Gilbert Elliot who afterwards became Lord Minto, and Miss Rutherford, afterwards Mrs. Cockburn, daughter of a Roxburghshire laird. Mrs. Cockburn's version had reference to a contemporary commercial disaster of the same nature as the Glasgow Bank failure, but both have become associated in the popular mind with the defeat of Flodden. This may have contributed to their popularity, but the strength of their appeal to the melancholy romantic side of the Scotch character would probably have alone sufficed to preserve them. To the same period belongs the marching song of the 42nd Regiment, *The Garb of Old Gaul*. This stirring martial lyric was first printed in *The Lark*, a miscellany published in Edinburgh in 1765, and was the composition of a young officer, Harry Erskine, who afterwards entered political life, and whose son was promoted to the peerage as Earl of Rosslyn.

I have drawn attention to the various social positions of the song-writers of that period, to whom we owe the best and most enduring Scotch songs, the songs which have taken most hold of the people, and have moulded their character, in order to show how universal was the passion for song-writing in the eighteenth century. If we turn to the productions of less happy faculty, the works of ambition and ingenious endeavour, we find abundant evidence of the same fact. Before Burns the lyric tendency is everywhere conspicuous, and naturally after Burns it increased for a time rather than abated. We have seen that Sir Gilbert Elliot's sister was a successful song-writer; the diplomatist and statesman himself in his youth contributed a pastoral to Yair's *Charmer*, *My Sheep I neglected--I lost my sheep-hook*, in which he vowed to 'wander from love and Amynta no more.' This pastoral still holds its place in collections of Scotch songs. Andrew Erskine, a younger brother of the Earl of Kellie, wrote many songs, and one, *How sweet this lone vale*, which Burns pronounced 'divine.' Sir John Clerk, a Baron of the Exchequer, did not consider it beneath his dignity to put tags to old songs, and words in his native dialect

to old tunes. Dr. Austin, a fashionable physician in Edinburgh, consoled himself for the loss of a lady who jilted him in a song which has supported many in similar circumstances, *For Lack of Gold.* Alexander Wilson, who afterwards attained fame as an ornithologist, began life as a pedlar and strung breezy lyrics together as he wandered on cheerfully from door to door with his pack on his back. 'Balloon' Tytler—so called from his aeronautic experiments—chemist, mechanician, original editor and principal compiler of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, showed in *Loch Erroch Side*, and *The Bonnie Brucket Lassie*, that scientific pursuits had not dimmed his freshness of feeling. Blind Dr. Blacklock, who kept a boarding-school, warbled 'in the manner of Shenstone,' about the harvest that waves in the breeze and the music that floats on the gale. Richard Hewitt, Blacklock's amanuensis, emulated the work of his master in the same vein. The famous song, *Hey Johnnie Cope*, which deserves to be ranked among the best songs of the period, was the composition of Adam Skirving, a wealthy Haddingtonshire farmer. John Lowe, a gardener's son, wrote *Mary, weep no more for me.* John Mayne, a compositor, wrote *Logan Braes.* A song-writer of wider culture was the Rev. John Logan, Minister of Leith, the writer of the most eloquent sermons which the Scotch Church has produced. It is difficult in reading Logan's poetry to divest oneself of sympathy with the story of his unhappy life, but there seems to be more in his verse than mere general literary facility. He was a writer of sacred as well as 'profane' songs, but his essays in the latter direction, though they disturbed his relations with his brethren, help to redeem the Ministers of the Scotch Kirk from the reproach of having contributed less than any other class in the community to the national lyric movement of the eighteenth century.

W. MINTO.

TULLOCHGORUM.

[JOHN SKINNER. Born 1721; died 1801]

Come gie's a sang, Montgomery cried,
And lay your disputes all aside,
What signifies't for folk to chide
For what's been done before them?
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
To drop their Whig-mig-morum,
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
To spend the night in mirth and glee,
And cheerfu' sing, alang wi' me,
The reel o' Tullochgorum.

O, Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And ony sumph[1] that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him.
For blythe and cheery we's be a,
Blythe and cheery, blythe and cheery,
Blythe and cheery we's be a',
And mak' a happy quorum.
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance, till we be like to fa',
The reel of Tullochgorum.

There needs na' be sae great a phrase,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wadna gi'e our ain strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' 'em.
They're douff[2] and dowie[3] at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie,
They're douff and dowie at the best
Wi' a' their variorum.

[1] morose person. [2] dull. [3] gloomy

They 're douff and dowie at the best,
Their allegros and a' the rest,
They canna please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

Let warldly minds themselves oppress
Wi' fears of want, and double cess,
And sullen sots themselves distress
Wi' keeping up decorum.
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Like auld Philosophorum?
Shall we so sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,
Nor ever rise to shake a fit
To the reel of Tullochgorum?

May choicest blessings still attend
Each honest open-hearted friend,
And calm and quiet be his end,
And a' that 's good watch o'er him!
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,
May peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' 'em;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstain'd by any vicious spot!
And may he never want a groat
That 's fond of Tullochgorum.

But for the dirty, yawning fool,
Who wants to be oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him!
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
And nane say wae 's me for 'im!

May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Wi' a' the ills that come frae France,
Whae'er he be, that winna dance
The reel of Tullochgorum

LOGIE O' BUCHAN.

[GEORGE HALKET. Died 1756.]

O Logie o' Buchan, O Logie the laird,
They ha'e ta'en awa' Jamie, that delved in the yard,
Wha play'd on the pipe, and the viol sae sma',
They ha'e ta'en awa' Jamie, the flow'r o' them a'.

He said, Think na lang lassie, tho' I gang awa';
He said, Think na lang lassie, tho' I gang awa';
For simmer is coming, cauld winter 's awa',
And I 'll come and see thee in spite of them a'.

Tho' Sandy has ousen[1], has gear, and has kye;
A house, and a hadden[2], and siller forbye:
Yet I 'd tak' my ain lad, wi' his staff in his hand,
Before I 'd ha'e him, wi' the houses and land.

My daddie looks sulky, my minnie looks sour,
They frown upon Jamie because he is poor;
Tho' I lo'e them as weel as a daughter should do,
They 're nae half sa dear to me, Jamie, as you.

I sit on my creepie[3], I spin at my wheel,
And think on the laddie that lo'ed me sae weel;
He had but ae saxpence, he brak it in twa,
And gied me the hauf o't when he ga'd awa'.

Then haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa',
Then haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa',
The simmer is coming, cauld winter 's awa',
And ye 'll come and see me in spite o' them a'.

[1] oxen [2] land (holding). [3] low stool.

LEWIE GORDON.

[ALEXANDER GEDDES. Born 1737; died 1802.]

Oh! send Lewie Gordon hame
And the lad I daurna' name;
Although his back be at the wa',
Here's to him that's far awa'.

Hech hey! my Highlandman!
My handsome, charming Highlandman!
Weel could I my true love ken,
Amang ten thousand Highlandmen.

Oh, to see his tartan trews,
Bonnet blue and laigh-heel'd shoes,
Philabeg aboon his knee!
That's the lad that I 'll gang wi'.

This lovely lad of whom I sing,
Is fitted for to be a king;
And on his breast he wears a star,
You 'd take him for the god of war.

Oh, to see this princely one
Seated on his father's throne!
Our griefs would then a' disappear,
We 'd celebrate the jub'lee year.

THERE 'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

[JEAN ADAMS. Died 1765.]

And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he 's weel?
Is this a time to think of wark?
Ye jauds, fling by your wheel.
Is this a time to think o' wark.
When Colin 's at the door?
Gie me my cloak! I 'll to the quay
And see him come ashore.

For there 's nae luck about the house,
There 's nae luck ava ;
There 's little pleasure in the house,
When our gudeman 's awa.

Rise up and mak' a clean fireside ;
Put on the muckle pot ;
Gi'e little Kate her cotton gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat :
And mak' their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw ;
It 's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he 's been long awa'.

There 's twa fat hens upon the bauk[1],
Been fed this month and mair ;
Mak' haste and thraw[2] their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare ;
And mak' the table neat and clean,
Gar ilka thing look braw ;
It 's a' for love of my gudeman,
For he 's been long awa'.

O gi'e me down my bigonet[3],
My bishop satin gown,
For I maun tell the bailie's wife
That Colin 's come to town.
My Sunday's shoon they maun gae on,
My hose o' pearlin blue ;
'Tis a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he 's baith leal and true.

Sae true his words, sae smooth his speech,
His breath 's like caller[4] air !
His very foot has music in 't,
As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again ?
And will I hear him speak ?
I 'm downright dizzy with the thought,—
In troth, I 'm like to greet[5].

[1] cross-beam (baulk). [2] wing. [3] linen cap. [4] fresh. [5] weep

The cauld blasts o' the winter wind,
That thrilled through my heart,
They 're a' blawn by; I ha'e him safe,
Till death we 'll never part:
But what puts parting in my head?
It may be far awa';
The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw.

Since Colin 's weel, I 'm weel content,
I ha'e nae more to crave;
Could I but live to mak' him blest,
I 'm blest above the lave[1]:
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I 'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,—
In troth, I 'm like to greet.

CA' THE YOWES.

[ISABEL PAGAN. Born 1740; died 1821.]

Ca' the yowes to the knowes[2],
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rows[3],
My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He rowed me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

Will ye gang down the water side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide
Beneath the hazels spreading wide,
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

[1] the rest. [2] knolls [3] rolls.

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool;
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.

Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye 'se lie and sleep,
And ye shall be my dearie.

If ye 'll but stand to what ye 've said,
I 'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad;
And ye may row me in your plaid,
And I shall be your dearie.

While waters wimple to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie;
Till clay-cauld death shall blin' my e'e,
Ye aye shall be my dearie.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

[JANE ELLIOT. Born 1727; died 1805.]

I 've heard them lilting, at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a-lilting, before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning, on ilka green loaning[1];
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts[2] in the morning nae blythe lads are scorning[3];
The lasses are lanely, and dowie, and wae;
Nae daffing[4], nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin[5], and hies her away.

In hairst[6], at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters[7] are lyart[8], and runkled and gray;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching[9]—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

[1] A loaning is a grass path through corn-fields for the use of the cattle.
[2] sheep-pens. [3] teasing. [4] jesting. [5] pail. [6] harvest
[7] men who bind up the sheaves. [8] hoary. [9] coaxing.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies[1] are roaming
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play;
But ilk ane sits eerie, lamenting her dearie—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay.

We 'll hear nae more lilting at our ewe-milking,
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

LOGAN BRAES.

[JOHN MAYNE. Born 1759; died 1836.]

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep
Fu' aft, wi' glee, I 've herded sheep,
I 've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes,
Wi' my dear lad, on Logan braes.
But wae 's my heart! thae days are gane,
And fu' o' grief I herd alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

Nae mair, at Logan kirk, will he,
Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or when it 's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.
I weel may sing thae days are gane—
Frae kirk and fair I come alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes!

At e'en, when hope amaist is gane,
I dander[2] dowie and forlane,
Or sit beneath the trysting-tree,
Where first he spak of love to me.

[1] strapping lads. [2] loiter

O ! cou'd I see thae days again,
My lover skaithless, and my ain ;
Rever'd by friends, and far frae faes,
We'd live in bliss on Logan braes.

FOR LACK OF GOLD.

[ADAM AUSTIN, M.D Born 1726? died 1774.]

For lack of gold she's left me, O,
And of all that's dear bereft me, O ;
She me forsook for Athole's duke,
And to endless woe she has left me, O.
A star and garter have more art
Than youth, a true and faithful heart ;
For empty titles we must part,
And for glittering show she's left me, O.

No cruel fair shall ever move
My injur'd heart again to love ;
Through distant climates I must rove ;
Since Jeany she has left me, O.
Ye powers above, I to your care
Give up my faithless, lovely fair ;
Your choicest blessings be her share,
Though she's for ever left me, O.

JOHNNIE COPE[1].

[ADAM SKIRVING Born 1719; died 1803.]

Cope sent a challenge frae Dunbar :—
Charlie, meet me an ye daur,
And I'll learn you the art o' war,
If you'll meet wi' me i' the mornin.

Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet ?
Or are your drums a-beating yet ?
If ye were wauking, I wad wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

[1] The reader need hardly be reminded that Sir John Cope commanded the English forces at Preston Pans, and was defeated by the Young Pretender.

When Charlie looked the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from :
Come follow me, my merry merry men,
And we 'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning

Now, Johnnie, be as good 's your word,
Come let us try both fire and sword ;
And dinna flee away like a frighted bird,
That 's chased from its nest in the morning.

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss,
To ha'e a horse in readiness,
To flee awa' in the morning.

Fy now, Johnnie, get up and rin,
The Highland bagpipes mak' a din ;
It is best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 'twill be bluidy in the morning.

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,
They speer'd at him, Where 's a' your men ?
The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning.

Now, Johnnie, troth ye are na blate[1],
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
Sae early in the morning.

Oh ! faith, quo' Johnnie, I got sic flegs[2]
Wi' their claymores and philabegs ;
If I face them again, deil break my legs—
So I wish you a' gude morning.

[1] shy. [2] fears.

ROBERT FERGUSSON.

[ROBERT FERGUSSON was born in Edinburgh 5th September, 1750. At the end of his Arts course at St. Andrew's he was forced by the death of his father and the poverty of his mother to accept a miserable post as lawyer's clerk, the monotonous drudgery of which he varied by the composition of his poems and by some slight excesses, which were fatal to his feeble constitution. Mania supervened upon illness, and he died in a lunatic asylum 16th October, 1774. His contributions to the *Weekly Magazine*, 1771, made him famous. His poems were collected in a small volume in 1773.]

Fergusson is an interesting figure in the literary history of his country as an instance of precocious poetical talent, and as a link between his predecessor Ramsay and his mightier successor Burns. His fame is indissolubly associated with that of Burns, not only because Burns erected a monument over his grave, and inscribed on it one of those rapturous eulogies which the mention of Fergusson's name always called forth from him, but still more because of the extraordinary flattery which Burns bestowed upon him by imitating him almost as often and as much as he surpassed him. Specimens of Burns' 'prentice hand' are preserved in the larger editions of his works. But they are few in number as well as of slender significance in regard to the possibilities of his genius. It was the reading of Fergusson's poems, he himself tells us, which moved him to resume his 'wildly sounding lyre,' when in his early manhood he had for a time laid it aside. The same influence which recalled him to the service of the Muses dictated to a surprising extent the choice and the treatment of his themes throughout his poetical career, and certainly during its most fertile period. So many of his best-known pieces, like *The Holy Fair*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, his epistles and satires, bear obvious traces of having been suggested by his youthful predecessor's slender volume of song, that it is as if Burns, solitary genius in other respects, were solitary also in this respect—that his *juvenilia* were not written by his own hand, but by a poetical predecessor still more pre-

cocious than himself. Fergusson's achievements in verse are the starting-points of Burns' triumphs. He who opens Fergusson's volume in the expectation of finding another Burns is destined to be disappointed. But he is likely to be consoled for this disappointment by the discovery that not a few of the marked qualities of the poetry of the later singer characterise, as if in immature form, the verse of his predecessor. There are present in the poems of each the same easy artless versification, the same love of nature and of human nature, the same humour, the same philosophy of common sense applied to social life, the same lively imagination; only what is ripe incomparable genius in the one is no more than precocious and surprising talent in the other. In this light it is fair to Fergusson as well as to Burns, and not injurious to the reputation of the younger poet, to compare *Braid Claith* (p. 505) with *The Epistle to a Young Friend*, or the *Ode to the Gowdspink* with *The Mouse* or *The Mountain Daisy*. Between Burns and his predecessor too there is this link of connection—the English poems of the one are of as little account as those of the other.

Precocity, which is usually a disease accompanying other diseases and symptomatic of them, from the first marked Fergusson for its own. All through his school and university course he was sickly, gentle and amiable, surprisingly quick and clever, a prodigy destined to an early grave. At twenty-one he is the most famous Scotch poet of his day, and his poems, apart from some pastorals which had served the purpose of poetical exercises, are chiefly short pieces in which he celebrates the life which he knows best, that of an Edinburgh clerk, and the life which he loves best, that of country swains. It is with much of the grace and gaiety of Horace growing old and mellow, secure of fame and wine and friendship and mastery of his art, that the starved young Edinburgh clerk sings of scenes of gaiety and mild dissipation, in which his part was more fatal to his health than discreditable to his character, and from these *noctes ambrosianae* turns to the farmer's ingle, and the frolic and innocent and healthy life of the denizens of meadows and uplands remote from towns. As if he were old before his time, he is little inspired by the passion from which the Greek dramatist was happy to be delivered by age, and from which Burns had no wish ever to escape. Similarly he is a city spark and a satirist of the city magistrates and the city guard, rather in the genial, reflective, humorous mood of the decline of life than with

the passionateness of youth. His range of subjects is narrowed by the narrow space of a career which began at twenty-one and was finished at twenty-four. He had a keen enjoyment of city life, with its clubs for a little dissipation, and its bailies and its 'black banditti' for a constant occasion of laughter. Still more keen on his part was that enjoyment of the country, the pleasures of which he seldom tasted except in imagination, but which supplies the inspiration of some of his most touching verses, as well as of some of his admirable mock heroics. We alternate in his verse between these two sets of themes, and in his treatment of both we meet with the same vein of pure pathos, and its almost unfailing accompaniment of genuine humour.

JOHN SERVICE.

THE DAFT DAYS.

[Corresponding in Scotland to Christmas holidays in England.]

Now mirk[1] December's dowie[2] face
Glowrs[3] owr the rigs wi' sour grimace,
While, thro' his *minimum* of space,
The bleer-ey'd sun,
Wi' blinkin light and stealing pace,
His race doth run.

From naked groves nae birdie sings;
To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings;
The breeze nae od'rous flavour brings
From Borean cave;
And dwyning[4] Nature droops her wings,
Wi' visage grave.

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean
Frae snawy hill or barren plain,
Whan Winter, 'midst his nipping train,
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift owr a' his bleak domain,
And guides the weir[5].

Auld Reikie[6]! thou 'rt the canty[7] hole,
A bield[8] for mony caldrife[9] soul,
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth[10];
While round they gar the bicker[11] roll
To weet their mouth.

When merry Yule-day comes, I trow,
You 'll scantlins find a hungry mou;
Sma' are our cares, our stamacks fu'
O' gusty gear[12],
And kickshaws, strangers to our view,
Sin' fairn-year[13].

[1] dark [2] gloomy. [3] stares. [4] failing. [5] war. [6] Edinburgh. [7] cheerful. [8] shelter. [9] chilly. [10] social. [11] wooden goblet. [12] full of wind. [13] last year.

Ye browster[1] wives! now busk ye bra,
And fling your sorrows far awa';
Then, come and gie's the tither blaw[2]
Of reaming[3] ale,
Mair precious than the Well of Spa,
Our hearts to heal.

Then, tho' at odds wi' a' the warl',
Amang oursells we'll never quarrel;
Tho' Discord gie a canker'd snarl
To spoil our glee,
As lang's there's pith into the barrel
We'll drink and 'gree.

Fiddlers! your pins[4] in temper fix,
And roset[5] weel your fiddlesticks,
But banish vile Italian tricks
From out your quorum,
Nor *fortes* wi' *pianos* mix—
Gie's *Tullochgorum*[6].

For nought can cheer the heart sae weel
As can a canty Highland reel;
It even vivifies the heel
To skip and dance:
Lifeless is he wha canna feel
Its influence.

Let mirth abound; let social cheer
Invest the dawning of the year;
Let blithesome innocence appear
To crown our joy;
Nor envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.

And thou, great god of *aqua vitæ*!
Wha sways the empire of this city—
When fou we're sometimes capernoity[7]—
Be thou prepar'd
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The City Guard.

[1] brewer. [2] jorum. [3] foaming. [4] pegs. [5] rosin.
[6] Printed four years before Skinner's 'Tullochgorum' (p. 491). [7] ill-tempered.

BRAID CLAITH.

Ye wha are fain to hae your name
Wrote in the bonny book of fame,
Let merit nae pretension claim
To laurel'd wreath,
But hap[1] ye weel, baith back and wame,
In gude Braid Claith.

He that some ells o' this may fa'[2],
An' slae-black[3] hat on pow[4] like snaw,
Bids bauld[5] to bear the gree[6] awa',
Wi' a' this graith[7],
Whan bienly[8] clad wi' shell fu' braw
O' gude Braid Claith.

Waesuck for him wha has nae fek[9] o't!
For he's a gowk[10] they're sure to geck[11] at,
A chield that ne'er will be respekit
While he draws breath,
Till his four quarters are bedeckit
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

On Sabbath-days the barber spark,
Whan he has done wi' scrapin wark,
Wi' siller broachie in his sark[12],
Gangs trigly, faith!
Or to the Meadow or the Park,
In gude Braid Claith.

Weel might ye trow, to see them there,
That they to shave your haffits[13] bare,
Or curl an' sleek a pickle[14] hair,
Wud be right laith[15]
When pacing wi' a gawsy air[16]
In gude Braid Claith.

[1] cover. [2] possess or deserve. [3] sloe-black. [4] poll. [5] bold. [6] pre eminence. [7] accoutrements. [8] well. [9] quantity. [10] fool. [11] toss the head. [12] shirt. [13] cheeks. [14] little. [15] loath. [16] looking big.

If ony mettled stirrah[1] grien[2]
For favour frae a lady's ein,
He mauna care for being seen
Before he sheath
His body in a scabbard clean
O' gude Braid Claith.

For gin[3] he comes wi' coat thread bare,
A feg[4] for him she winna care,
But crook her bony mou' fu' sair,
An' scald him baith.
Wooers shou'd ay their travel[5] spare
Without Braid Claith.

Braid Claith lends fouk[6] an unco heese[7]
Makes mony kail-worms butter-flies,
Gies mony a doctor his degrees
For little skaith[8]:
In short, you may be what you please
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

For thof ye had as wise a snout on,
As Shakespeare or Sir Isaac Newton,
Your judgment fouk wud hae a doubt on,
I 'll tak' my aith,
Till they cou'd see ye wi' a suit on
O' gude Braid Claith.

FROM 'CALLER WATER.'

Whan father Adie[9] first pat spade in
The bonny yeard[10] of antient Eden[11]
His amry[12] had nae liquor laid in,
To fire his mou',
Nor did he thole[13] his wife's upbraidin'
For being fou[14].

[1] young fellow. [2] long for. [3] if. [4] fig. [5] trouble
[6] folk. [7] lift. [8] harm. [9] Adam. [10] earth.
[11] 'Langsyne in Eden's bonny yard.'—Burns' *Address to the Deil*
[12] cupboard. [13] suffer. [14] drunk.

A caller burn o' siller sheen,
Ran cannily out o'er the green,
And whan our gutcher's[1] drouth had been
To bide right sair,
He loutit[2] down and drank bedeen[3]
A dainty skair[4].

His bairns a' before the flood
Had langer tack[5] o' flesh and blood,
And on mair pithy shanks they stood
Than Noah's line,
Wha still hae been a feckless brood
Wi' drinking wine.

The fuddlin' Bardies now-a-days
Rin maukin[6]-mad in Bacchus' praise,
And limp and stoiter[7] thro' their lays
Anacreontic,
While each his sea of wine displays
As big's the Pontic.

My muse will no gang far frae hame,
Or scour a' airths[8] to hound for fame;
In troth, the jillet[9] ye might blame
For thinking on't,
Whan eithly[10] she can find the theme
Of *aqua font*.

This is the name that doctors use
Their patients' noddles to confuse;
Wi' simples clad in terms abstruse,
They labour still,
In kittle[11] words to gar your roose[12]
Their want o' skill.

But we'll hae nae sick clitter-clatter,
And briefly to expound the matter,
It shall be ca'd good Caller Water,
Than whilk, I trow,
Few drogs in doctors' shops are better
For me or you.

[1] grandfather. [2] bent. [3] hastily. [4] share. [5] lease. [6] hare. [7] stagger. [8] regions of sky or earth. [9] skittish damsel. [10] easily. [11] ticklish. [12] praise.

Tho' joints are stiff as ony rung[1],
Your pith wi' pain be fairly dung[2],
Be you in Caller Water flung
Out o'er the lugs[3],
'Twill mak you souple, swack[4] and young,
Withouten drugs.

Tho' cholic or the heart-scad teaze us,
Or ony inward pain should seize us,
It masters a' sic fell diseases
That would ye spulzie[5],
And brings them to a canny crisis
Wi' little tulzie[6].

Wer't na for it the bonny lasses
Would glowr nae mair in keeking-glasses[7],
And soon tine dint[8] o' a' the graces
That aft conveen
In gleefu' looks and bonny faces,
To catch our ein.

The fairest then might die a maid,
And Cupid quit his shooting trade,
For wha thro' clarty[9] masquerade
Could then discover,
Whether the features under shade
Were worth a lover?

ODE TO THE GOWDSPINK[10].

Frae fields where Spring her sweets has blawn
Wi' caller verdure o'er the lawn,
The gowdspink comes in new attire,
The brawest 'mang the whistling choir,
That, ere the sun can clear his ein,
Wi' glib notes sane[11] the simmer's green.
Sure Nature herried[12] mony a tree,
For sprains[13] and bonny spats to thee;

[1] staff [2] exhausted. [3] ears. [4] nimble. [5] spoil.
[6] struggle. [7] looking-glasses. [8] lose regard for. [9] dirty.
[10] Goldfinch. [11] bless [12] plundered. [13] different coloured stripes.

Nae mair the rainbow can impart
Sic glowing ferlies[1] o' her art,
Whase pencil wrought its freaks at will
On thee the sey-piece[2] o' her skill.
Nae mair through straths in simmer dight
We seek the rose to bless our sight;
Or bid the bonny wa'-flowers sprout
On yonder Ruin's lofty snout.
Thy shining garments far outstrip
The cherries upo' Hebe's lip,
And fool the tints that Nature chose
To busk and paint the crimson rose.
'Mang men, wae's heart! we aften find
The brawest drest want peace of mind,
While he that gangs wi' ragged coat
Is weil contentit wi' his lot.
Whan wand wi' glewy birdlime's set,
To steal far aff your dautit[3] mate,
Blyth wad ye change your cleething gay
In lieu of lav'rock's sober grey.
In vain thro' woods you sair may ban
Th' envious treachery of man,
That, wi' your gowden glister ta'en,
Still haunts you on the simmer's plain
And traps you 'mang the sudden fa's[4]
O' winter's dreary dreepin' snaws.
Now steekit[5] frae the gowany[6] field,
Frae ilka fav'rite houff[7] and bield,
But mergh[8], alas! to disengage
Your bonny bouck[9] frae fettering cage,
Your free-born bosom beats in vain
For darling liberty again.
In window hung, how aft we see
Thee keek[10] around at warblers free.
That carrol saft, and sweetly sing
Wi' a' the blythness of the spring?

[1] marvels. [2] trial-piece. [3] cherished. [4] snares. [5] shut.
[6] daisied. [7] resort. [8] without strength. [9] body. [10] look.

Like Tantalus they hing you here
To spy the glories o' the year;
And tho' you 're at the burnie's brink,
They douna[1] suffer you to drink.
Ah, Liberty! thou bonny dame,
How wildly wanton is thy stream,
Round whilk the birdies a' rejoice,
An' hail you wi' a gratefu' voice.
The gowdspink chatters joyous here,
And courts wi' gleesome sangs his peer:
The mavis frae the new-bloom'd thorn
Begins his lauds at earest morn;
And herd lowns[2] louping o'er the grass,
Need far less fleetching[3] till their lass,
Than paughty[4] damsels bred at courts,
Wha thraw their mou's and take the dorts[5]:
But, reft of thee, fient[6] flee we care
For a' that life ahint can spare.
The gowdspink, that sae lang has kend
Thy happy sweets (his wonted friend),
Her sad confinement ill can brook
In some dark chamber's dowy[7] nook;
Tho' Mary's hand his nebb[8] supplies,
Unkend to hunger's painfu' cries,
Ev'n beauty canna chear the heart
Frae life, frae liberty apart;
For now we tyne[9] its wonted lay,
Sae lightsome sweet, sae blythely gay.
Thus Fortune aft a curse can gie,
To wyle us far frae liberty:
Then tent[10] her syren smiles wha list,
I 'll ne'er envy your girnal's[11] grist;
For whan fair freedom smiles nae mair,
Care I for life? Shame fa' the hair[12]:
A field o'ergrown wi' rankest stubble,
The essence of a paltry bubble.

[1] cannot. [2] lads. [3] flattery. [4] haughty. [5] huff. [6] devil a fly
[7] gloomy. [8] bill. [9] lose. [10] heed. [11] box for meal. [12] whore.

ROBERT BURNS.

[ROBERT BURNS was born 25th January, 1759, 'the hindmost year but ane' of George the Second's reign, in a cottage built by his father, two miles south of Ayr, and close to Alloway Kirk, that relic of nondescript architecture to which his genius has lent almost as worldwide an interest as that which makes Vaucluse a place of pilgrimage to all nations. Eldest son of William Burness, of a Kincardineshire family of small farmers, market gardener and overseer of a small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr, and afterwards tenant of Lochlie and Mount Oliphant, small Ayrshire farms, Burns received an education which ultimately included a sound acquaintance with English grammar, a little mathematics, mensuration, French, and a smattering of Latin. At work on his father's farm from an early age till he was twenty-three, he tried then to establish himself in business as a flax-dresser in Irvine, but returned in a short time to his father's house with empty pockets and with a character hitherto blameless deteriorated by some new companionships. After the death of his father, a specimen of industry and integrity never rewarded in this life, his brother Gilbert and he took the farm of Mossgiel near Mauchline (1784), which also turned out to be a bad bargain. To escape troubles in which his youthful and characteristic follies involved him, especially with the father of his future partner in life, 'Bonnie Jean,' he accepted an appointment to a clerkship in Jamaica; but on the point of starting on the voyage he had his footsteps turned towards Edinburgh by the success of his volume of poems (Kilmarnock, 1786), and by the patronage, literary and aristocratic, which it immediately secured for him. With the proceeds of a second edition of the volume (Edinburgh, 1787), amounting to £500 or £600, he established himself on the farm of Ellisland near Dumfries. Unsuccessful once more in this tenancy he became an exciseman to eke out his income, and finally in that capacity, unfortunately both for his health and for his reputation, removed to Dumfries, where he died in 1796.]

That admiration of Burns' poetry as the work of a ploughman, which Jeffrey in his time had occasion to deprecate, in which he could see no more sense than 'in admiring it as if it had been written with his toes,' has not survived Jeffrey's ridicule. Burns, like Joseph in Egypt, was destined to 'forget his toil and his father's house.' His right to a place among the greater poets of Europe being no longer in dispute, to speak of him still as 'the

Ayrshire bard' is almost as dull an affectation as to follow his own example and call him Rob or Robin. A great poet not only in the sense that his affinities are with the greatest of the great poets that were before him or have been since, rather than with the multitude of inferior writers who have struggled into fame in verse, but great also in the sense that he gave a new impulse and a new direction to poetry, helped to overturn in that splendid realm the dynasty of Pope, and to found that to which Wordsworth and Shelley and Byron belong, Burns is only once a peasant and clownish in the course of nearly a century during which his name has been illustrious. It is not in 1786, in the circles of rank and fashion in Edinburgh, in which he appears fresh from the plough—here his courtliness astonishes Dugald Stewart and delights the Duchess of Gordon—it is now, when coming from Olympus, he is introduced to us as from Ayrshire. Though nothing could be more natural than his first appearance in the character of rustic bard, he has so long played a different part that his resumption of it is felt to border upon the grotesque and to be akin to fustian. The task which criticism has to perform in regard to him is indicated in this transformation of the natural man into something of a histrionic figure. It is a task of difficulty under any conditions, and not to be attempted with success in a very limited space. It is to explain how the publication of a small volume of poems 'chiefly in the Scottish dialect,' the natural destiny of which would have seemed to be fulfilled in making the Ayrshire bard known in Ayrshire, or at the most in Scotland, should have turned out to be an occasion, in literature and in history, of worldwide significance.

This explanation, be it ever so partial, must include, and perhaps ought to begin with, the admission, fatal to his character as a prodigy, that the influences under which Burns was tutored into song were as eminently European in fact as they were singularly provincial in appearance. The Revolution, at any rate in action, had not returned from America to France, when his poems were published. But the intellectual activity and turmoil which led to the Revolution was a phenomenon to which he was no more of a stranger in his humble and straitened sphere of life, than to summer's heat or winter's cold, or the west wind or 'man's inhumanity to man.' His father's cottage, in which, like the rest of the family (they were all readers), he sat at meals 'with a book in one hand and a spoon in the other,' was, as far as intelligence of most kinds was concerned, in open communication with Europe

and America, and the presiding spirit in it was an old peasant, whose sagacity and whose virtues would have adorned the rank to which Glencairn or Athole belonged. Whatever limitations were imposed upon the growth of his intellect, whatever obstacles were thrown in the way of his attaining literary distinction by a life of slavish toil such as he was condemned to live, there was nothing in his case in such a life to exclude, there was everything to beget and to intensify, sympathy with an age which had grown sick of conventionality, classicality, and unreality in life and literature, and which yearned passionately after a return to nature and to truth. This yearning might be less general and less eager among the peasants of Ayrshire than among some other classes in other parts of Europe, but then he belonged, by the discipline as well as by the force of his mind, rather to Europe than to Ayrshire. His education at school, though, even for a Scotch peasant's son, irregular and scanty, was sufficient to fit him for becoming a citizen of the world; and a citizen of the world he did become by the study of the best English authors in prose and verse and by critical familiarity with the songs and ballads of his country. In virtue of this citizenship, the spirit of Revolution being abroad in Europe, he was as certain to encounter it as was Tam O'Shanter on his way home from Ayr and from the company of Souter Johnny to see Kirk Alloway in a 'bleeze.'

'He sings,' as he himself says, 'the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him'; but it is after the manner of one who is accustomed to live and move in a larger world than that in which he and they had 'leave to toil.' While he has never yet set foot beyond his native county, his mind has travelled; he is familiar with the continental resorts of persons of quality, with hunters of Ponotaxi (who have to rhyme with orthodoxy), with scenes, events, characters in Eastern lands, and in the literature and history of antiquity. His ideas, sentiments, aspirations, hopes, fears, range easily and naturally beyond parochial and provincial limits into national affairs and the struggling life of civilised mankind. If he is ever more truly himself than in Bruce's Address to his troops at Bannockburn, a patriotic ode, it is in anticipating that golden age of the poet and the philanthropist when

> 'man to man the world o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that.'

His countrymen are a pushing and adventurous race. Wherever

they go they carry with them as a feature of the national mind, an estimate of man as man, of wealth and worth, of rank and work, which bears the stamp of one man's genius. Burns' poems and songs are a programme of social and political reform and progress, or at any rate aspiration,—as radical a programme as could well be framed. No such programme, it is certain, ever had such currency in one nation as it has obtained among the Scottish race at home and abroad. For almost a century it has been said and sung by high and low, by rank and fashion, by artisans and milkmaids, and aged inmates of the poorhouse. Children babble it and lisp it; it is the privileged sedition of public houses and public assemblies, privileged almost like the Bible ; young ladies warble it at the request of their Tory grandfathers and to please their orthodox aunts ; in kirks as well as where the shepherd tells his tale the echoes of it are never still. As far as there is any need to characterise his poetical lineage and development, this identifies Burns with the Revolution. It identifies him with it as respects the style of his poetry and also as respects its substance. Machinery of all kinds deteriorates by use ; allowance should be made in all cases, that of poetry not excepted, for depreciation of value as the effect of wear and tear. Only the forces of nature are inexhaustible. Happily for him, Burns' poetical life fell within a period in which it had come to be felt that the machinery of the classical school of poetry was worn out, and that recourse must be had, for poetical power, to unexhausted and inexhaustible nature. He owed thus to the spirit of the time that passion for truth and nature in the style of his poems which ensured them such welcome as the time could give to novelty and excellence combined. He was a debtor to the same source for the ideas and sentiments, or many of the ideas and sentiments, to which his poetry owes not a little of the vitality and the currency it has among men and nations to whom it is known only in an almost unknown tongue, or in more or less inadequate translations.

His poetry is instinct with the life and movement of one age,—one which was an era of resurrection from the dead and of revolt against all that had lived too long. Any explanation of Burns, however, which is thus to be found where we find an explanation of Europe itself in the spirit of a particular age, is of course partial. Its merit is that it points to what is more essential and more comprehensive than itself. Burns' poetry shares with all poetry of the first order of excellence the life and movement not of one age but

of all ages, that which belongs to what Wordsworth calls 'the essential passions' of human nature. It is the voice of nature which we hear in his poetry, and it is of that nature one touch of which makes the whole world kin. It is doubtful whether any poet, ancient or modern, has evoked as much personal attachment of a fervid and perfervid quality as Burns has been able to draw to himself. It is an attachment the amount and the quality of which are not to be explained by anything in the history of the man, anything apart from the exercise of his genius as a poet. His misfortunes, though they were great, do not account for it—these are cancelled by his faults, from which his misfortunes are not easily separated. What renders it at all intelligible is that human nature, in its most ordinary shapes, is more poetical than it looks, and that exactly at those moments of its consciousness in which it is most truly because most vividly and powerfully and poetically itself, Burns has a voice to give to it. He is not the poet's poet, which Shelley no doubt meant to be, or the philosopher's poet, which Wordsworth, in spite of himself, is. He is the poet of homely human nature, not half so homely or prosaic as it seems. His genius, in a manner all its own, associates itself with the fortunes, experiences, memorable moments, of human beings whose humanity is their sole patrimony; to whom 'liberty,' and whatever, like liberty, has the power

> 'To raise a man aboon the brute,
> And mak him ken himsel,'

is their portion in life; for whom the great epochs and never-to-be-forgotten phases of existence are those which are occasioned by emotions inseparable from the consciousness of existence. For the great majority of his readers, and therefore for the mass of human beings, the sympathy which exists between him and them is sympathy relative to their strongest and deepest feelings, and this is sympathy out of which personal affection naturally springs, and in the strength of which it cannot but grow strong. In this light Burns clubs and Burns celebrations, excursions and pilgrimages to the land of Burns, manifestations of personal affection without parallel for range or depth in the history of literature, instead of misleading the critical judgment as to his poetry, are an infallible index to the truth respecting it—namely, that the passions which live in it and by which it lives are the essential passions of human nature.

Of these plain 'good masters' his princely intellectual gifts are the humble and faithful servants. His imagination, humour, pathos, the qualities in respect of which his genius is most powerful and opulent, are without reserve placed at their disposal and submitted to their dictation. His genius might possibly have elected to move sometimes in a different sphere, but this is the sphere in which its creative force is habitually spent. Words and phrases which derive their significance from what belongs to it are those that recur oftenest in his best and in his worst lines, and linger in our ears with the airs to which his songs are sung. As part and parcel of its contents, and as they are assorted in its compass, 'freedom and whisky gang thegither' in his rhymes; so do mirth and care, despair and rapture, pride of birth and pride of worth, love and sorrow and death, auld acquaintance not to be forgotten, social inequalities not to be forgiven, hypocrisy at its prayers, and commiseration for the wretched which extends to the brute creation and cannot be withheld from the devil. That the worst of it as well as the best of it has power over him is the most that can be said in the way of censure or in the way of excuse in regard to that capital fault of his, a relish for grossness and even obscenity in the choice and treatment of his themes, which gives occasion to turgid moralists to talk of him as at once the glory and the shame of literature, and which, as disfiguring some of his best pieces no one has more reason to regret than he who has to do justice to the genius of the poet by making a selection from his works.

Genius can explain everything except itself. In this limitation of his genius to one sphere of activity we have, however, not only some explanation of the place which Burns occupies in European literature and European history, but also a revelation of the inner structure and quality of his genius. Genius which in every case eludes and defies definition is by this restriction of its operations shown to be in his case, more than most, synonymous with force of mind, that force which cleaves its way through the shows of things to the reality behind them and beyond them:

> 'The heart ay 's the part ay
> That makes us right or wrang.'

To say that this is his poetical creed is to say that poetical genius in his case is akin to or identical with 'majestic common sense,' an intellect of singular power to penetrate appearance and become conversant with reality and truth—that reality and truth which are

to be found, if anywhere, in the sphere of the passions and emotions of which he is the laureate. He is closer to this reality than other poets because his mental force is greater than theirs and carries him farther and straighter from the surface of things towards the centre. His poetry makes a gift again to folly of that definition of poetry which was presented by folly to stupidity —that is the best poetry which is the most feigning. It feigns not at all when it is at its best, and but little when it is at its worst. So much reality is there in it to the experience of common mortals, that it is commonly mistaken among them for useful information for the people. Where it is not understood as comprehending the choicest products of imagination, humour, pathos, it is admired and valued as a repertory of oracular wisdom. When it is denied the welcome to which it is entitled as song, the gift of the gods, it is sure of applause as the 'pith of sense,' of which every man as he believes has his own share. Genius in the case of Burns is thus shown to be compact of sense, sagacity, intelligence of a powerful and piercing order, general force of mind to which nature and life cannot but yield up their deepest secrets. It is in the sphere of the essential passions of human nature that reality lies. That Burns, in a manner all his own, is rigid, not consciously always, but instinctively, in adhering to this sphere, is evidence that what takes in him the form and fashion of genius is common sense.

A melancholy or rather a mournful interest attaches to several of his poems—*A Bard's Epitaph* for example, and the *Epistle to a Young Friend*—as showing that intellect and passion were as far from being perfectly adjusted in his life as they have been in the lives of many other sons of genius. That they were not on better terms with each other than they actually were, it may be, is a matter which calls rather for regret than for amazement. Considering what nature made him and what his destiny was, considering how rudely in his case the sensibilities of a gifted soul clashed with the exigencies of a sordid lot, it is possibly not a matter for as much astonishment as has been sometimes expressed, that the last chapter of his history should be one which cannot be read without a pang of sorrow for the degradation of genius. Had he been a struggling tradesman in Paris instead of a struggling farmer in Ayrshire and a measurer of ale-firkins at Dumfries, Burns would no doubt have lived and died with a reputation for sobriety as unimpeachable as that of Beranger. But for that insanity, compounded of headache

and melancholy, from which he suffered all his life, as the result of being made to do a man's work when he was a boy; but for his being 'half fed, half sarkit,' too literally and too long not to be rendered 'half mad' as well, it is open to a candid judgment to suppose that the 'thoughtless follies' which 'laid him low,' would not have been committed, at any rate would not have cut half as formidable a figure as they do in the count and reckoning of some of the honorary sheriffs and respectable aldermen of literature. But however it may have been that the relations of intellect and passion were imperfectly or ill adjusted in his life, their perfect harmony is the marvel and the glory of his song. Passages indeed from various pieces of his, perhaps whole pieces, could be cited which fall below the level of poetry in the strictest sense of the word, for which no higher character can be claimed than that of rhymed prose, because sense and sagacity or wit and humour predominate in them in too marked a degree over feeling and imagination. It is as if the balance, 'rarely right adjusted,' in his life, swung heavily sometimes in his verse to the other side. But it is only where it is chargeable with this excess of sense, or where it is written in that English tongue of which he never attained any mastery in verse, that his poetry falls short of excellence as regards the union of intellect and passion, the union of which is the first condition of poetical vitality. His passions, according to a well-known account of them from the best authority, 'raged like so many devils' till they found vent in rhyme. They could not have raged more or raged less any day without perhaps marring the perfection of a stanza or a song which has almost the perfection of the work of Shakespeare or of nature. His one poetical failing, besides being one which leans to virtue's side, is exhibited for the most part only where it is harmless—in his epistles, satires, and especially his epigrams. His songs, on which after all his fame must mainly rest, are free from it, though even in them passion is governed and moderated in such a manner that in the whole collection of them there is abundant evidence of sense and sanity which it would have been fatal to obtrude in any one of them. His claim to be considered the first of song-writers is hardly disputed. It is a claim which rests upon scores of lyrics, each of which might be cited as an instance of lyrical passion at its best and highest. Lyrical passion in his case drew its strength from various and opposite sources, from the clashing experiences, habits, and emotions of a nature which needed nothing so much as

regulation and harmony. But it is itself harmony as perfect as the song of the linnet and the thrush piping to a summer evening of peace on earth and glory in the western sky. Whatever the poet's eye has seen of beauty, or his heart has felt of mirth or sadness or madness, melts into it and becomes a tone, a chord of music of which, but for one singer, the world should hardly have known the power to thrill the universal heart. He could not begin to write a song till he had crooned over and got into his head some old air to which words might be adapted. Only when his songs are sung are they legitimately said, is the melody of them vocalised. Their affinity with music by origin and by use is only symbolic of the harmony to which lyrical passion in them has set the incongruous facts and experiences of human life and destiny. The best of them are serious and pathetic, like *Mary Morison*, *My Nanie O*, *Of a' the airts the wind can blaw*; but serious and pathetic like these, or arch and airy and humorous like *Tam Glen* and *Duncan Gray*, they draw upon sources of melody of which Tibullus and Petrarch and Beranger had almost as little knowledge as of the sources of the Lugar or of the banks of Bonnie Doon.

Like Shakespeare, Burns is almost as great in the matter of borrowing as in that of originality. His measures are without exception those with which he was familiar in his favourites and predecessors, Ramsay and Fergusson, or in the ballads and songs which the stream of time might be said to have brought down to his poetical mill. His *Cotter's Saturday Night* is modelled upon Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*; his *Holy Fair* upon the same poet's *Leith Races*. His epistles are Ramsay's and Fergusson's in form and spirit, only instinct with a kind of genius to which neither Ramsay nor Fergusson had any pretensions. One stanza in which he wrote a great deal, for which among poetical measures he had as much partiality as he had for winter among the seasons, or the mavis among birds, or humanity among the virtues, and which his readers, even Scotch readers, find it sometimes hard to endure, was no doubt made classical to him and informed with music by its having been made use of by predecessors of his, of whose genius he had formed a most generous and uncritical estimate.

His best work is distributed over three periods, into which his poetical life can be most easily divided—the first marked by the publication of his poems at Kilmarnock, 1786, when he was at the age of twenty-seven; the second comprehending the extraordinary fertility of his later residence in Ayrshire (at Mossgiel), and ter-

minating in 1788, and the third being the melancholy last years at Ellisland and Dumfries, in which his recreation was to give to his country and the world a store of songs, original and amended, such as no other country possesses. *The Jolly Beggars*, that incomparable opera in which critical genius of the highest order has discovered the highest flight of his poetical genius, belongs to the first period, though not published till after his death. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* belongs to the same period. *My Nanie O* is one of its songs. As regards humour and imagination it could be represented either by *Death and Doctor Hornbook*, or the *Address to the Deil*, or *The Holy Fair*. With reference to the work which was done by him before the close of this period, considering its quality and variety, considering how much of it is destined to hold a permanent place in literature, Burns is perhaps to be regarded as the most remarkable instance on record of the precocity of genius, at any rate poetical genius. It would be difficult to point to a single rival for poetical fame who before the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven had contributed as much to the stock of literature, exempt for ever from oblivion. He was in this sense something of the prodigy which, in respect of his being born a peasant, Jeffrey would not allow him to be considered.

In each of these three periods of his poetical life he was at his best in one or other of the departments of song in which his greatness is least open to question. To Ellisland and Dumfries, the last of the three, besides *Tam o' Shanter* and *Captain Grose*, belongs the glory of that marvellous series of songs, new and old, original and improved, which it was the unhappy exciseman-poet's one pure delight to contribute to the Miscellanies in which they appeared. Whether his genius was exhausted by the activity of these ten or a dozen years, or whether, if his life had been prolonged, he might not have undertaken and accomplished some even greater task than any he had attempted, is a question to which no very certain answer can be given. He might have done something to diminish the interval between him and the poets of the first order —those whose poetry includes character and action as well as passion. He was ambitious of doing something of the kind. At one time the scheme of an epic, at another the plans for a tragedy were revolved in his mind. But if we may judge from a fragment of his intended drama, from the quality of his English verses, or from the leading features of his character, it seems unlikely that he would under any circumstances have made a nearer approach

than he has done, or than that other passionate pilgrim of the realm of song, Byron, has done, to Milton or Shakespeare. His nearest approach to Shakespeare and Milton must be held to be that he wrote for the same theatre as they—not for an age, but for all time.

If only because the essential passions of human nature are so peculiarly and exclusively the sphere in which his genius moves, the question whether on the whole the influence of his poetry is wholesome, is a question touching the perpetuity of his fame. It is the native sphere of morality and religion in which his genius disports itself, and hence, though it cannot be required of poetry that it should directly inculcate virtue and piety, yet poetry like his has only the choice of recognising at their proper value the highest instincts and feelings of human nature, or ensuring its own consignment to neglect and oblivion by clashing with them. For, as critics have at length discovered, poetry is not meant for critics but for mankind. If it is of use to mankind it has a chance of life; if not it must die. On these terms, like other poets, Burns is a competitor for immortality, and on these terms, though his claim has been variously judged, it is now generally admitted to be strong. It is true, as has been already acknowledged, that touches of grossness and obscenity disfigure some of his best pieces, and are the execrable characteristics of some of his worst. It is true also that religious people have had much fault to find with *The Holy Fair* and *Holy Willie*, and other satires of his in which religious, or rather ecclesiastical things and personages, have been held up to ridicule and scorn. But the one fault he shares with many of his brother poets whose immortality is not doubtful; the other to most persons is rendered venial by a doubt as to whether it is not rather a capital merit than an unpardonable sin. His morality is not always perfect; sometimes it sanctions or applauds what cannot be defended. But he never ridicules religion except when the religion in question is in the nature of things ridiculous, and only not so by an accident of time or place. On the other hand, it is a world from which virtue and piety are not absent into which he habitually escapes from scenes in the actual world in which, with most of his generation, he was tempted to linger too long and too agreeably. Sordid and even revolting as some of these scenes are, they are yet to the reader of all that he has written only grotesque openings into a world beyond and above them in which everything fair and good has its own place—love and truth, joy in all that is pure and high, sorrow over all that is weak and low and

sad, in the life of man. Hypocrisy, superstition, fanaticism owe him a heavy grudge. But in Scotland at least, and where *The Holy Fair* is remembered and *Holy Willie* is not unknown, spiritual religion owes him little but thanks.

On this subject only a word more need be said. Burns lives above all, and is destined to live, in his songs. In them, at any rate, he lives for an infinitely larger public than knows much of him as the author of *Halloween* or *The Jolly Beggars*. By his songs, though they too furnish his more austere censors with complaint, the service which he rendered to morality and religion is one the value of which can hardly be over-estimated. It is a remarkable fact that a country, the history of which is so much, as that of Scotland is, a history of religious or at any rate ecclesiastical events, especially battles, a country too which has not been unprolific in poetical talent, should have given birth to almost no religious poetry worth the name. Yet hardly is religious poetry a more prolific crop in the country of Dunbar and Burns and Scott than figs or peaches or bananas. It may be after all that other passions than those spiritual ones which find expression for themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, have been chiefly concerned in those religious movements of which Scottish history is a tedious record. But be that as it may, Burns inherited from his poetical ancestry a wealth not of hymns but of songs and ballads, chiefly of course amatory. They inspired him with harmonies compared with which they are themselves harsh and out of tune—the inimitable airs to which they were sung were reverberated from his mind in words in which there is the very soul of melody. In this process of transmitting what he received from the past to the future to which he looked forward as a better day for all mankind, he changed, as regards morality, silver into gold, dirt into the fragrance of lilies and violets, foul dirt into the breath of meadows and of shady paths through woods and by the banks of murmuring streams. As a reformer of one branch of literature, when centuries that are centuries still have dwindled into years, he may perhaps be named along with John Knox and Walter Scott in the history of the Scottish Reformation. Anyhow, judged by his songs, Burns' fame has little to fear from any question being raised as to whether the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the instance of his poetry is really what it seems—a tree that is good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise.

JOHN SERVICE.

MARY MORISON.

TUNE—'Bide ye yet.'

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor;
How blithely wad I bide the stoure[1],
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw;
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown!
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

MY NANIE, O.

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I'll awa to Nanie, O.

[1] worry, trouble.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill:
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O!
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be?
I'm welcome ay to Nanie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O:
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a', my Nanie, O.

Our auld Guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

Come weal, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heaven will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES. A FRAGMENT.

Chorus.

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O!

There 's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.

The warly[1] race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' warly cares, an' warly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie[2], O!

For you sae douce[3], ye sneer at this,
Ye 're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE, THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE[4].

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie an' her lambs thegither
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot[5] she coost[6] a hitch[7],
An' owre she warsl'd[8] in the ditch:
There groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc[9] he cam doytin by.
Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it.

[1] worldly. [2] topsy turvy. [3] sober, serious. [4] ewe.
[5] hoof. [6] cast. [7] loop. [8] tumbled.
[9] A neibor herd-callan about three-fourths as wise as other folk.

He gaped wide, but naething spak.
At length poor Mailie silence brak.
'O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.
'Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'[1]!
'Tell him, he was a Master kin',
An' ay was guid to me an' mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him
'O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods[2], an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend[3] themsel:
An' tent[4] them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' taets[5] o' hay, an' ripps[6] o' corn.
'An' may they never learn the gaets[7]
Of ither vile, wanrestfu'[8] pets!
To slink thro' slaps[9] an' reave[10] an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears[11],
For monie a year come thro' the sheers;
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet[12] for them when they're dead.
'My poor toop[13]-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins[14] in his breast!

[1] wool. [2] foxes. [3] make shift. [4] tend. [5] small quantities. [6] handfuls. [7] ways. [8] restless. [9] gaps in fences. [10] rob. [11] forefathers. [12] weep. [13] tup. [14] good manners

An' warn him, what I winna name;
To stay content wi' yowes[1] at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like other menseless[2], graceless brutes.
'An' niest my yowie[3], silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop;
But ay keep mind to moop[4] an' mell[5]
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!
'And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your Mither,
Mind to be kind to ane anither.
'Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail,
To tell my Master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blather[6].'

This said, poor Mailie turned her head,
An' closed her een amang the dead!

FROM 'AN EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.'

I am nae Poet, in a sense,
But just a Rhymer like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, 'How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?'
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye 're maybe wrang.

[1] ewes. [2] mannerless. [3] ewe. [4] fondle. [5] meddle. [6] bladder.

What 's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs[1] your grammars?
Ye 'd better taen up spades and shools[2],
Or knappin[3]-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes[4],
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks[5], and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne[6] they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That 's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub[7] an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk[8] o' Allan's glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear[9] eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

TO A MOUSE, ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST, WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickerin brattle[10]!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle[11]!

[1] serves. [2] shovels. [3] stone-breaking. [4] louts. [5] year-old cow or bullock. [6] then. [7] pond. [8] spark. [9] learning. [10] hurry [11] hand-stick for clearing the plough

I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker[1] in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I 'll get a blessing wi' the lave[2],
And never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big[3] a new one,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell[4] an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou 's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But[5] house or hald[6],
To thole[7] the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch[8] cauld!

[1] An ear of corn now and then; a thrave is twenty-four sheaves. [2] rest.
[3] build. [4] bitter. [5] without. [6] holding. [7] endure.
[8] hoar-frost.

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane [1],
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft agley [2],
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

Inscribed to R. Aiken, Esq.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the Poor.—*Gray.*

My loved, my honoured, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there I ween

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh [3];
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;

[1] alone. [2] awry. [3] whistling sound.

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher[1] thro',
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin[2] noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve[3], the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun'[4];
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie[5] rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers[6]:
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos[7] that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years,

[1] stagger. [2] fluttering. [3] by and by

[4] Although the 'Cotter,' in the Saturday Night, is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotions, and exhortations, yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us ever were 'At service out amang the neebors roun'.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny-fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home.—*Gilbert Burns to Dr. Currie*, Oct. 24, 1800.

[5] attentively. [6] enquires. [7] news.

Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars[1] auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent[2] hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk[3] or play:
'And, oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!'

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins[4] is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears, it 's nae wild worthless rake

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben[5];
A strappan youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks[6] of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But, blate[7] and laithfu'[8], scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleased to think her bairn 's respected like the lave[9].

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I 've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—

[1] makes. [2] diligent. [3] dally. [4] half [5] into the room.
[6] talks. [7] bashful. [8] sheepish [9] the rest

'If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale!'

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:
The sowpe their only hawkie[1] does afford,
That 'yont the hallan[2] snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hained[3] kebbuck[4] fell[5],
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond[6] auld, sin' lint was i' the bell[7].

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible[8], ance his father's pride:
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[9] wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[10] a portion with judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

[1] cow. [2] partition wall. [3] well-saved. [4] cheese. [5] pungent.
[6] a twelvemonth. [7] Since the flax was in flower.
[8] hall-Bible. [9] grey side locks. [10] chooses.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
Perhaps 'Dundee's' wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive 'Martyrs,' worthy of the name ;
Or noble 'Elgin' beets[1] the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head :
How His first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :
How he, who lone in Patmos banishéd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays :
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'[2]
That thus they all shall meet in future days :
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

[1] feeds. [2] Pope's *Windsor Forest*.—R B.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them, and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings;
'An honest man's the noblest work of God:'
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

Address to the Deil.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.—*Milton.*

O thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges[1] about the brunstane cootie[2],
To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp[3] an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd an' noted is thy name:
An', tho' yon lowin heugh's[4] thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An', faith! thou 's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur[5]

[1] splashes. [2] pail. [3] slap. [4] flaming pit.
[5] Neither bashful nor apt to be scared.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-winged tempest flyin,
Tirlin[1] the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I 've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruined castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon[2].

When twilight did my grannie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft 'yont the dyke she 's heard you bummin,
W' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees[3] comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin[4] light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-buss[5], stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve[6] did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor[7], 'quaick, quaick,'
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squattered[8] like a drake,
On whistling wings.

[1] unroofing. [2] frightful moan. [3] elder trees.
[4] slanting. [5] a bush of rushes. [6] fist. [7] hoarse.
[8] fluttered.

Let warlocks [1] grim, an' withered hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed [2] nags,
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit [3] dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn [4] in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit [5], twal-pint [6] Hawkie's gaen
As yell's [7] the bill [8].

When thowes [9] dissolve the snawy hoord [10],
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted Trav'llers are allured
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing Spunkies [11]
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest 'brother' ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

[1] wizards [2] ragwort. [3] digged up. [4] churn
[5] fondled [6] twelve-pint. [7] milkless. [8] bull.
[9] thaws. [10] hoard. [11] Will-o'-the-wisp

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
An' all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawin[1] dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog,
An' played on man a cursed brogue[2],
(Black be your fa'[3]!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog[4],
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz[5],
Wi' reekit duds[6], an' reestit gizz[7],
Ye did present your smoutie phiz[8]
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented[9] on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lowsed[10] his ill-tongued wicked scaul[11],
Was warst ava[12]?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares and fechtin[13] fierce,
Sin' that day Michael[14] did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding[15] a' Lallan[16] tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

[1] Who draws stealthily the door-bolt. [2] trick. [3] lot. [4] shock [5] bustle. [6] smoky rags. [7] singed periwig. [8] blackened face. [9] slanted. [10] loosed. [11] scold. [12] of all. [13] fighting. [14] Vide Milton, Book vi.—R. B. [15] exhaust. [16] Lowland.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin[1]
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin[2],
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins[3] might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

FROM 'THE HOLY FAIR.'

Now, butt an' ben[4], the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup[5] commentators:
Here's crying out for bakes[6] an' gills,
An' there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic, an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me[7] on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it waukens lear[8],
It pangs[9] us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep[10],
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle[11] up our notion
By night or day.

[1] tripping. [2] dodging. [3] perhaps. [4] kitchen and parlour [5] ale-cup. [6] biscuits. [7] a blessing. [8] learning. [9] crams [10] small beer. [11] tickle.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer[1] about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk[2],
An' formin assignations
To meet some day.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts[3],
Till a' the hills are rairin,
An' echoes back return the shouts;
Black Russel[4] is na spairin:
His piercing words, like Highlan swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
Our vera 'sauls does harrow'[5]
Wi' fright that day.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fu' o' lowin[6] brunstane,
Wha's raging flame, an' scorching heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane[7]!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin,
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neibor snorin
Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
How mony stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill[8],
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups[9],
Amang the furms and benches;
An' cheese an' bread frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches[10]
An' dawds[11] that day.

[1] stir. [2] nook. [3] blows. [4] Minister of Kilmarnock.
[5] Shakspeare's Hamlet.—R B. [6] flaming. [7] whinstone. [8] ale.
[9] wooden vessels [10] slices. [11] lumps.

In comes a gaucie[1] gash Guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck[2] an' her knife,
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them 't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks[3]! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie[4] his braw claithing!
O wives be mindfu', ance yoursel
How bonie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell[5], wi' rattling tow,
Begins to jow[6] an' croon;
Some swagger hame, the best they dow[7],
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps[8] the billies[9] halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They 're a' in famous tune
For crack[10] that day.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND[11].

May 1786.

I lang hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento;

[1] jolly. [2] cheese. [3] waes me! [4] soil. [5] the bell-ringer. [6] to peal or roar. [7] they can. [8] gaps in fences. [9] lads [10] talk. [11] Andrew Aiken.

But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye 'll try the world soon, my lad,
And Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye 'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your end 's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

I 'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, hardened wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricket;
But, och! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It 's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa'[1] in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure,
For still the important end of life
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith[2] hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neibor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff-han' your story tell,
When wi a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel 's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek[3] thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpened, sly inspection.

[1] fall. [2] poverty. [3] peep.

The sacred lowe[1] o' weel-placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it;
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border;
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere,
Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature;
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;

[1] flame.

But when on life we're tempest-driv'n—
A conscience but[1] a canker,
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear amiable Youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, 'God send you speed,'
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may you better reck the rede[2],
Than ever did th' Adviser!

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate[3] to seek, owre proud to snool,[4]
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career
Wild as the wave;
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

[1] without. [2] heed the counsel. [3] bashful. [4] submit tamely.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

FROM THE EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT OF WAUCHOPE.

I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten[1] sair enough,
Yet unco[2] proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave[3] ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing and clearing
The tither stooked raw[4],
Wi' claivers[5], an' haivers[6],
Wearing the day awa:

Ev'n then a wish (I mind its power),
A wish that, to my latest hour,
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan, or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.

[1] tired [2] uncommonly. [3] rest
[4] the other row of shocks. [5] gossip. [6] nonsense.

The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear[1],
I turned the weeding-hook aside,
An' spared the symbol dear:
No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise;
A Scot still, but[2] blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
'Till on that har'st I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She roused the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie[3] quean,
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky[4] een,
That gart[5] my heart-strings tingle;
I fired, inspired,
At ev'ry kindling keek[6],
But bashing, and dashing,
I feared aye to speak.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

Bonie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go,
Bonie lassie, will ye go,
To the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,
Come let us spend the lightsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

[1] barley. [2] without. [3] comely. [4] sly. [5] made. [6] look.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep roaring fa's,
O'er-hung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And, rising, weets wi' misty showers
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW

Tune—'Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey.'

Of a' the airts[1] the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best;
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
By day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw[2], or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

[1] quarters [2] wood.

Auld Lang Syne.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

Chorus.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans[1] fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fere[2],
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught[3],
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

[1] daisies. [2] companion. [3] draught.

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent[1];
But now your brow is beld[2], John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a canty[3] day, John,
We 've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we 'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

TAM GLEN.

Tune—'The mucking o' Geordie's Byre.'

My heart is a breaking, dear Tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity;
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I 'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith[4] I might mak a fen'[5];
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I maunna marry Tam Glen?

There 's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,
'Guid-day to you,'—brute! he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller;
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

[1] smooth. [2] bald. [3] cheerful. [4] poverty. [5] make a shift.

My minnie does constantly deave[1] me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I 'll forsake him,
He 'll gie me gude hunder marks ten:
But, if it 's ordained I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou gied a sten[2]:
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written, Tam Glen.

The last Halloween I was waukin[3]
My droukit[4] sark-sleeve, as ye ken,
His likeness cam up the house staukin,
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry;
I 'll gie ye my bonie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

THE HAPPY TRIO.

Tune—'Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.'

O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang[5] night,
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Chorus.

We are na fou, we 're no that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we 'll taste the barley bree.

[1] deafen [2] leap. [3] watching. [4] wet. [5] live-long.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!
We are na fou, &c.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!
We are na fou, &c.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King among us three!
We are na fou, &c.

To Mary in Heaven.

Tune—'Miss Forbes' Farewell to Banff.'

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love!
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twined am'rous round the raptured scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,—
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but th' impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

TAM O' SHANTER. A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.
Gawin Douglas.

When chapman billies[1] leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate[2];
While we sit bousing at the nappy[3],
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps[4], and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.
This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonie lasses).

[1] pedlar fellows. [2] road. [3] ale. [4] gaps in fences

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum[1],
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum[2];
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder[3], wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton[4] Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drowned in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks[5] in the mirk[6],
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.
Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet[7],
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!
But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats[8], that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter[9] tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

[1] knave. [2] idle talker. [3] every time he went to get grain ground.
[4] Kirkton is the distinctive name of a village in which the parish kirk stands.
[5] wizards. [6] dark. [7] makes me weep. [8] frothing ale. [9] shoemaker.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himself amang the nappy!
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;—
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit[1] on thro' dub[2] and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets[3] nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoored[4];

[1] hurried. [2] puddle. [3] owls. [4] was smothered.

And past the birks[1] and meikle[2] stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane:
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore[3] the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.
Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we 'll face the Devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle[4].
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At winnock-bunker[5] in the east,
There sat old Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie[6] tyke[7], black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart[8] them skirl[9],
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl[10].—
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;

[1] birches. [2] big. [3] hole in the wall. [4] doit. [5] window-seat.
[6] shaggy. [7] dog. [8] forced. [9] scream. [10] thrill.

And by some devilish cantrip [1] slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns [2];
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies [3] to the wark,
And linket [4] at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam, had thae been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie [5] flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linnen [6]!
Thir [7] breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies [8],
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean [9] a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock [10],
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

[1] magic. [2] irons. [3] clothes. [4] linked. [5] greasy [6] The manufacturing term for a fine linen, woven in a reed of 1700 divisions.—*Cromek.* [7] these. [8] loins. [9] wean. [10] short staff.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perished mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear[1],
And kept the country-side in fear,)
Her cutty[2] sark, o' Paisley harn[3],
That, while a lassie, she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[4] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne[5] anither,
Tam tint[6] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, 'Weel done, Cutty-sark!'
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke[7],
When plundering herds assail their byke[8];
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When 'Catch the thief!' resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

[1] barley. [2] short [3] Very coarse linen. [4] ought. [5] then
[6] lost. [7] bustle. [8] hive.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane[1] of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient[2] a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle[3];
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

THE BANKS O' DOON.

Tune—'The Caledonian Hunt's delight.'

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!

[1] It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—R. B.

[2] deuce (fiend). [3] aim.

Thou 'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw[1] my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

FAREWELL TO NANCY.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I 'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted!

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.

[1] stole.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune—'Katharine Ogie.'

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie[1]!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and locked embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay
That wraps my Highland Mary!

[1] muddy.

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!
And closed for ay the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And' mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

DUNCAN GRAY.

Duncan Gray came here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost[1] her head fu' high,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh[2],
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh[3];
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleeched[4], and Duncan prayed,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan sighed baith out and in,
Grat[5] his een baith bleer't and blin'[6],
Spak o' lowpin[7] o'er a linn[8];
Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie dee?
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, &c.

[1] tossed. [2] proud. [3] At a shy distance. [4] besought.
[5] wept. [6] bleared and blind. [7] leaping. [8] precipice

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg grew sick—as he grew hale,
Ha, ha, &c.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd[1] his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie[2] baith,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME TO YE, MY LAD.

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad:
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad.
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad.

But warily tent, when ye come to court me,
And comena unless the back-yett[3] be a-jee[4];
Syne[5] up the back-stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye werena comin to me.
And come as ye werena comin to me.
O whistle, &c.

At Kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye caredna a flee:
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye werena lookin at me.
Yet look as ye werena lookin at me.
O whistle, &c.

[1] smothered. [2] cheerful and merry. [3] gate. [4] ajar. [5] then.

Aye vow and protest that ye carena for me,
And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But courtna anither, tho' jokin ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
For fear, that she wyle your fancy frae me.
O whistle, &c.

BANNOCKBURN. ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

Tune—'Hey tuttie tattie.'

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa'?
Let him on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

A Red, Red Rose.

Tune—'Wishaw's Favourite.'

My luve is like a red, red rose
That 's newly sprung in June:
My luve is like the melodie
That 's sweetly played in tune.

As fair thou art, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho it were ten thousand mile.

My Nanie's awa.

Tune—'There 'll never be peace till Jamie comes Hame.'

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it 's delightless—my Nanie 's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn:
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nanie—and Nanie 's awa.

Thou lav'rock [1] that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nanie 's awa.

Come Autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay;
The dark, dreary Winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nanie 's awa.

A MAN 'S A MAN FOR A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hings his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The man 's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin-grey [2], and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man 's a man, for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that:
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie [3], ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He 's but a coof [4] for a' that:
For a' that, an a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

[1] lark. [2] coarse woollen cloth. [3] conceited fellow. [4] blockhead.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Gude faith, he mauna fa'[1] that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree[2], and a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
It 's coming yet, for a' that;
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow joined
Sic notes o' wae could wauken.

[1] manage. [2] pre eminence.

Thou tells o' never-ending care ;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair :
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair !
Or my poor heart is broken !

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

Tune—'This is no my ain House.'

This is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be ;
Weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi'[1] the fairest place :
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that 's in her e'e.
This is no, &c.

She 's bonie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall ;
And aye it charms my very saul,
The kind love that 's in her e'e
This is no, &c.

A thief sae pawkie[2] is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen ;
But gleg[3] as light are lovers' een,
When kind love is in the e'e.
This is no, &c.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks ;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that 's in her e'e.
This is no, &c.

[1] win. [2] cunning. [3] quick.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER.

Tune—'The Lothian Lassie.'

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi 'm to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi 'm to believe me.

He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,
And vowed for my love he was diein;
I said he might die when he liket for Jean:
The Lord forgie me for liein, for liein,
The Lord forgie me for liein.

A weel-stocked mailen[1], himsel for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on[2] that I kenned it, or cared;
But thought I might hae waur[3] offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan[4] to my black cousin Bess,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the neist week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste[5] o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there!
I glowred as I 'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowred as I 'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neibors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he capered as he 'd been in drink,
And vowed I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vowed I was his dear lassie.

[1] farm. [2] let out. [3] worse.
[4] green lane, the same word as *loaning*. [5] market.

I spier'd[1] for my cousin fu' couthy[2] and sweet,
Gin she had recovered her hearin,
And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't[3] feet—
But Heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin,
But Heavens! how he fell a swearin.

He begged, for Gudesake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Tune—'The Lass of Livingstone.'

O, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt[4],
I 'd shelter thee, I 'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[5] should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown,
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

[1] asked. [2] kind. [3] twisted.
[4] direction of the wind. [5] shelter.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT

(BARONESS NAIRN).

[Lady Nairn was born in 1766. Though she lived to an advanced age, dying in 1845, most of her songs were written early in life, soon after the appearance of Burns's poems in 1787. The first and only collected edition of her works appeared in 1869, but for two generations before, songs of her composing had been sung in every Scotch household and concert-room, though the name of the author was unknown. A surprising number of the most familiar Scotch songs, many of them popularly believed to have descended from remote antiquity, were written by Lady Nairn—*The Land o' the Leal, The Laird o' Cockpen, Caller Herrin, The Auld House, Hunting-Tower, John Tod, Wha'll be King but Charlie? Charlie is my darling, Will ye no come back again? He's ower the hills that I loe weel, I will sit in my wee croo house.*]

Like another Scotch lady, the authoress of *Auld Robin Gray*, Miss Oliphant was first moved to song-writing by the desire of rescuing fine old tunes from coarse themes. This is her own account of the beginning of her poetic impulse ; she saw, she says, with admiration how Burns was fitting popular melodies with worthy words, and longed to help him in the good work. That this object should have mixed with her poetic impulses is characteristic of her training, but no songs written with or without a moral object were ever more spontaneous in their lyric flow, more free from artificiality. Two great motives may be distinguished in her verse—sympathy with the life of the common people among whom she moved with old-fashioned familiarity as a radiant comforter and joy-bringer, and sympathy with the chivalrous spirit of Jacobitism, which was the air she breathed in her own family. Her songs contain all that is best and highest in the Jacobite poetry of Scotland,—the tender regret that never sinks into wailing, the high-tempered gaiety that bends but will not break, the fiery spirit that reaches forward to victory and never thinks of defeat. It was a misfortune for the Pretender that such a poet-

laureate of his cause did not appear till forty years after that cause was hopelessly lost. Lady Nairn's Jacobite songs—she did not receive her title till her husband's attainder was removed in 1824—were written for the consolation of an aged kinsman who had followed 'Prince Charlie's' fortunes in 1745. Her grandfather, Oliphant of Gask, had been 'out' in 1715 as well as 1745, and of her father the Pretender wrote—'He is as worthy a subject as I have, and his family never deroged from their principals.' The atmosphere of sincere and chivalrous Jacobitism in which she was nurtured accounts in no small measure for the intense air of reality in her songs.

W. MINTO

WHA'LL BE KING BUT CHARLIE?

The news frae Moidart cam' yestreen
Will soon gar mony ferlie[1];
For ships o' war hae just come in
And landit Royal Charlie.

Come through the heather, around him gather,
Ye're a' th' welcomer early;
Around him cling wi' a' your kin,
For wha 'll be King but Charlie?
Come through the heather, around him gather,
Come Ronald, come Donald, com a' thegither,
And crown your rightfu' lawfu' King,
For wha 'll be King but Charlie?

The Hieland clans, wi' sword in hand,
Frae John o' Groats to Airlie,
Hae to a man declared to stand,
Or fa' wi' Royal Charlie,
Come through the heather, &c.

The Lowlands a', baith great and sma',
Wi mony a lord and laird, hae
Declared for Scotia's King and law,
And spier ye wha but Charlie?
Come through the heather, &c.

There 's nae a lass in a' the lan',
But vows faith late an' early,
She 'll ne'er to man gie heart nor han',
Wha wadna fecht for Charlie.
Come through the heather, &c.

Then here 's a health to Charlie's cause,
And be 't complete an' early;
His very name our hearts' blood warms,
To arms for Royal Charlie!
Come through the heather, &c.

[1] make many wonder.

THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I 'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I 'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There 's nae sorrow there, John,
There 's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn 's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John;
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy 's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that 's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
Oh! dry your glistening e'e, John,
My soul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me,
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! haud ye leal and true, John,
Your day it 's wearin' through, John,
And I 'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
This warld's cares are vain, John,
We 'll meet, and we 'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.

MRS. BARBAULD.

[ANNA LÆTITIA AIKIN, was born at Kibworth Harcourt, in Leicestershire, 1743. Published *Poems*, 1773; *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* by *J. and A. L. Aikin*, 1773. Married Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, 1774. Published *Poetical Epistle to Mr. Wilberforce*, 1791; *Hymns in Prose for Little Children*, 1811. Died at Stoke Newington, March 9, 1825.]

The poems of Mrs. Barbauld are chiefly written in the elegant pseudo-classic style of the close of the last century. She expresses herself clearly and with grace; a certain artificiality of manner harmonises with her choice of subject. Her poetry is without deep thought or passion; but it is free from blunders of an avoidable kind. The spirit of self-criticism which prompted her to destroy all her juvenile verses, never permitted her to include with her published works any ill-considered thought or unsuccessful effort. 'I had rather,' she declared, in answer to remonstrance, 'that it should be asked of twenty pieces why they are not here, than of one why it is.' The bulk of Mrs. Barbauld's poetry is inspired by the trivial occasions of domestic life; and when she quits the personal vein, it is of Delia and Damon, of Sylvia and Corin, that she sings; pretty shepherdesses and tuneful shepherds, whose delicate pretence of loving claims no relation to the passions of reality. Such fancies move her to an airy playfulness, a charming feminine kind of humour. She is gay, but her gayest mood is without abandonment. Frequent allusions to the classic poets, quoted lines of Virgil, remind us that the poetess is also a learned lady, a schoolmistress, and an authority on education.

The fame of Mrs. Barbauld's hymns has outlived the rest of her work. Yet with the exception of her charming *Hymns in Prose for Little Children*, they seem, to a modern reader, deficient in fervour and in religious emotion. They are pure in tone and lofty, but often singularly cold. There can be no doubt, however, of their sincerity.

Mrs. Barbauld essayed her strength in one or two serious poems and epistles on political subjects. In the treatment of such themes she was not happy. It is only in her lighter moods that she is free from a certain complacent shallowness of sentiment which lessens the value of her work. This fault is less noticeable in her later poems, when age and sad experience had, overcome her: yet even here, in only one of her lyrics, in the close of the *Ode to Life*, do we meet with much real beauty of feeling. Towards the end of her days she composed the longest of her poems, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven.* Her subject is the decline of British power, the transfer of European prestige to America; and it is not surprising that it was received with much disfavour. Nor were the public to be soothed by hearing that the 'ingenuous youth from the Blue Mountains or Ontario's Lake,' forerunners of Lord Macaulay's New Zealander, should, making duteous pilgrimage to London's faded glories, enquire

'Where all-accomplished Jones his race began.'

Mrs. Barbauld could not forgive the public its ingratitude. She took a mild revenge in publishing no more poems, and the step, it may be, was a wise one. In the heyday of the Georgian revival, her academic little verses must have missed their accustomed praise. Her vaunted immortelles had already faded; I fear they will bear no more their golden flowers in any possible future.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

Ode to Spring.

Sweet daughter of a rough and stormy sire,
Hoar Winter's blooming child; delightful Spring!
Whose unshorn locks with leaves
And swelling buds are crowned;

From the green islands of eternal youth,
Crowned with fresh blooms and ever springing shade;
Turn, hither turn thy step,
O thou, whose powerful voice

More sweet than softest touch of Doric reed,
Or Lydian flute, can soothe the madding winds,
And through the stormy deep
Breathe thine own tender calm.

Thee, best beloved! the virgin train await
With songs and festal rites, and joy to rove
Thy blooming wilds among,
And vales and dewy lawns,

With untired feet; and cull thy earliest sweet,
To weave fresh garlands for the glowing brow
Of him, the favoured youth
That prompts their whispered sigh.

Unlock thy copious stores,—those tender showers
That drop their sweetness on the infant buds;
And silent dews that swell
The milky ear's green stem,

And feed the flowering osier's early shoots;
And call those winds which through the whispering boughs
With warm and pleasant breath
Salute the blowing flowers.

Now let me sit beneath the whitening thorn
And mark thy spreading tints steal o'er the dale,
And watch with patient eye
Thy fair unfolding charms.

O nymph, approach! while yet the temperate sun
With bashful forehead through the cool moist air
  Throws his young maiden beams,
  And with chaste kisses wooes
The earth's fair bosom; while the streaming veil
Of lucid clouds with wind and frequent shade
  Protects thy modest blooms
  From his severer blaze.

Sweet is thy reign, but short:—the red dog-star
Shall scorch thy tresses, and the mower's scythe
  Thy greens, thy flowerets all
  Remorseless shall destroy.

Reluctant shall I bid thee then farewell:
For O not all that Autumn's lap contains,
  Nor Summer's ruddiest fruits,
  Can aught for thee atone,

Fair Spring! whose simplest promise more delights
Than all their largest wealth, and through the heart
  Each joy and new-born hope
  With softest influence breathes.

LIFE.

'*Animula, vagula, blandula.*'

Life! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me's a secret yet.
But this I know, when thou art fled
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
No clod so valueless shall be
As all that then remains of me.
O whither, whither dost thou fly,
Where bend unseen thy trackless course,
  And in this strange divorce,
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame
From whence thy essence came
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
From matter's base encumbering weed?
Or dost thou, hid from sight,
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
Through blank oblivious years the appointed hour
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
O say what art thou when no more thou'rt thee?

Life! we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good morning.

GEORGE CRABBE.

[GEORGE CRABBE was born at Aldborough in Suffolk, of poor parents, on the 24th of December, 1754. He was apprenticed in his fourteenth year to a surgeon at Wickham Brook, near Bury St. Edmunds, and after completing his term actually practised at Aldborough. He was not however successful in his profession, and being reduced to great extremities, he determined to go to London, and to devote himself to literature, for which he had at an early age discovered a strong bent. For a long time he sought in vain for patronage, but was at length fortunate enough to attract the attention of Burke, through whose kindly influence *The Library* (1781) was favourably received by the public. In the same year he took orders, and two years later published *The Village*, after first submitting it to the revision of Johnson. This work at once established his reputation; but instead of following up his success, for the period of twenty-four years he published but one poem, *The Newspaper* (1785), and devoted himself almost entirely to parish work. In 1807 appeared *The Parish Register*, which was succeeded in 1810 by *The Borough*, in 1812 by *Tales in Verse*, and in 1819 by *Tales of the Hall*. This was his last poetical work, though his death did not take place till February 3, 1832, thirteen years later.]

Crabbe's poems form a very distinct landmark in the course of English literature. Nothing is more noticeable in the latter part of the eighteenth century than the apparent exhaustion of poetical material. Poetry thrives in an agitated atmosphere; it languishes in a state of settled repose. For more than a century before the appearance of Crabbe the prevailing tone of English poetry had been political. The interest of the people had been absorbed in the establishment of their constitutional liberties, which they had secured at the price of civil war and a disputed succession, and what was felt in society was reflected in verse. The political passions of the period show themselves in different forms in the controversial satires of Dryden, in the personal satires of Pope, in the dramatic declamation of Addison, and at last in the more composed moralising of Johnson and Goldsmith. But by degrees, under a settled dynasty, the air is cleared of serious

political storms. And as the times become more quiet, we observe a rapid ebb in the inspiration of the poets who carried on the traditions peculiar to the eighteenth century. Churchill is but a poor third in satire to Dryden and Pope; *The Traveller* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* are ill replaced in the didactic class of poetry by Erasmus Darwin's frigid *Loves of the Plants*, or Payne Knight's *Progress of Society*. In another direction the strong centrifugal tendency of poetry, afterwards so fully developed by the Lake School, first discovers itself in the solitary and meditative muse of Cowper, and in the Doric provincialism of Burns.

Another feature equally observable in late eighteenth-century poetry is the decline of the Romantic pastoralism of the classical Renaissance. From *The Shepheards Calender* down to the *Pastorals* of Pope this literary fashion of thought had continued to afford materials to the English poet. It was derived from the fiction of a Golden Age of virtue and innocence, traces of which were supposed still to linger in the simplicity of country life. A belief so artificial could only thrive in an artificial atmosphere; it was congenial to Courts. For a long period 'every flowery courtier writ romance,' and in all that portion of society which pretended to good breeding, each lover thought of himself as a shepherd, and sighed for his mistress as a nymph. Slight indications of the fashion are to be found even in poets so plain and unaffected as Cowper and Burns. But as wealth accumulated, and the democratic influence of cities extended, it was gradually felt that for a rich and refined society to be always emulating the manners of shepherds was somewhat absurd. This feeling found a vigorous exponent in Johnson, whose *Lives of the Poets* abound in expressions of contempt for the insipidity and unreality of pastoral poetry.

Of these conditions of taste Crabbe dexterously availed himself. He saw that the questions which were becoming of paramount interest in men's minds were no longer political but social. Himself born and bred among the poor, he knew that there was a vast range of human interest in the actions, passions, and manners of common life, of which the general reader, though they lay immediately under his eyes, was completely ignorant. At the same time his knowledge of English literature enabled him to perceive how effective a contrast might be drawn between rural life as it was conventionally described by poets, and as it existed in reality. On this principle he designed and executed *The Village*. Beginning with a brief but telling allusion to the fiction of the Golden

Age, he proceeded to draw with a stern fidelity the picture of the actual village, with its sterile soil, its half-starved inhabitants, and its smuggling surroundings; he described the sufferings of the peasant concealed by pride or suppressed by necessity, the hopelessness of his prospect, in the workhouse which awaited his old age, and where he could look for no relief for his material and spiritual wants except such as might be afforded by the quack doctor or the fox-hunting parson. His apology for such a representation of reality was, he said, the necessity of showing how small was the difference between the different ranks of men, when measured by the standard of their common nature. The plea was felt to be just; many whose imaginations had before been satisfied with the dreamland of conventional fancy were induced to extend their sympathies to the drama of actual life; *The Village* speedily became popular.

Yet though Crabbe had thus established for himself a permanent place among the English poets, he seemed in no haste to work further the vein of poetry which he had discovered. After the publication of *The Newspaper*—a somewhat uninteresting composition—he seemed almost to lay aside literary ambition, and twenty-two years elapsed before the appearance of *The Parish Register*. This poem is an extension of the subject treated in *The Village*; he takes up again the old text, 'Auburn and Eden can be found no more,' but experience of the world had enlarged his views, and his descriptions of life and character in the *Register* are not so unvaryingly dark as in the earlier poem. To his view of country 'tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,' he now joined some highly finished episodes of individual life, one of which, the story of Phœbe Dawson, is specially memorable as having given pleasure to Fox in his last illness. In his next poem *The Borough*, together with many admirable pictures of that Suffolk coast life and scenery, which always exercised a strong spell on his imaginations, he inserted several connected tales, illustrative of the peculiar temptations and passions to which the poor are exposed, and having now discovered his extraordinary power of tracing the working of the human mind, he soon afterwards published twenty-one *Tales* of various kinds, tragic, pathetic, and humorous. These were entirely wanting in connection; and it was probably a fear that the appearance of a new set of separate stories might expose him to the charge of repeating himself, which caused him to attempt a kind of unity in his last work, *Tales of the Hall*.

In this the stories, though in every other respect resembling the first series, were connected with each other by the persons of the narrators, two brothers, who having been parted since their youth, meet when middle-aged in the house of the elder, and amuse each other with their different experiences.

Though Crabbe occupies so marked a place in the history of English poetry, he has not met in our own generation with all the attention which he deserves. Something of this comparative neglect is to be attributed to changes in society; the altered position of the poor has fortunately deprived his poems of much of the reality they once possessed. Something too must be ascribed to the revolutions of taste. We have been long accustomed to look at Nature and peasant life through the philosophic medium created for us by Wordsworth and his followers. From the poetical standpoint of this school Crabbe is as far removed as he is from the conventional pastoralism of his predecessors. His intention is simply to paint things as they are, and modern ideology therefore finds in his poetry an uncongenial atmosphere. But beyond this it must be allowed that of all standard English writers Crabbe makes the largest demands on the patience of his readers. His great defect is an incurable want of taste. Like Rembrandt, to whose work his poetical chiaroscuro has a striking analogy, he seems, while impressing the imagination with powerful effects of light and shade, to delight at the same time in the exhibition of the most vulgar details. These he introduces into his poetry without the slightest attempt at generalisation or selection. In the midst of a passage of sustained tragic pathos he shocks us by the appearance of some incredibly mean thought or word; his shrewd humour runs without restraint into coarseness; and he frequently oversteps the line that divides the horrible from the terrible.

Yet after making full deduction for these defects we have still left a body of powerful and original poetry, and indeed the defects themselves arise from that strong bent of genius which makes Crabbe's verse such an admirable foil to the insincerity of the fashionable pastoral. The extraordinary minuteness of his descriptions of actual nature becomes excusable when we take into consideration the deep moral truth which he seeks to convey in them. As an observer and painter of the individual truths of nature no poet has ever approached him. He had a scientific interest and curiosity about all living objects, and this, though it impaired his sense of beauty, gave him an unrivalled power

in placing the scenes and persons he described before the mind of the reader. Whether he paints a storm on the East Coast, or exhibits the succession of images passing through the imagination of the condemned felon, or shows the mental stages by which the enthusiast of virtue proceeds to crime, everything is represented with an appearance of scientific precision, which in an ordinary poet would be offensive, but which from Crabbe's point of view is just and necessary. At the same time, with all this Dutch minuteness, he possessed, as we see in *The Lover's Journey*, and *Delay has Danger*, exceptional skill in describing Nature in the aspect which she presents to minds labouring under strong emotions. His powers of pathos are extraordinary, and his faculty of giving pain is often put to an illegitimate use. When his humour is under his control it is admirable, and of all the poets who have used the heroic couplet, Pope himself not excepted, he is the best writer of easy dialogue. As a painter of character he evidently modelled himself on Pope, but the style of the two poets is as different as their genius. Pope, an unequalled observer within a limited compass, is most careful to choose rare types and to embody their prominent features in the most select and pregnant words; Crabbe, on the other hand, trusts to the largeness of his experience, and to the general human interest of his descriptions, and, though preserving the antithetical form of Pope's verse, makes comparatively little attempt at epigrammatic expression. It is noticeable that, as his subjects become more numerous and extended, his care in composition seems to diminish; there is far more literary finish in *The Village* than in *Tales of the Hall*.

W. J. COURTHOPE.

THE VILLAGE AS IT IS.

[From *The Village*, Book I.]

Fled are those times, when in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty, or their nymph's rehearse;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the golden age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where fancy, leads the way?
* * * * * * *
No; cast by fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As Truth will paint it and as bards will not:
Nor you, ye poor, of lettered scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bowed down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?—
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;

Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.

THE CONVICT'S DREAM.

[From *The Borough*, Letter xxiii.]

Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain:
He sees the judge and jury—when he shakes,
And loudly cries 'Not guilty!' and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compelled to sleep.

Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene
With each small circumstance that comes between,
The call to suffering, and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The home, the chamber, where he once arrayed
His youthful person; where he knelt and prayed:

Then too the comfort he enjoyed at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence; the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.
All now is present; 'tis a moment's gleam,
Of former sunshine—stay delightful dream!
Let them within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.
Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows.
Pierced by no crime and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane—then linger in the mead;
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,
And pluck the blossoms where the wild bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the seaside sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea;
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold

The glittering waters on the shingles rolled;
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below;
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon.
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour fire—
Tokens of bliss! Oh! horrible! a wave
Roars as it rises—Save me, Edward! save!
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

STROLLING PLAYERS.

[From *The Borough*, Letter xii.]

Sad happy race! Soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery, not enriched by gain:
Whom justice, pitying, chides from place to place,
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race,
Who cheerful looks assume, and play the parts
Of happy rovers with repining hearts;
Then cast off care, and, in the mimic pain
Of tragic woe, feel spirits light and vain,
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's, wear,
The man's affliction and the actor's tear:
Alternate times of fasting and excess
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.
Slaves though ye be, your wandering freedom seems,
And with your varying views and restless schemes,
Your griefs are transient, as your joys are dreams.

The Founder of the Almshouse.

[From *The Borough*, Letter xiii.]

Leave now our streets, and in yon plain behold
Those pleasant seats for the reduced and old;
A merchant's gift, whose wife and children died;
When he to saving all his powers applied;
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,
And with the meanest fare his body fed.
He had a female cousin, who with care
Walked in his steps, and learned of him to spare;
With emulation and success they strove,
Improving still, still seeking to improve,
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—
How little food would human life sustain:
No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:
When beggars saw the frugal merchant pass,
It moved their pity and they said 'Alas!
Hard is thy fate, my brother,' and they felt
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt.
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,
Barked him away from every decent door;
While they who saw him bare but thought him rich,
To show respect or scorn they knew not which.
But while our merchant seemed so base and mean,
He had his wanderings, sometimes not unseen;
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,
And serious sums in healing misery spent;
Oft has he cheered the wretched at a rate
For which he daily might have dined on plate;
He has been seen—his hair all silver white,
Shaking and shivering—as he stole by night,
To feed unenvied on his still delight.
A twofold taste he had; to give and spare,
Both were his duties, and had equal care.

It was his joy to sit at home and fast,
Then send a widow and her boys repast:
Tears in his eyes would spite of him appear,
But he from other eyes has kept the tear:
All in a wintry night from far he came
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame,
Whose husband robb'd him, and to whom he meant
A lingering but reforming punishment:
Home then he walked, and found his anger rise
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes;
But these extinguished, and his prayer addressed
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.

A Storm on the East Coast.

[From *The Borough*, Letter i.]

View now the winter storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud:
The unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had rolled in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes showed his form,
Dark as the cloud and furious as the storm.
All where the eye delights yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curled as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then, reflowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Rolled by their rage, and shall to ages last.
Far off the petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;

She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunners' hope, vast flocks of wild-duck stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.
In-shore their passage tribes of sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion on the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.
Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak, and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon prowler on his way;
Lo, he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—'Was your search in vain?'
Gruffly he answers, ''Tis a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more to-night!'

An Entanglement.

[From *Tales of the Hall.*]

[The following is an extract from one of the *Tales of the Hall*, entitled 'Delay has Danger.' A young man, who is happily engaged to be married, finds himself, during a visit in a friend's house, partly through his own weakness and folly, partly through the cunning designs of others, compromised in his relations with a girl of inferior station and insignificant attractions. The dialogue that ensues is between the unwilling lover and the girl's adopted parents, who are upper servants in his host's house, and who, having brought about the entanglement, now affect to encourage the lover in his timid advances.]

'An orphan maid—your patience! you shall have
Your time to speak; I now attention crave—

Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me
Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
None of the poorest—nay, sir, no reply,
You shall not need—and we are born to die;
And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say,
That what he has he cannot take away:
Her mother's father, one who has a store
Of this world's goods and always looks for more;
But, next his money, loves the girl at heart,
And she will have it when they come to part.'
'Sir,' said the youth, his terrors all awake,
'Hear me, I pray, I beg—for mercy's sake!
Sir, were the secrets of my soul confessed,
Would you admit the truths that I protest
Are such—your pardon—'
'Pardon! good my friend,
I not alone will pardon, I commend;
Think you that I have no remembrance left
Of youthful love and Cupid's cunning theft?
How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
How hearts are gained and how exchange is made?
Come, sir, your hand—'
'In mercy hear me now!'
'I cannot hear you, time will not allow:
You know my station, what on me depends,
For ever needed—but we part as friends;
And here comes one who will the whole explain,
My better self—and we shall meet again:'
'Sir, I entreat—'
'Then be entreaty made
To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
A little teasing, but she will comply,
And loves her niece too fondly to deny.'
'O! he is mad, and miserable I!'
Exclaimed the youth; 'but let me now collect
My scatter'd thoughts; I something must effect.'
Hurrying she came—'Now what has he confessed,
Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
What! he has grieved you! Yet he too approves

The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.
But now for business: tell me, did you think
That we should always at your meetings wink?
Think you, you walked unseen? There are who bring
To me all secrets—O you wicked thing!
Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
And "Hide your secret,"—said I, "if you dare!"
So out it came like an affrightened hare.
"Miss!" said I, gravely: and the trembling maid
Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
And then she wept,—now, do remember this,
Never to chide her when she does amiss;
For she is tender as the callow bird,
And cannot bear to have her temper stirred;—
"Fanny," I said, then whispered her the name,
And caused such looks—yes, yours are just the same;
But hear my story—When your love was known
For this our child—she is in fact our own—
Then, first debating, we agreed at last
To seek my Lord and tell him what had passed.'
'To tell the Earl?'
'Yes truly, and why not?
And then together we contrived our plot.'
'Eternal God!'
'Nay be not so surprised,—
In all the matter we were well advised;
We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
And said to Johnson—'Johnson, take a chair.'
True we are servants in a certain way,
But in the higher places so are they;
We are obeyed in ours and they in theirs obey—
So Johnson bowed, for that was right and fit,
And had no scruple with the Earl to sit—
Why look you so impatient while I tell
What they debated? You must like it well.'

* * * * *

That evening all in fond discourse was spent
When the sad lover to his chamber went,

To think on what had passed, to grieve and to repent.
Early he rose, and looked with many a sigh
On the red light that filled the eastern sky;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day:
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curled onward as the gale
From the pine hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood surveyed,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are reared, and when the old,
Lost to the tie grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights and twittered on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blackened in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from time, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he pondered for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrowed smile

WILLIAM BLAKE.

[WILLIAM BLAKE was born in London, at No. 28, Broad Street, Golden Square, on the 28th November 1757; he died in Fountain Court, Strand, on the 12th of August, 1827. His *Poetical Sketches* were published in 1783, and the *Songs of Innocence* in 1787. In 1787 was also published *The Book of Thel*; and this was followed in 1790 by *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in 1791 by *The French Revolution*, and in 1793 by *The Gates of Paradise*, the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, and the *America*. The *Songs of Experience*, designed as a companion series to the earlier *Songs of Innocence*, were issued in 1794. Of the later productions of the poet nearly all belonged to the class of prophetic books. To the year 1794 belong the *Europe* and *The Book of Urizen*; in 1795 appeared *The Song of Los* and *The Book of Abania*, and in 1804 the *Jerusalem* and the *Milton*.]

The poetry of Blake holds a unique position in the history of English literature. Its extraordinary independence of contemporary fashion in verse, and its intuitive sympathy with the taste of a later generation, would alone suffice to give a peculiar interest to the study of the poet's career. Nor is this interest in any way diminished by a knowledge of Blake's singular and strongly marked individuality. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to do justice to the great qualities of his imagination, or to make due allowance for its startling defects, unless the exercise of the poetic gift is considered in relation to the other faculties of his mind. He appealed to the world in the double capacity of poet and painter; and such was the peculiar nature of his endowment and the particular method of his work, that it is difficult to measure the value of his literary genius without some reference to his achievements in design. For it is not merely that he practised the two arts simultaneously, but that he chose to combine them after a fashion of his own. An engraver by profession and training, he began at a very early age to employ his technical knowledge in the invention of a wholly original system of literary publication. With the exception of the *Poetical Sketches*, issued in the ordinary form through the kindly help of friends, nearly all of Blake's poems

were given to the world in a fantastic dress of his own devising. He became in a special sense his own printer and his own publisher. The typography of his poems and the pictorial illustration by which they were accompanied were blended in a single scheme of ornamental design, and from the engraved plate upon which this design was executed by the artist's own hand copies were struck off in numbers more than sufficient to satisfy the modest demands of his admirers.

This peculiar process of publication cannot of course be held to affect Blake's claims as a poet. It bears a more obvious relation to those powers of a purely artistic kind which are not here in question; but its employment by him is nevertheless well deserving of remark in this place, because it indicates a certain quality of mind that deeply affected his poetic individuality. That happy mingling and confusion of text and ornament which give such a charm to *Songs of Innocence* was the symbol of a strongly marked intellectual tendency that afterwards received a morbid development. Blake has been called mad, and within certain well-defined limits the charge must, we think, be admitted. He possessed only in the most imperfect and rudimentary form the faculty which distinguishes the functions of art and literature; and when his imagination was exercised upon any but the simplest material, his logical powers became altogether unequal to the labour of logical and consequent expression. That this failure arose rather from morbid excess and excitement of visionary power than from any abnormal defect of intellectual energy is sufficiently indicated by the facts of his career. For while his hold over the abstract symbols of language grew gradually feebler, his powers of pictorial imagery became correspondingly vigorous and intense. The artistic faculty in Blake strengthened and developed with advancing life, and he produced no surer or more satisfying example of his powers than the series of illustrations to the Book of Job, executed when he was already an old man.

Indeed if Blake had never committed himself to literature we should scarcely be aware of the morbid tendency of his mind. It is only in turning from his design to his verse that we are forced to recognise the imperfect balance of his faculties: nor could we rightly understand the strange limitation of his poetical powers without constant reference to this diseased activity of the artistic sense. For there is a large portion of Blake's verse which is not infected at all with the suspicion of insanity, and it seems at first

sight almost inexplicable that a writer who has produced some of the simplest and sweetest lyrics in the language should also have left behind him a confused mass of writings such as no man can hope to decipher. All that can be done for these so-called *Prophetic Books* has been accomplished by Mr. Swinburne, in his sympathetic study of the poet's work; but although Mr. Swinburne rightly asserts the power that is displayed in them, his eloquent commentary does not substantially change the ordinary judgment of their confused and inconsequent character. The defects of such work are too grave for any kind of serious vindication to be really possible, and if Blake had produced nothing more or nothing better, his claims to rank among English poets could not be successfully maintained. But these defects, although they are in their nature incurable, are not altogether incapable of explanation. For it cannot be questioned by any one who has seriously attempted to decipher these 'prophetic' writings, that to Blake himself the ordinary modes of intellectual expression had become charged with something of mysterious and special meaning. Words were no longer mere abstract symbols: they had assumed to his imagination the force of individual images. As they passed into his work they lost the stamp of ordinary currency and became impressed with a device of his own coinage, vivid and eloquent to him, but strange to all the world beside. To Blake's mind, in short, these prophetic writings doubtless formed a series of distinct and coherent pictures; but without the key that he alone possessed, they must ever remain a chaos through which not even the most wary guide can hope to find a path.

Putting aside the prophetic books, the quantity of verse which Blake has left behind him is by no means large. His lyrical poems have been collected in a small volume edited by Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and the contents of this volume are found to be mainly derived from the *Poetical Sketches* and the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. It is to these essays of his youth and early manhood that we must look for the true sources of his fame. The *Poetical Sketches*, begun when the author was only twelve years of age, and finished when he was no more than twenty, must assuredly be reckoned among the most extraordinary examples of youthful production; and it is profoundly characteristic of the man and his particular cast of mind that many of these boyish poems are among the best that Blake at any time produced. For his was a nature that owed little to development or experience. The perfect

innocence of his spirit, as it kept him safe from the taint of the world, also rendered him incapable of receiving that enlargement of sympathy and deepening of emotion which others differently constituted may gain from contact with actual life. His imagination was not of the kind that could deal with the complex problems of human passion; he retained to the end of his days the happy ignorance as well as the freshness of childhood: and it is therefore perhaps less wonderful in his case than it would be in the case of a poet of richer and more varied humanity that he should be able to display at once and in early youth the full measure of his powers.

But this acknowledgment of the inherent limitation of Blake's poetic gift leads us by a natural process to a clearer recognition of its great qualities. His detachment from the ordinary currents of practical thought left to his mind an unspoiled and delightful simplicity which has perhaps never been matched in English poetry. The childlike beauty of his poems is entirely free from the awkward lisp of wisdom that condescends. It is always unconscious and always unstrained, and even the simplicity of a poet like Wordsworth must often seem by comparison to be tinged with a didactic spirit. Blake's verse has indeed, both as regards intellectual invention and executive skill, a kind of unpremeditated charm that forces comparison with the things of inanimate life. Where he is successful his work has the fresh perfume and perfect grace of a flower, and at all times there is the air of careless growth that belongs to the shapes of outward nature. And yet this quality of simplicity is constantly associated with an unusual power of rendering the most subtle effects of beauty. In the actual processes of his art Blake could command the utmost refinement and delicacy of style. He possessed in a rare degree the secret by which the loveliness of a scene can be arrested and registered in a line of verse, and he often displays a faultless choice of language and the finest sense of poetic melody.

We have said already that he worked in absolute independence of the accepted models of his time. This is strictly true: but it would be absurd therefore to assume that he laboured without any models at all. Blake's isolation, if we look to the character of the man, is indeed less extraordinary than it would otherwise appear. He did not mingle in the concerns of life in such a way as to expose him to the dangers of being unduly swayed by the caprices of fashion. His was a world of his own creating, and to his vivid

imagination the poets of an earlier generation would seem as near as the versifiers of his own day. That he should have chosen from the past those models whose example was most needed in order to infuse a new life into English poetry proves of course the justice of his poetic instinct. In fixing upon the great writers of the Elizabethan age he anticipated, as we have already observed, the taste of a succeeding generation, and it is only to be regretted that he did not absolutely confine himself to these nobler models of style. Unfortunately however his own intellectual tendency towards mysticism, found only too ready encouragement in the prophetic vagueness of the Ossianic verse, and we may fairly trace a part at least of Blake's obscurer manner to this source.

J. COMYNS CARR.

[From *Poetical Sketches.*]

TO THE EVENING STAR.

Thou fair-haired Angel of the Evening,
Now whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
Thy bright torch of love—thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves; and while thou drawest the
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy West Wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes
And wash the dusk with silver.—Soon, full soon,
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And the lion glares through the dun forest,
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew; protect them with thine influence!

SONG.

How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride;
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
And led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then laughing sports and plays with me,
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

SONG.

My silks and fine array,
  My smiles and languished air,
By love are driven away;
  And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave:
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven
  When springing buds unfold;
Oh, why to him was't given
  Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is love's all-worshipped tomb
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
  Bring me a winding sheet;
When I my grave have made,
  Let winds and tempest beat;
Then down I'll lie as cold as clay.
True love doth pass away!

SONG.

Memory, hither come
  And tune your merry notes;
And while upon the wind
  Your music floats,
I'll pore upon the stream
Where sighing lovers dream,
And fish for fancies as they pass
Within the watery glass.

I 'll drink of the clear stream,
And hear the linnet's song,
And there I 'll lie and dream
The day along;
And when night comes I 'll go
To places fit for woe,
Walking along the darkened valley,
With silent Melancholy.

MAD SONG.

The wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold,
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs enfold:
But lo! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling beds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
Of pavèd heaven
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven;
They strike the ear of night,
Make weak the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds
And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud
With howling woe
After night I do crowd
And with night will go;
I turn my back to the east
From whence comforts have increased;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

TO THE MUSES.

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the Earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove;
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry:

How have you left your ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few.

[From *Songs of Innocence.*]

INTRODUCTION.

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:—

'Pipe a song about a lamb:'
So I piped with merry cheer.
'Piper, pipe that song again:'
So I piped; he wept to hear.

'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:'
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read'—
So he vanished from my sight:
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear.

THE LAMB.

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb I 'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I 'll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For He calls himself a Lamb;
He is meek and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

NIGHT.

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine:
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.

The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright:
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful
The angels most heedful
Receive each mild spirit
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying: 'Wrath by His meekness,
And by His health sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold.'

[From *Songs of Experience.*]

AH, SUNFLOWER.

Ah, Sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done—

Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin, shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go!

THE TIGER.

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb, make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

THE ANGEL.

I dreamt a dream! What can it mean?
And that I was a maiden queen,
Guarded by an angel mild;
Witless woe was ne'er beguiled.

And I wept both night and day,
And he wiped my tears away;
And I wept both day and night,
And hid from him my heart's delight.

So he took his wings and fled;
Then the morn blushed rosy red;
I dried my tears and armed my fears
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my angel came again:
I was armed, he came in vain;
For the time of youth was fled,
And grey hairs were on my head.