

The Poetical Works of Addison; Gay's Fables; and Somerville's Chase eBook

The Poetical Works of Addison; Gay's Fables; and Somerville's Chase

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THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SOMERVILLE

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LIFE OF JOSEPH ADDISON.

Joseph Addison, the *Spectator*, the true founder of our periodical literature, the finest, if not the greatest writer in the English language, was born at Milston, Wiltshire, on the 1st of May 1672. A fanciful mind might trace a correspondence between the particular months when celebrated men have been born and the peculiar complexion of their genius. Milton, the austere and awful, was born in the silent and gloomy month of December. Shakspeare, the most versatile of all writers, was born in April, that month of changeful skies, of sudden sunshine, and sudden showers. Burns and Byron, those stormy spirits, both appeared in the fierce January; and of the former, he himself says,

“‘Twas then a blast o’ Januar-win’
Blew welcome in on Robin.”



Scott, the broad sunny being, visited us in August, and in the same month the warm genius of Shelley came, as Hunt used to tell him, “from the planet Mercury” to our earth. Coleridge and Keats, with whose song a deep bar of sorrow was to mingle, like the music of falling leaves, or of winds wailing for the departure of summer, arrived in October,—that month, the beauty of which is the child of blasting, and its glory the flush of decay. And it seems somehow fitting that Addison, the mild, the quietly-joyous, the sanguine and serene, should come, with the daisy and the sweet summer-tide, on the 1st of May, which Buchanan thus hails—

“Salve fugacis gloria saeculi,
Salve secunda digna dies nota,
Salve vetustae vitae imago,
Et specimen venientis aevi.”

“Hail, glory of the fleeting year!
Hail, day, the fairest, happiest here!
Image of time for ever by,
Pledge of a bright eternity.”

Dr Lancelot Addison, himself a man of no mean note, was the father of our poet. He was born in 1632, at Maltesmeaburn, in the parish of *Corby Ravensworth*, (what a name of ill-omen within ill-omen, or as Dr Johnson would say, “inspissated gloom”!) in the county of Westmoreland. His father was a minister of the gospel; but in such humble circumstances, that Lancelot was received from the Grammar-school of Appleby into Queen’s College, Oxford, in

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the capacity of a “poor child.” After passing his curriculum there, being chiefly distinguished for his violent High Church and Monarchical principles, for which he repeatedly smarted, he, at the Restoration, was appointed chaplain to the garrison of Dunkirk, and soon after he accepted a similar situation in Tangier, which had been ceded by Portugal to Britain. In this latter post he felt rather lonely and miserable, and was driven, in self-defence, to betake himself to the study of the manners and the literature of the Moors, Jews, and other Oriental nations. This led him afterwards to publish some works on Barbary, on Hebrew customs, and Mohammedanism, which shew a profound acquaintance with these subjects, and which, not without reason, are supposed to have coloured the imagination of his son Joseph, who is seldom more felicitous than when reproducing the gorgeous superstitions and phantasies of the East.

For eight years, old Addison lingered in loathed Tangier; nor, when he returned to England on a visit, had he any purpose of permanently residing in his own country. But his appointment was hastily bestowed on another; and it was fortunate for him that a private friend stepped in and presented him with the living of Milston, near Ambrosebury, Wilts, worth £120 a-year. This, which Miss Aiken calls a “pittance,” was probably equivalent to £250 now. At all events, on the strength of it, he married Jane, daughter of Dr Gulstone, and sister to the Bishop of Bristol, who, in due time, became the mother of our poet. Lancelot was afterwards made Prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, and King’s Chaplain in ordinary; about the time (1675) when he took the degree of D.D. Subsequently he became Archdeacon of Salisbury, and at last, in 1683, obtained the Deanery of Lichfield. But for his suspected Jacobitism, he would probably have received the mitre. He died in 1703.

Joseph had two brothers and three sisters. His third sister, Dorothy, survived the rest, and was twice married. Swift met her once, and with some awe (for he, like all bullies, had a little of the coward about him), describes her as a kind of wit, and very like her brother. The *Spectator* seems to have been a wild and wayward boy. He is said to have once acted as ringleader in a “barring out,” described by Johnson as a savage license by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, used to take possession of the school, of which they barred the doors, and bade the master defiance from the windows. On another occasion, having committed some petty offence at a country school, terrified at the master’s apprehended displeasure, he made his escape into the fields and woods, where for some days he fed on fruits and slept in a hollow tree till discovered and brought back to his parents. This last may seem the act of a timid boy, and inconsistent with the former, and yet is somehow congenial to our ideal of the character of our poet. It required perhaps more daring to front the perils of the woods

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than the frown of the master, and augured, besides, a certain romance in his disposition which found afterwards a vent in literature. After receiving instruction, first at Salisbury, and then at Lichfield, (his connexion with which place forms a link, uniting him in a manner to the great lexicographer, who was born there,) he was removed to the Charterhouse, and there profited so much in Greek and Latin, that at fifteen he was not only, says Macaulay, “fit for the university, but carried thither a classical taste and a stock of learning which would have done honour to a master of arts.” He had at the Charter-house formed a friendship, destined to have important bearings on his after history, with Richard Steele, whose character may be summed up in a few sentences. Who has not heard of Sir Richard Steele? Wordsworth says of one of his characters—

“She was known to every star,
And every wind that blows.”

Poor Dick was known to every sponging-house, and to every bailiff that, blowing in pursuit, walked the London streets. A fine-hearted, warm-blooded character, without an atom of prudence, self-control, reticence, or forethought; quite as destitute of malice or envy; perpetually sinning and perpetually repenting; never positively irreligious, even when drunk; and often excessively pious when recovering sobriety,—Steele reeled his way through life, and died with the reputation of being an orthodox Christian and a (nearly) habitual drunkard; the most affectionate and most faithless of husbands; a brave soldier, and in many points an arrant fool; a violent politician, and the best natured of men; a writer extremely lively, for this, among other reasons, that he wrote generally on his legs, flying or meditating flight from his creditors; and who embodied in himself the titles of his three principal works—“The Christian Hero,” “The Tender Husband,” and the *Tatler*;—being a “Christian Hero” in intention, one of those intentions with which a certain place is paved; a “Tender Husband,” if not a true one, to his two ladies; and a *Tatler* to all persons, in all circumstances, and at all times. When Addison first knew this original, he was probably uncontaminated, and must have been, as he continued to the end to be, an irascible but joyous and genial being; and they became intimate at once, although circumstances severed them from each other for a long period.

In 1687 Addison entered Queen’s College, Oxford; but sometime after, (Macaulay says “not many months,” Johnson “a year,” and Miss Aiken “two years,”) Dr Lancaster, of Magdalene College, having accidentally seen some Latin verses from his pen, exerted himself to procure their author admission to the benefits of a foundation, then the wealthiest in Europe. Our poet was first elected Demy, then Probationary Fellow in 1697, and in the year following, Actual Fellow. During the ten years he resided at Oxford, he was a general favourite, remarkable for his diligence in study, for the purity

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and tenderness of his feelings, for his bashful and retiring manners, for the excellence of his Latin compositions, and for his solitary walks, pursued in a path they still point out below the elms which skirt a meadow on the banks of the Cherwell,—a river, we need scarcely say, which there weds the Isis. It was in such lonely evening or Saturday strolls that he probably acquired the habit of pensive reverie to which we owe many of the finest of his speculations in after days, such as that in *Spectator*, No. 565, beginning, “I was yesterday, about sunset, walking in the open fields, when insensibly the night fell upon me,” &c.

Prose English essays, however, were as yet strangers to his pen. His ambition was to be a poet, and while still under twenty-two, he produced and printed some complimentary verses to Dryden, then declining in years, and fallen into comparative neglect. The old poet was pleased with the homage of the young aspirant, which was as graceful in expression as it was generous in purpose. For instance, alluding to Dryden’s projected translation of “Ovid,” he says, that “Ovid,” thus transformed, shall “reveal”

“A nobler change than he himself can tell.”

This, however, although happy, starts a different view of the subject. It suggests the idea that most translations are metamorphoses to the worse, like that of a living person into a dead tree, or at least of a superior into an inferior being. In Pope’s “Iliad,” you have the metamorphosis of an eagle into a nightingale; in Dryden’s “Virgil,” you have a stately war-horse transformed into a hard-trotting hackney; in Hoole’s versions of the Italian Poets, you have nymphs nailed up in timber; while, on the other hand, in Coleridge’s “Wallenstein,” you have the “nobler change,” spoken of by Addison, of—shall we say?—a cold and stately holly-tree turned into a murmuring and oracular oak.

That, after thus introducing himself to Dryden, he met him occasionally seems certain, although the rumour circulated by Spence that he taught the old man to sit late and drink hard seems ridiculous. Dryden introduced him to Congreve, and through Congreve he made the valuable acquaintance of Charles Montague, then leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

He afterwards published a translation of that part of the “Fourth Book of the Georgics” referring to bees, on which Dryden, who had procured a preface to his own complete translation of the same poem from Addison, complimented him by saying—“After his bees, my later swarm is scarcely worth hiving.” He published, too, a poem on “King William,” and an “Account of the Principal English Poets,” in which he ventures on a character of Spenser ere he had read his works. It thus is, as might have been expected, poor and non-appreciative, and speaks of Spenser as a poet pretty nearly

forgotten. Some time after this, he collected a volume, entitled, “Musae Anglicanae,” in which he inserted all his early Latin verses.

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Charles Montague, himself a poet of a certain small rank, and a man of great general talents, became—along with Somers—the patron of Addison. He diverted him from the Church, to which his own tastes seemed to destine him, suggesting that civil employment had become very corrupt through want of men of liberal education and good principles, and should be redeemed from this reproach, and declaring that, though he had been called an enemy of the Church, he would never do it any other injury than keeping Mr Addison out of it. It is likely that the timid temperament of our poet concurred with these suggestions of Montague in determining his decision. His failure as a Parliamentary orator subsequently seems to prove that the pulpit was not his vocation. After all, his Saturday papers in the *Spectator* are as fine as any sermons of that age, and he perhaps did more good serving as a volunteer than had he been a regular soldier in the army of the Christian faith.

Somers and Montague wished to employ their *protege* in public service abroad. There was, however, one drawback. Addison had plenty of English, Greek, and Latin, but he had little French. This he must be sent abroad to acquire; and for the purpose of defraying the expenses of his travels, a pension of L300 a-year was conferred upon him. Paid thus, as few poets or writers of any kind are, in advance, and having his fellowship besides, Addison, like a young nobleman, instead of a parson's son, set out upon his tour. This was in the summer of 1699. He was twenty-seven years of age, exactly one year younger than Byron, and three years younger than Milton, when they visited the same regions. He went first to Paris, and was received with great distinction by Montague's kinsman, the Earl of Manchester, and his beautiful lady. He travelled with his eyes quietly open, especially to the humorous aspects of things. In a letter to Montague he says that he had not seen a *blush* from his first landing at Calais, and gives a sarcastic description of the spurious devotion which the example of the old repentant *roue*, Louis XIV., had rendered fashionable among the *litterati* of France: "There is no book comes out at present that has not something in it of an air of devotion. Dacier has been forced to prove his Plato a very good CHRISTIAN before he ventures upon his translation, and has so far complied with the taste of the age, that his whole book is overrun with texts of Scripture, and the notion of pre-existence, supposed to be stolen from two verses of the prophets." The sincere believer is usually the first to detect and be disgusted with the sham one; and Addison was always a sincere believer, but he had also that happy nature in which disgust is carried quickly and easily off through the safety-valve of a smile.

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From Paris he went to Blois, the capital of Loir-and-Cher, a small town about 110 miles south-west of Paris. Here he had two advantages. He found the French language spoken in its perfection; and as he had not a single countryman with whom to exchange a word, he was driven on his own resources. He remained there a year, and spent his time well, studying hard, rising early, having the best French masters, mingling in society, although subject, as in previous and after parts of his life, to fits of absence. His life was as pure as it was simple, his most intimate friend at Blois, the Abbe Philippeaux, saying: "He had no amour whilst here that I know of, and I think I should have known it if he had had any." During this time he sent home letters to his friends in England—to Montague, Colonel Froude, Congreve, and others[1]—which contain sentences of exquisite humour. Thus, describing the famous gallery at Versailles, with the paintings of Louis' victories, he says: "The history of the present King till the sixteenth year of his reign is painted on the roof by Le Brun, so that his Majesty has actions enough by him to furnish another gallery much longer than the first. He is represented with all the terror and majesty that you can imagine in every part of the picture, and see his young face as perfectly drawn in the roof as his present one in the side. The painter has represented His Most Christian Majesty under the figure of Jupiter throwing thunderbolts all about the ceiling, and striking terror into the Danube and Rhine, that *lie astonished and blasted with lightning a little above the cornice.*"

This is Addison all over; and quite as good is his picture of the general character of the French: "'Tis not in the power of want or slavery to make them miserable. There is nothing to be met with in the country but mirth and poverty. Every one sings, laughs, and starves. Their conversation is generally agreeable, for if they have any wit or sense, they are sure to shew it. Their women are perfect mistresses in the art of shewing themselves to the best advantage. They are always gay and sprightly, and set off the worst faces in Europe with the best airs. Every one knows how to give herself as charming a look and posture as Sir Godfrey Kneller could draw her in."

From Blois he returned to Paris, and was now better qualified, from his knowledge of the language, to mingle with its philosophers, savants, and poets. He had some interesting talk with Malebranche and Boileau, the former of whom "very much praised Mr Newton's mathematics; shook his head at the name of Hobbes, and told me he thought him a *pauvre esprit.*" Here follows a genuine Addisonianism: "His book is now reprinted with many additions, among which he shewed me a very pretty hypothesis of colours, which is different from that of Cartesius or Newton, *though they may all three be true.*" Boileau, now sixty-four, deaf as a post, and full

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of the “sweltered venom” of ill-natured criticism, nevertheless received Addison kindly; and when presented by him with his “*Musae Anglicanae*,” is said from that time to have conceived an opinion of the English genius for poetry. Addison says that Boileau “hated an ill poet.” Unfortunately, however, for his judgment, it is notorious that he slighted Shakspeare, Milton, and Corneille, and that, next to Homer and Virgil, his great idols were Arnaud and Racine.

In December 1700, tired of French manners, which had lost even their power of moving him to smiles, and it may be apprehensive of the war connected with the Spanish succession, which was about to inflame all Europe, Addison embarked from Marseilles for Italy. After a narrow escape from one of those sudden Mediterranean storms, in which poor Shelley perished, he landed at Savona, and proceeded, through wild mountain paths, to Genoa. He afterwards commemorated his deliverance in the pleasing lines published in the *Spectator*, beginning with—

“How are Thy servants blest, O Lord,”

one verse in which was wont to awaken the enthusiasm of the boy Burns,

“What though in dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave,” &c.

The survivor of a shipwreck is, or should be, ever afterwards a sadder and a wiser man. And Addison continued long to feel subdued and thankful, and could hardly have been more so though he had outlived *that* shipwreck which bears now the relation to all recent wrecks which “*the storm*” of November 1703, as we shall see, bore to all inferior tempests—the loss of the *Royal Charter*,—the stately and gold-laden bark, which, on Wednesday the 26th October 1859, when on the verge of the haven which the passengers so much desired to see, was lifted up by the blast as by the hand of God, and dashed into ten thousand pieces,—hundreds of men, women, and, alas! alas! children, drowned, mutilated, crushed by falling machinery, and that, too, at a moment when they had just been assured that there was no immediate danger, and when hope was beginning to sparkle in the eyes that were sinking into despair,—sovereigns, spray, and the mangled fragments of human bodies massed together as if in the anarchy of hell, and hurled upon the rocks. Addison, no more than one of the escaped from that saloon of horror and sea of death, could forget the special Providence by which he was saved; and the hymn above referred to, and that other still finer, commencing—

“When all Thy mercies, O my God!
My rising soul surveys,”

seem a pillar erected on the shore to Him that had protected and redeemed him.

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From Genoa he went to Milan, and thence to Venice, where he saw a play on the subject of Cato enacted, and began himself to indite his celebrated tragedy, of which he completed four acts ere he quitted Italy. On his way to Rome, he visited the miniature mountain republic of San Marino, which he contemplated and described with much the same feeling of interest and amazement, as afterwards, in the *Guardian*, the little colony of ants immortalised there. Like Swift, (whom Macaulay accuses of stealing from Addison's Latin poem on the "Pigmies," some hints for his Lilliput,) Addison had a finer eye for the little than for the vast. He enjoyed Marino, therefore, and must have chuckled over the description of it in the geography, as much as if it had been a stroke of his own inventive pen. "Besides the mountain on which the town stands, the republic possesses *two adjoining hills*." At Rome he did not stay long at this time, but as if afraid of the attractions of the approaching Holy Week—that blaze of brilliant but false light in which so many moths have been consumed—he hurried to Naples and saw Vesuvius burning over its beautiful bay with less admiration than has been felt since by many inferior men. He returned to Rome and lived there unharmed during the sickly season; thence he went to Florence, surveying with interest the glories of its art; and in fine he crossed the Alps by Mount Cenis to Geneva, composing on his way a poetical epistle to Montague, now Lord Halifax. The Alps do not seem to have much delighted his imagination. There are a few even still who look upon mountains as excrescences and deformities, and give to Glencoe only the homage of their unaffected fears, which is certainly better than the false raptures of others. But, in Addison's day, admiration for wild scenery was neither pretended nor felt. Our poet loved, indeed, the great silent starry night, and has whispered and stammered out some beautiful things in its praise. But he does this, so to speak, below his breath, while the white Alps, seeming the shrouded corpses of the fallen Titans, take that breath away, and he shudders all the road through them, and descends delightedly to the green pastures and the still waters of lower regions.

At Geneva, where he arrived in December 1701, he remained some time, expecting from Lord Manchester the official appointment for which he was now qualified. But while waiting there, he heard the tidings of King William's death, which put an end to his hopes as well as to those of his party. His pension, too, was stopped, and he was obliged to become a tutor to a young Englishman of fortune. With him he visited many parts of Switzerland and Germany, and spent a portion of his leisure in writing, not only his "Travels," but his recondite "Dialogue on Medals,"—a book of considerable research and great ingenuity, which was not published, however, till after his death. From Germany he passed to Holland, where he heard the sad intelligence

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that his father was no more. During his stay in Holland, he watched with keen, yet kindly eye, the manners of the inhabitants; and in his letters hits at their drinking habits with a mixture of severity and sympathy which is very characteristic. Toward the close of 1703 he returned home, and, we doubt not, felt at first desolate enough. His father was dead, his pension withdrawn, his political patrons out of power, and his literary fame not yet fully established. But, on the other hand, he was only thirty-one; he had made some new and influential friends on the Continent, particularly the eminent Edward Wortley Montague, husband of the still more celebrated Mary Wortley Montague, and he had in his portfolio a volume of "Travels" of some mark and likelihood, nearly ready for the press. Besides, the Whigs, low as they were now in political influence, were still true to their party, and they welcomed Addison, as one of their rising hopes, into the famous "Kit-Cat Club," an *omniumgaiherum* of all whose talents, learning, accomplishments, wit, or wealth were thought useful to the Whig cause.

Addison's arrival in England seems to have synchronised or preceded the great tempest of November 1703, to which we have already referred, and to which he afterwards alludes in his simile of the Angel in "The Campaign"—

"Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past."

Our readers will find a sketch of this terrific tempest in the commencement of Ainsworth's "Jack Shepherd." Macaulay says of it, "It was the only tempest which, in our latitude, has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a Parliamentary address, or of a national fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down; one prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace. London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were thrown into mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees, and the ruins of houses attested, in all the southern counties, the fury of the blast." How Addison felt or fared during this storm, we have no means of knowing. Perhaps his timid nature shrank from it in spite of its appeal to imagination, or perhaps the poetry that was in him triumphed over his fears, and as he felt what *Zanga* was afterwards to say—

"I love this rocking of the battlements,"

the image of the Angel, afterwards to be dilated into the vast form of Wrath, described in the "Campaign," rose on his vision, and remained there indelibly fixed till the time arrived when, used with artistic skill, it floated him into fame.

Meanwhile, he spent this winter and spring of 1703-4 in a rather precarious manner, and like a true poet. He was lodging in an obscure garret in the Haymarket, up three stairs,



when one day the Right Honourable Henry Boyle, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, called on him and communicated a project that had been concocted between Godolphin and Halifax. The Whigs were now again in the ascendant, and the battle of Blenheim, fought on the 13th August 1704, had brought their triumph to a climax. Halifax and Godolphin were mortified at the bad poems in commemoration of it which poured from the press. Their feeling was sincerely that which Byron affected in reference to Wellington and Waterloo—

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“I wish your bards would sing it rather better.”

They bethought themselves of Addison, and sent Boyle to request him to write some verses on the subject. He readily undertook the task, and when he had half-finished the “Campaign,” he shewed it to Godolphin, who was delighted, especially with the Angel, and in gratitude, instantly appointed the lucky poet to a commissionership worth about L200 a-year, and assured him that this was only a foretaste of greater favours to come. The poem soon after appeared. It was received with acclamation, and Addison felt that his fortune and his fame were both secured.

Yet, in truth, the “Campaign” is not a great poem, nor, properly speaking, if we except the Angel, a poem at all. It is simply a *Gazette* done into tolerable rhyme; and its chief inspiration comes from its zealous party-feeling. Marlborough, though a first-rate marshal, was not a great man, not by any means so great as Wellington, far less as Napoleon; and how can a heroic poem be written without a hero? Yet the poem fell in with the humour of the times, and was cried up as though it had been another book of the *Iliad*. Shortly afterwards he published his “Travels,” which were thought rather cold and classical. To them succeeded the opera of “Rosamond,” which, being ill-set to music, failed on the stage; but became, and is still, a favourite in the closet. It is in the lightest and easiest style of Dryden,—that in which he wrote “Alexander’s Feast,” and some other of his lyrics,—but is sustained for some fifteen hundred lines with an energy and a grace which we doubt if even Dryden could have equalled. Its verses not only move but dance. The spirit is genial and sunny, and above the mazy motions shines the light of genuine poetry. Johnson truly says, that if Addison had cultivated this style he would have excelled.

From the date of the “Campaign,” Addison’s life became an ascending scale of promotion. We find him first in Hanover with Lord Halifax, then appointed under-secretary to Sir Charles Hodges, and in a few months after to the Earl of Sunderland. In 1708 he was elected member for Malmesbury, and the next year he accompanied Thomas, Earl of Wharton, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, to that country as his secretary, and became Keeper of the Records in Birmingham’s Tower,—a nominal office worth L300 a-year. His secretary’s salary was L2000 per annum.

Previous to this he had resumed his intimacy with Steele, to whom he lent money, and on one occasion is said to have recovered it by sending a bailiff to his house. This has been called heartless conduct, but the probability is that Addison was provoked by the extravagant use made of the loan by his reckless friend. In Parliament it is well-known Addison never spoke; but he surrounded himself in private life with a parliament of his own, and, like Cato, gave his little senate laws. That senate consisted of Steele, Ambrose, Phillips; the wretched Eustace

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Budgell, who afterwards drowned himself; sometimes Swift and Pope; and ultimately Tickell, who became his most confidential friend and the depositor of his literary remains. In mixed societies he was silent; but with a few select spirits around him, and especially after the “good wine did the good office” of banishing his bashfulness and taciturnity, he became the most delightful and fascinating of conversers. The staple of his conversation was quiet, sly humour; but there was fine sentiment, touches of pathos, and now and then imagination peeped over like an Alp above meaner hills. Swift alone, we suspect, was his match; but his power lay rather in severe and pungent sarcasm, in broad, coarse, though unsmiling wit, and at times in the fierce and terrible sallies of misanthropic rage and despair. Addison, on leaving England, had, by his modesty, geniality, and amiable manners, become the most popular man in the country, so much so, that, says Swift, “he might be king an’ he had a mind.”

In Ireland—although he sat as member for Cavan, and appears in Parliament to have got beyond his famous “I conceive—I conceive—I conceive”—(having, as the wag observed, “conceived three times and brought forth nothing”), and spoken sometimes, if not often—he did not feel himself at home. He must have loathed the licentious and corrupt Wharton, and felt besides a longing for the society of London, the *noctes coenoeque Deum* he had left behind him. It was in Ireland, however, that his real literary career began. Steele, in the spring of 1709, had commenced the *Tatler*, a thrice-a-week miscellany of foreign news, town gossip, short sharp papers *de omnibus rebus et quibusdum aliis*, with a sprinkling of moral and literary criticism. When Addison heard of this scheme, he readily lent his aid to it, and then, as honest Richard admits, “I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid,—I was undone by my auxiliary.” To the *Tatler* Addison contributed a number of papers, which, if slighter than his better ones in the *Spectator*, were nevertheless highly characteristic of his singular powers of observation, character-painting, humour, and invention.

In November 1709, he returned to England, and not long after he shared in the downfall of his party, and lost his secretaryship. This also is thought to have injured him in a tender point. He had already conceived an affection for the Countess-Dowager of Warwick, who had been disposed to encourage the addresses of the Secretary, but looked coldly on those of the mere man and scribbler Joseph Addison, who, to crown his misfortunes at this time, had resigned his Fellowship, suffered some severe pecuniary losses of a kind, and from a quarter which are both obscure, and was trembling lest he should be deprived of his small Irish office too. Yet, although reduced and well-nigh beggared, never did his mind approve itself more rich. Besides writing a great deal

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in the *Tatler*, he published a political journal, called the *Whig Examiner*, in which, although the wit, we think, is not so fine as in his *Freeholder*, there is a vigour and masculine energy which he has seldom equalled elsewhere. When it expired, Swift exulted over its death in terms which sufficiently proved that he was annoyed and oppressed by its life. "He might well," says Johnson, "rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed."

On the 2d of January 1711, the last *Tatler* came forth; and on the 1st of the following March appeared the *Spectator*, which is now the main pillar of Addison's fame, and the fullest revelation of his exquisite genius. Without being as a whole a great, or in any part of it a profound work, there are few productions which, if lost, would be more missed in literature. One reclines on its pages as on pillows. The sweetness of the spirit,—the trembling beauty of the sentences, like that of a twilight wave just touched by the west wind's balmy breath,—the nice strokes of humour, so gentle, yet so overpowering,—the feminine delicacy and refinement of the allusions,—the art which so dexterously conceals itself,—the mild enthusiasm for the works of man and God which glows in all its serious effusions,—the good nature of its satire,—the geniality of its criticism,—the everlasting April of the style, so soft and vivid,—the purity and healthiness of the moral tone,—and the childlike religion which breathes in the Saturday papers—one or two of which, such as the "Vision of Mirza," are almost scriptural in spirit and beautiful simplicity,—combine to throw a charm around the *Spectator* which works of far loftier pretensions, if they need not, certainly do not possess. Macaulay (whom we love for his love of Addison and Bunyan more than for aught else about his works) truly observes, that few writers have discovered so much variety and inventiveness as Addison, who, in the papers of a single week, sometimes traverses the whole gamut of literature, supplying keen sarcasm, rich portraiture of character, the epistle, the tale, the allegory, the apologue, the moral essay, and the religious meditation,—all first-rate in quality, and all suggesting the idea that his resources are boundless, and that the half has not been told. His criticisms have been ridiculed as shallow; but while his lucubrations on Milton were useful in their day as plain finger-posts, quietly pointing up to the stupendous sublimities of the theme, his essays on Wit are subtle, and his papers on the "Pleasures of Imagination" throw on the beautiful topic a light like that of a red evening west, giving and receiving glory from the autumnal landscape.

In the end of 1712 the *Spectator*, which had circulated at one time to the extent of 4000 copies a-day, was discontinued, and in a few weeks the *Guardian* supplied its place. It was two months ere Addison began to write, and during that time it was flippantly dull; but when he appeared its character changed, and his contributions to the new periodical were quite as good as the best of his *Spectators*.

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In April 1713 his “Cato” was acted with immense success, and in circumstances so well known that they need not be detailed at length. Pope wrote the prologue; Booth enacted the hero; Steele packed the house; peers, both Tory and Whig, crowded the boxes; claps of applause were echoed back from High Churchmen to the members of the “Kit-Cat Club;” Bolingbroke sent fifty guineas, during the progress of the play, to Booth for defending the cause of liberty against a perpetual dictator, (Marlborough;) and with the exception of growling Dennis, everybody was in raptures. The play has long found its level. It has passages of power and thoughts of beauty, but it has one radical fault—formality. Mandeville described Addison as a parson in a tie-wig. “Cato” is a parson without the tie-wig; an intolerable mixture of the patriot and the pedant. Few would now give one of the *Spectator’s* little papers about Sir Roger de Coverley for a century of Catos.

In September 1713 the *Guardian* stopped; but in June 1714 Addison, now separated from Steele, who was carrying on a political paper called the *Englishman*, added an eighth volume to the *Spectator*. Its contents are more uniformly serious than those of the first seven volumes, and it contains, besides Addison’s matchless papers, some only inferior to these, especially four by Mr Grove, a dissenting minister in Taunton. It is recorded in “Boswell” that Baretti having, on the Continent, met with Grove’s paper on “Novelty,” it quickened his curiosity to visit Britain, for he thought, if such were the lighter periodical essays of our authors, their productions on more weighty occasions must be wonderful indeed!

When George I. succeeded to the throne, Addison’s fortunes began to improve. A Council having been appointed to manage matters till the King arrived, Addison was chosen their secretary; and afterwards he went over again to Ireland in his old capacity, Sunderland being now Lord-Lieutenant. Here, much as he differed from Swift in politics, he resumed his intimacy with him,—an intimacy, considering the dispositions of the two men, singular, as though a lamb and a flayed bear were to form an alliance. In 1715 our poet returned to England, and obtained a seat at the Board of Trade. Early in the year he brought out, anonymously, on the stage his comedy of the “Drummer,” which was coldly received. And towards the close of it, he commenced a very clever periodical called the *Freeholder*. We only met with this series a few years ago, but can assure our readers that some of the most delectable bits of Addison are to be found in it. There is a Tory fox-hunter yet riding along there, whom we would advise you to join if you would enjoy one of the richest treats of humour; and there is a Jacobite army still on its way to Preston, the only danger connected with approaching which, is lest you be killed with laughter.

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Shortly after occurred his famous quarrel with Pope, to which we have already referred in our life of that poet, and do not intend to recur. Next year Addison's long courtship came to a successful close. He wedded the Dowager Warwick, went to reside at Holland-house, and became miserable for life. She was a proud, imperious woman, who, instead of seeking to wean Addison from his convivial habits, (if such habits in any excessive measure were his,) drove him deeper into the slough by her bitter words and haughty carriage. The tavern, which had formerly been his occasional resort, became now his nightly refuge. In 1717 he received his highest civil honour, being made Secretary of State under Lord Sunderland; but, as usual, the slave soon appeared in the chariot. His health began to break down, and asthma soon obliged him to resign his office, on receiving a retiring pension of £1500 a-year. Next Steele and he, having taken opposite sides in politics, got engaged in a paper war—Steele in the *Plebeian*, and Addison in the *Old Whig*; and personalities of a disagreeable kind passed between the two friends. In the meantime Addison was dying fast. Dropsy had supervened on asthma, and the help of physicians was vain. He prepared himself, like a man and a Christian, to meet the last stern foe. He sent for Gay and asked his forgiveness for some act of unkindness he had done him. Gay granted it, although utterly ignorant of what the offence had been. He had probably, on account of his Toryism, been deprived, through Addison's means, of some preferment. He entrusted his works to the care of Tickell, and dedicated them to Craggs, his successor in the secretaryship, in a touching and beautiful letter, written a few days before his death. He called, it is said, the young Earl of Warwick, his wife's son, a very dissipated young man, and of unsettled religious principles, to his bedside, and said, "I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die." He breathed his last on the 17th June 1709, forty-seven years old, and leaving one child, a daughter, who died, at an advanced age, at Bilton, Warwickshire, in 1797. His funeral took place, at dead of night, in Westminster Abbey, Bishop Atterbury meeting the procession and reading the service by torch-light. He was laid beside his friend Montague, and in a few months his successor, Craggs, was laid beside him. Nearly a century elapsed ere the present monument was erected over his dust. Tickell wrote a fine poem to his memory; and a splendid edition of his works was published by subscription in 1721.

Addison was cut off in the prime of life, and interrupted in some literary undertakings and projects of great pith and moment. He had written a portion of a treatise on the "Evidences of Christianity," and was meditating some works, such as a "Metrical Version of the Psalms" and a tragedy on the history of Socrates, still more suitable to his cast of mind.

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We have already indicated our opinion alike of Addison's character and genius, but must be permitted a few closing remarks. Both partook of the feminine type. He was an amiable and highly gifted, rather than a strong or great man. His shrinking timidity of temperament, his singular modesty of manners, his quiet, sly power of humorous yet kindly observation, his minute style of criticism, even the peculiar cast of his piety, all served to stamp the lady-man. In taciturnity alone he bore the sex no resemblance. And hence it is that Campbell in poetry, and Addison in prose, are, or were, the great favourites of female readers. He had many weaknesses, but, as in the character of woman, they appeared beautiful, and cognate to his gentle nature. His fear of giving offence was one of the most prominent of these. In his writings and in his life, he seems always treading on thin ice. Pope said truly of him—

“He hints a fault, and hesitates dislike.”

But this was not owing to malice, but to the bashful good nature which distinguished him. It is true, too, that he hints a beauty, and hesitates in his expressions of love. He says himself the finest things, and then blushes as if detected in a crime; or he praises an obvious and colossal merit in another, and then starts at the sound himself had made. His encomiums resemble the evening talk of lovers, being low, sweet, and trembling. Were we to speak of Addison phrenologically, we should say that, next to veneration, wit, and ideality, his principal faculties were caution and secretiveness. He was cautious to the brink of cowardice. We fancy him in a considerable fright in the storm on the Ligurian Gulf, amidst the exhalations of the unhealthy Campagna, and while the avalanches of the Alps—“the thunderbolts of snow”—were falling around him. We know that he walked about behind the scenes perspiring with agitation while the fate of “Cato” was still undecided. Had it failed, Addison never could, as Dr Johnson, when asked how he felt after “Irene” was damned, have replied, “Like the Monument.” We know, too, that he sought to soothe the fury and stroke down the angry bristles of John Dennis. To call the author of the “Campaign” a coward were going too far; but he felt, we believe, more of a martial glow while writing it in his Haymarket garret than had he mingled in the fray. And as to his secretiveness, his still, deep, scarce-rippling stream of humour, his habit, commemorated by Swift, when he found any man invincibly wrong, of flattering his opinions by acquiescence, and sinking him yet deeper in absurdity; even the fact that no word is found more frequently in his writings than “secret” (“secret joy,” “secret satisfaction,” “secret solace,” are phrases constantly occurring,) prove that, whatever else he had possessed of the female character, the title of the play, “A Wonder—a Woman keeps a Secret,” had been no paradox in reference to him.

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Having his lips in general barred by the double bolts of caution and secretiveness, one ceases to wonder that the “invisible spirit of wine” was welcomed by him as a key to open occasionally the rich treasures of his mind; but that he was a habitual drunkard is one calumny; that he wrote his best *Spectators* when too much excited with wine is another; and that he “died drunk” is a third,—and the most atrocious of all, propagated though it has been by Walpole and Byron. His habits, however, were undoubtedly too careless and convivial; and there used to be a floating tradition in Holland-house, that, when meditating his writings there, he was wont to walk along a gallery, at each end of which stood a separate bottle, out of both of which he never failed, *en passant*, to sip! This, after all, however, may be only a mythical fable.

While, as an author, the favourite of ladies, of the young, and of catholic-minded critics generally, Addison has had, and has still, severe and able detractors, who are wont to speak of him in such a manner as this:—“He is a highly cultivated artist, but not one thought of any vivid novelty did he put out in all his many books. You become placid reading him, but think of Ossian and Shakspeare, and be silent. He is a lapidary polishing pebbles,—a pretty art, but not vested with the glories of sculpture, nor the mathematical magnitude of architecture. He does not walk a demigod, but a stiff Anglicised imitator of French paces. He is a symmetrical, but a small invisible personage at rapier practice.” Now, clever as this is, it only proves that Addison is not a Shakspeare or Milton. He does not pretend to be either. He is no demigod, but he is a man, a lady-man if you will, but the lovelier on that account. Besides, he was cut off in his prime, and when he might have girt himself up to achieve greater things than he has done. And although the French taste of his age somewhat affected and chilled his genius, yet he knew of other models than Racine and Boileau. He drank of “Siloa’s brook.” He admired and imitated the poetry of the Bible. He loves not, indeed, its wilder and higher strains; he gets giddy on the top of Lebanon; the Valley of Dry Bones he treads with timid steps; and his look up to the “Terrible Crystal” is more of fright than of exultation. But the lovelier, softer, simpler, and more pensive parts of the Bible are very dear to the gentle *Spectator*, and are finely, if faintly, reproduced in his writings. Indeed, the principle which would derogate from Addison’s works, would lead to the depreciation of portions of the Scriptures too. “Ruth” is not so grand as the “Revelation;” the “Song of Solomon” is not so sublime as the “Song of Songs, which is Isaiah’s;” and the story of Joseph has not the mystic grandeur or rushing fire of Ezekiel’s prophecy. But there they are in the same Book of God, and are even dearer to many hearts than the loftier portions; and so with Addison’s papers beside the works of Bacon, Milton, and Coleridge.

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His poetry is now in our readers' hands, and should be read with a candid spirit. They will admire the elegance and gracefully-used learning of the "Epistle to Halifax." They will not be astonished at the "Campaign," but they will regard it with interest as the lever which first lifted Addison into his true place in society and letters. They will find much to please them in his verses to Dryden, Somers, King William, and his odes on St Cecilia's Day; and they will pause with peculiar fondness over those delightful hymns, some of which they have sung or repeated from infancy, which they will find again able to "beat the heavenward flame," and start the tender and pious tear, and which are of themselves sufficient to rank Addison high on the list of Christian poets.

[Footnote 1: Among these "others" was Abraham Stanyan, plenipotentiary extraordinary at Neufchatel at the settlement of the rival claims of the Duke of Brandenburg, Holland, and France, to that principality. He was afterwards ambassador to France. He married a daughter of Dr Pritchett, Bishop of Gloucester. It is said, that, having on one occasion borrowed a sum of money from Addison, the latter observed him to be very subservient, agreeing with every opinion Mr A. expressed, till Addison, provoked, and guessing the cause, said, "Stanyan, either contradict me, or pay me my money." Our friend, Mr J. Stanyan Bigg, author of the very brilliant poem, "Night and the Soul," is a descendant of Abraham Stanyan.]

ADDISON'S POETICAL WORKS.

POEMS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

TO MR DRYDEN.

How long, great poet, shall thy sacred lays
Provoke our wonder, and transcend our praise?
Can neither injuries of time, nor age,
Damp thy poetic heat, and quench thy rage?
Not so thy Ovid in his exile wrote;
Grief chilled his breast, and checked his rising thought;
Pensive and sad, his drooping Muse betrays
The Roman genius in its last decays.

Prevailing warmth has still thy mind possess'd,
And second youth is kindled in thy breast;

10

*Thou mak'st the beauties of the Romans known,
And England boasts of riches not her own;
Thy lines have heightened Virgil's majesty,
And Horace wonders at himself in thee.
Thou teachest Persius to inform our isle*



*In smoother numbers, and a clearer style;
And Juvenal, instructed in thy page,
Edges his satire, and improves his rage.
Thy copy casts a fairer light on all,
And still outshines the bright original.*

20

Now Ovid boasts the advantage of thy song,
And tells his story in the British tongue;
Thy charming verse and fair translations show
How thy own laurel first began to grow;
How wild Lycaon, changed by angry gods,
And frightened at himself, ran howling through



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the woods.

Oh, mayst thou still the noble task prolong,
Nor age nor sickness interrupt thy song!
Then may we wondering read, how human limbs
Have watered kingdoms, and dissolved in streams;

30

*Of those rich fruits that on the fertile mould
Turned yellow by degrees, and ripened into gold:
How some in feathers, or a ragged hide,
Have lived a second life, and different natures tried.
Then will thy Ovid, thus transformed, reveal
A nobler change than he himself can tell.*

Mag. Coll. Oxon, June 2, 1693.

The Author's age, 22.

A POEM TO HIS MAJESTY,[2] PRESENTED TO THE LORD KEEPER.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JOHN SOMERS,

LOKD KEEPER OF THE GREAT SEAL.

If yet your thoughts are loose from state affairs,
Nor feel the burden of a kingdom's cares,
If yet your time and actions are your own,
Receive the present of a Muse unknown:
A Muse that in adventurous numbers sings
The rout of armies, and the fall of kings,
Britain advanced, and Europe's peace restored,
By Somers' counsels, and by Nassau's sword.

To you, my lord, these daring thoughts belong,
Who helped to raise the subject of my song;

10

*To you the hero of my verse reveals
His great designs; to you in council tells
His inmost thoughts, determining the doom
Of towns unstormed, and battles yet to come.
And well could you, in your immortal strains,
Describe his conduct, and reward his pains:
But since the state has all your cares engross'd,
And poetry in higher thoughts is lost,*



*Attend to what a lesser Muse indites,
Pardon her faults and countenance her flights.*

20

On you, my lord, with anxious fear I wait,
And from your judgment must expect my fate,
Who, free from vulgar passions, are above
Degrading envy, or misguided love;
If you, well pleased, shall smile upon my lays,
Secure of fame, my voice I'll boldly raise;
For next to what you write, is what you praise.

TO THE KING.

When now the business of the field is o'er,
The trumpets sleep, and cannons cease to roar;
When every dismal echo is decay'd,
And all the thunder of the battle laid;
Attend, auspicious prince, and let the Muse
In humble accents milder thoughts infuse.

Others, in bold prophetic numbers skill'd,
Set thee in arms, and led thee to the field;
My Muse, expecting, on the British strand
Waits thy return, and welcomes thee to land:

10

*She oft has seen thee pressing on the foe,
When Europe was concerned in every blow;
But durst not in heroic strains rejoice; is
The trumpets, drums, and cannons drowned her voice:*

Page 21

*She saw the Boyne run thick with human gore,
And floating corps lie beating on the shore:
She saw thee climb the banks, but tried in vain
To trace her hero through the dusty plain,
When through the thick embattled lines he broke,
Now plunged amidst the foes, now lost in clouds of smoke.*

20

Oh that some Muse, renowned for lofty verse,
In daring numbers would thy toils rehearse!
Draw thee beloved in peace, and feared in wars,
Inured to noonday sweats, and midnight cares!
But still the godlike man, by some hard fate,
Receives the glory of his toils too late;
Too late the verse the mighty act succeeds;
One age the hero, one the poet breeds.

A thousand years in full succession ran
Ere Virgil raised his voice, and sung the man

30

*Who, driven by stress of fate, such dangers bore
On stormy seas and a disastrous shore,
Before he settled in the promised earth,
And gave the empire of the world its birth.*

*Troy long had found the Grecians bold and fierce,
Ere Homer mustered up their troops in verse;
Long had Achilles quelled the Trojans' lust,
And laid the labour of the gods in dust,
Before the towering Muse began her flight,
And drew the hero raging in the fight,*

40

Engaged in tented fields and rolling floods,
Or slaughtering mortals, or a match for gods.

And here, perhaps, by fate's unerring doom,
Some mighty bard lies hid in years to come,
That shall in William's godlike acts engage,
And with his battles warm a future age.

Hibernian fields shall here thy conquests show,
And Boyne be sung when it has ceased to flow;
Here Gallic labours shall advance thy fame,
And here Seneffe[3] shall wear another name.

50

Our late posterity, with secret dread,



*Shall view thy battles, and with pleasure read
How, in the bloody field, too near advanced,
The guiltless bullet on thy shoulder glanced.*

*The race of Nassaus was by Heaven design'd
To curb the proud oppressors of mankind,
To bind the tyrants of the earth with laws,
And fight in every injured nation's cause,
The world's great patriots; they for justice call,
And, as they favour, kingdoms rise or fall.*

60

Our British youth, unused to rough alarms,
Careless of fame, and negligent of arms,
Had long forgot to meditate the foe,
And heard unwarmed the martial trumpet blow;
But now, inspired by thee, with fresh delight
Their swords they brandish, and require the fight,
Renew their ancient conquests on the main,
And act their fathers' triumphs o'er again;
Fired, when they hear how Agincourt was strow'd
With Gallic corps and Cressi swam in blood,

70

*With eager warmth they fight, ambitious all
Who first shall storm the breach, or mount*

Page 22

the wall.

*In vain the thronging enemy by force
Would clear the ramparts, and repel their course;
They break through all, for William leads the way,
Where fires rage most, and loudest engines play.
Namur's late terrors and destruction show
What William, warmed with just revenge, can do:
Where once a thousand turrets raised on high
Their gilded spires, and glittered in the sky,*

80

*An undistinguished heap of dust is found,
And all the pile lies smoking on the ground,
His toils, for no ignoble ends design'd,
Promote the common welfare of mankind;
No wild ambition moves, but Europe's fears,
The cries of orphans, and the widow's tears;
Oppressed religion gives the first alarms,
And injured justice sets him in his arms;
His conquests freedom to the world afford,
And nations bless the labours of his sword.*

90

*Thus when the forming Muse would copy forth
A perfect pattern of heroic worth,
She sets a man triumphant in the field,
O'er giants cloven down, and monsters kill'd,
Reeking in blood, and smeared with dust and sweat,
Whilst angry gods conspire to make him great.*

*Thy navy rides on seas before unpress'd,
And strikes a terror through the haughty East;
Algiers and Tunis from their sultry shore
With horror hear the British engines roar;*

100

*Fain from the neighbouring dangers would they run,
And wish themselves still nearer to the sun.
The Gallic ships are in their ports confined,
Denied the common use of sea and wind,
Nor dare again the British strength engage;
Still they remember that destructive rage
Which lately made their trembling host retire,
Stunned with the noise, and wrapt in smoke and fire;
The waves with wide unnumbered wrecks were strow'd,
And planks, and arms, and men, promiscuous flow'd.*

110



*Spain's numerous fleet, that perished on our coast,
Could scarce a longer line of battle boast,
The winds could hardly drive them to their fate,
And all the ocean laboured with the weight.*

*Where'er the waves in restless errors roll,
The sea lies open now to either pole:
Now may we safely use the northern gales,
And in the Polar Circle spread our sails;
Or deep in southern climes, secure from wars,
New lands explore, and sail by other stars;*

120

Fetch uncontrolled each labour of the sun,
And make the product of the world our own.

At length, proud prince, ambitious Louis, cease
To plague mankind, and trouble Europe's peace;
Think on the structures which thy pride has razed,
On towns unpeopled, and on fields laid waste;
Think on the heaps of corps and streams of blood,
On every guilty plain, and purple flood,
Thy arms have made, and cease an impious war,
Nor waste the lives intrusted to thy care.

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130

*Or if no milder thought can calm thy mind,
Behold the great avenger of mankind,
See mighty Nassau through the battle ride,
And see thy subjects gasping by his side:
Fain would the pious prince refuse the alarm,
Fain would he check the fury of his arm;
But when thy cruelties his thoughts engage,
The hero kindles with becoming rage,
Then countries stolen, and captives unrestored,
Give strength to every blow, and edge his sword.*

140

*Behold with what resistless force he falls
On towns besieged, and thunders at thy walls!
Ask Villeroy, for Villeroy beheld
The town surrendered, and the treaty seal'd,
With what amazing strength the forts were won,
Whilst the whole power of France stood looking on.
But stop not here: behold where Berkley stands,
And executes his injured king's commands!
Around thy coast his bursting bombs he pours
On flaming citadels and falling towers;*

150

*With hissing streams of fire the air they streak,
And hurl destruction round them where they break;
The skies with long ascending flames are bright,
And all the sea reflects a quivering light.
Thus AEtna, when in fierce eruptions broke,
Fills heaven with ashes, and the earth with smoke;
Here crags of broken rocks are twirled on high,
Here molten stones and scattered cinders fly:
Its fury reaches the remotest coast,
And strows the Asiatic shore with dust.*

160

*Now does the sailor from the neighbouring main
Look after Gallic towns and forts in vain;
No more his wonted marks he can descry,
But sees a long unmeasured ruin lie;
Whilst, pointing to the naked coast, he shows
His wondering mates where towns and steeples rose,
Where crowded citizens he lately view'd,*



And singles out the place where once St Maloes stood.

Here Russel's actions should my Muse require;
And, would my strength but second my desire,

170

*I'd all his boundless bravery rehearse,
And draw his cannons thundering in my verse:
High on the deck should the great leader stand,
Wrath in his look, and lightning in his hand;
Like Homer's Hector, when he flung his fire
Amidst a thousand ships, and made all Greece retire.*

*But who can run the British triumphs o'er,
And count the flames dispersed on every shore?
Who can describe the scattered victory,*

And draw the reader on from sea to sea?

180

*Else who could Ormond's godlike acts refuse,
Ormond the theme of every Oxford Muse?
Fain would I here his mighty worth proclaim,
Attend him in the noble chase of fame,
Through all the noise and hurry of the fight,
Observe each blow, and keep him still in sight.
Oh, did our British peers thus court renown,
And grace the coats their great forefathers*



Page 24

won,

*Our arms would then triumphantly advance,
Nor Henry be the last that conquered France!*

190

What might not England hope, if such abroad
Purchased their country's honour with their blood:
When such, detained at home, support our state
In William's stead, and bear a kingdom's weight,
The schemes of Gallic policy o'erthrow,
And blast the counsels of the common foe;
Direct our armies, and distribute right,
And render our Maria's loss more light.

But stop, my Muse, the ungrateful sound forbear,
Maria's name still wounds each British ear:

200

*Each British heart Maria still does wound,
And tears burst out unbidden at the sound;
Maria still our rising mirth destroys,
Darkens our triumphs, and forbids our joys.*

*But see, at length, the British ships appear!
Our Nassau comes! and, as his fleet draws near,
The rising masts advance, the sails grow white,
And all his pompous navy floats in sight.
Come, mighty prince, desired of Britain, come!
May heaven's propitious gales attend thee home!*

210

Come, and let longing crowds behold that look
Which such confusion and amazement strook
Through Gallic hosts: but, oh! let us descry
Mirth in thy brow, and pleasure in thy eye;
Let nothing dreadful in thy face be found;
But for awhile forget the trumpet's sound;
Well-pleased, thy people's loyalty approve,
Accept their duty, and enjoy their love.

For as, when lately moved with fierce delight,
You plunged amidst the tumult of the fight,

220

*Whole heaps of dead encompassed you around,
And steeds o'erturned lay foaming on the ground:
So crowned with laurels now, where'er you go,
Around you blooming joys and peaceful blessings flow.*

A TRANSLATION OF ALL

VIRGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC,
EXCEPT THE STORY OF ARISTAEUS.

Ethereal sweets shall next my Muse engage,
And this, Maecenas, claims your patronage.
Of little creatures' wondrous acts I treat,
The ranks and mighty leaders of their state,
Their laws, employments, and their wars relate.
A trifling theme provokes my humble lays.
Trifling the theme, not so the poet's praise,
If great Apollo and the tuneful Nine
First, for your bees a proper station find,

10

*That's fenced about, and sheltered from the wind;
For winds divert them in their flight, and drive
The swarms, when loaden homeward, from their hive.
Nor sheep, nor goats, must pasture near their stores,
To trample underfoot the springing flowers;
Nor frisking heifers bound about the place,
To spurn the dew-drops off, and bruise the rising grass;
Nor must the lizard's painted brood appear,
Nor wood-pecks, nor the swallow, harbour near.
They waste the swarms, and, as they fly*



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along,

20

Convey the tender morsels to their young.

Let purling streams, and fountains edged with moss,
And shallow rills run trickling through the grass;
Let branching olives o'er the fountain grow;
Or palms shoot up, and shade the streams below;
That when the youth, led by their princes, shun
The crowded hive and sport it in the sun,
Refreshing springs may tempt them from the heat,
And shady coverts yield a cool retreat.

Whether the neighbouring water stands or runs,

30

*Lay twigs across and bridge it o'er with stones
That if rough storms, or sudden blasts of wind,
Should dip or scatter those that lag behind,
Here they may settle on the friendly stone,
And dry their reeking pinions at the sun.*

*Plant all the flowery banks with lavender,
With store of savory scent the fragrant air;
Let running betony the field o'erspread,
And fountains soak the violet's dewy bed.*

Though barks or plaited willows make your hive,

40

A narrow inlet to their cells contrive;
For colds congeal and freeze the liquors up,
And, melted down with heat, the waxen buildings drop.
The bees, of both extremes alike afraid,
Their wax around the whistling crannies spread,
And suck out clammy dews from herbs and flowers,
To smear the chinks, and plaster up the pores;
For this they hoard up glue, whose clinging drops,
Like pitch or bird-lime, hang in stringy ropes.
They oft, 'tis said, in dark retirements dwell,

50

*And work in subterraneous caves their cell;
At other times the industrious insects live
In hollow rocks, or make a tree their hive.*

*Point all their chinky lodgings round with mud,
And leaves must thinly on your work be strow'd;
But let no baleful yew-tree flourish near,
Nor rotten marshes send out steams of mire;
Nor burning crabs grow red, and crackle in the fire:*



*Nor neighbouring caves return the dying sound,
Nor echoing rocks the doubled voice rebound.*

60

Things thus prepared——

When the under-world is seized with cold and night,
And summer here descends in streams of light,
The bees through woods and forests take their flight.
They rifle every flower, and lightly skim
The crystal brook, and sip the running stream;
And thus they feed their young with strange delight,
And knead the yielding wax, and work the slimy sweet.
But when on high you see the bees repair,
Borne on the winds through distant tracts of air,

70

*And view the winged cloud all blackening from afar;
While shady coverts and fresh streams they choose,
Milfoil and common honeysuckles bruise,
And sprinkle on their hives the fragrant juice.
On brazen vessels beat a tinkling sound,
And shake the cymbals of the goddess round;*

Page 26

*Then all will hastily retreat, and fill
The warm resounding hollow of their cell.
If once two rival kings their right debate,
And factions and cabals embroil the state,*

80

*The people's actions will their thoughts declare;
All their hearts tremble, and beat thick with war;
Hoarse, broken sounds, like trumpets' harsh alarms,
Run through the hive, and call them to their arms;
All in a hurry spread their shivering wings,
And fit their claws, and point their angry stings:
In crowds before the king's pavilion meet,
And boldly challenge out the foe to fight:
At last, when all the heavens are warm and fair,
They rush together out, and join; the air*

90

*Swarms thick, and echoes with the humming war.
All in a firm round cluster mix, and strow
With heaps of little corps the earth below,
As thick as hailstones from the floor rebound,
Or shaken acorns rattle on the ground.
No sense of danger can their kings control,
Their little bodies lodge a mighty soul:
Each obstinate in arms pursues his blow,
Till shameful flight secures the routed foe.
This hot dispute and all this mighty fray*

100

*A little dust flung upward will allay.
But when both kings are settled in their hive,
Mark him who looks the worst, and, lest he live
Idle at home in ease and luxury,
The lazy monarch must be doomed to die;
So let the royal insect rule alone,
And reign without a rival in his throne.*

*The kings are different; one of better note,
All speck'd with gold, and many a shining spot,
Looks gay, and glistens in a gilded coat;*

110

*But love of ease, and sloth, in one prevails,
That scarce his hanging paunch behind him trails:
The people's looks are different as their kings',*



*Some sparkle bright, and glitter in their wings;
Others look loathsome and diseased with sloth,
Like a faint traveller, whose dusty mouth
Grows dry with heat, and spits a mawkish froth.
The first are best——*

*From their o'erflowing combs you'll often press
Pure luscious sweets, that mingling in the glass*

120

*Correct the harshness of the racy juice,
And a rich flavour through the wine diffuse.
But when they sport abroad, and rove from home,
And leave the cooling hive, and quit the unfinished comb,
Their airy ramblings are with ease confined,
Clip their king's wings, and if they stay behind
No bold usurper dares invade their right,
Nor sound a march, nor give the sign for flight.
Let flowery banks entice them to their cells,
And gardens all perfumed with native smells;*

130

*Where carved Priapus has his fixed abode,
The robber's terror, and the scarecrow god.
Wild thyme and pine-trees from their barren hill
Transplant, and nurse them in the neighbouring*



Page 27

soil,

*Set fruit-trees round, nor e'er indulge thy sloth,
But water them, and urge their shady growth.*

*And here, perhaps, were not I giving o'er,
And striking sail, and making to the shore,
I'd show what art the gardener's toils require,
Why rosy paestum blushes twice a year;*

140

*What streams the verdant succory supply,
And how the thirsty plant drinks rivers dry;
With what a cheerful green does parsley grace,
And writhes the belying cucumber along the twisted grass;
Nor would I pass the soft acanthus o'er,
Ivy nor myrtle-trees that love the shore;
Nor daffodils, that late from earth's slow womb
Unrumple their swoln buds, and show their yellow bloom.*

*For once I saw in the Tarentine vale,
Where slow Galesus drenched the washy soil,*

150

*An old Corician yeoman, who had got
A few neglected acres to his lot,
Where neither corn nor pasture graced the field,
Nor would the vine her purple harvest yield;
But savoury herbs among the thorns were found,
Vervain and poppy-flowers his garden crown'd,
And drooping lilies whitened all the ground.
Blest with these riches he could empires slight,
And when he rested from his toils at night,
The earth unpurchased dainties would afford,*

160

*And his own garden furnished out his board:
The spring did first his opening roses blow,
First ripening autumn bent his fruitful bough.
When piercing colds had burst the brittle stone,
And freezing rivers stiffened as they run,
He then would prune the tenderest of his trees,
Chide the late spring, and lingering western breeze:
His bees first swarmed, and made his vessels foam
With the rich squeezing of the juicy comb.
Here lindens and the sappy pine increased;*

170

*Here, when gay flowers his smiling orchard dressed,
As many blossoms as the spring could show,*



*So many dangling apples mellowed on the bough.
In rows his elms and knotty pear-trees bloom,
And thorns ennobled now to bear a plum,
And spreading plane-trees, where, supinely laid,
He now enjoys the cool, and quaffs beneath the shade.
But these for want of room I must omit,
And leave for future poets to recite.*

Now I'll proceed their natures to declare,

180

Which Jove himself did on the bees confer
Because, invited by the timbrel's sound,
Lodged in a cave, the almighty babe they found,
And the young god nursed kindly under-ground.

Of all the winged inhabitants of air,
These only make their young the public care;
In well-disposed societies they live,
And laws and statutes regulate their hive;
Nor stray like others unconfined abroad,
But know set stations, and a fixed abode:

190

*Each provident of cold in summer flies
Through fields and woods, to seek for*

Page 28

new supplies,

*And in the common stock unloads his thighs.
Some watch the food, some in the meadows ply,
Taste every bud, and suck each blossom dry;
Whilst others, labouring in their cells at home,
Temper Narcissus' clammy tears with gum,
For the first groundwork of the golden comb;
On this they found their waxen works, and raise
The yellow fabric on its gluey base.*

200

*Some educate the young, or hatch the seed
With vital warmth, and future nations breed;
Whilst others thicken all the slimy dew,
And into purest honey work the juice;
Then fill the hollows of the comb, and swell
With luscious nectar every flowing cell.
By turns they watch, by turns with curious eyes
Survey the heavens, and search the clouded skies,
To find out breeding storms, and tell what tempests rise.
By turns they ease the laden swarms, or drive*

210

*The drone, a lazy insect, from their hive.
The work is warmly plied through all the cells,
And strong with thyme the new-made honey smells.
So in their caves the brawny Cyclops sweat,
When with huge strokes the stubborn wedge they beat,
And all the unshapen thunderbolt complete;
Alternately their hammers rise and fall;
Whilst gripping tongs turn round the glowing ball.
With puffing bellows some the flames increase,
And some in waters dip the hissing mass;*

220

*Their beaten anvils dreadfully resound,
And AEtna shakes all o'er, and thunders under-ground.
Thus, if great things we may with small compare,
The busy swarms their different labours share.
Desire of profit urges all degrees;
The aged insects, by experience wise,
Attend the comb, and fashion every part,
And shape the waxen fret-work out with art:
The young at night, returning from their toils,
Bring home their thighs clogged with the meadows' spoils.*

230



*On lavender and saffron buds they feed,
On bending osiers and the balmy reed,
From purple violets and the teile they bring
Their gathered sweets, and rifle all the spring.*

*All work together, all together rest,
The morning still renews their labours past;
Then all rush out, their different tasks pursue,
Sit on the bloom, and suck the ripening dew;
Again, when evening warns them to their home,
With weary wings and heavy thighs they come,*

240

*And crowd about the chink, and mix a drowsy hum.
Into their cells at length they gently creep,
There all the night their peaceful station keep,
Wrapt up in silence, and dissolved in sleep.
None range abroad when winds and storms are nigh,
Nor trust their bodies to a faithless sky,
But make small journeys with a careful wing,
And fly to water at a neighbouring spring;
And lest their airy bodies should be cast*

Page 29

In restless whirls, the sport of every blast,
250

*They carry stones to poise them in their flight,
As ballast keeps the unsteady vessel right.*

*But, of all customs that the bees can boast,
'Tis this may challenge admiration most;
That none will Hymen's softer joys approve,
Nor waste their spirits in luxurious love,
But all a long virginity maintain,
And bring forth young without a mother's pain:
From herbs and flowers they pick each tender bee,
And cull from plants a buzzing progeny;*

260

From these they choose out subjects, and create
A little monarch of the rising state;
Then build wax kingdoms for the infant prince,
And form a palace for his residence.

But often in their journeys, as they fly,
On flints they tear their silken wings, or lie
Groveling beneath their flowery load, and die.
Thus love of honey can an insect fire,
And in a fly such generous thoughts inspire.
Yet by repeopling their decaying state,

270

*Though seven short springs conclude their vital date,
Their ancient stocks eternally remain,
And in an endless race their children's children reign.*

*No prostrate vassal of the East can more
With slavish fear his haughty prince adore;
His life unites them all; but, when he dies,
All in loud tumults and distractions rise;
They waste their honey and their combs deface,
And wild confusion reigns in every place.
Him all admire, all the great guardian own,*

280

And crowd about his courts, and buzz about his throne.
Oft on their backs their weary prince they bear,
Oft in his cause, embattled in the air,
Pursue a glorious death, in wounds and war.

Some, from such instances as these, have taught,



'The bees' extract is heavenly; for they thought
The universe alive; and that a soul,
Diffused throughout the matter of the whole,
To all the vast unbounded frame was given,
And ran through earth, and air, and sea, and all the deep of heaven;
290

*That this first kindled life in man and beast,
Life, that again flows into this at last.
That no compounded animal could die,
But when dissolved, the spirit mounted high,
Dwelt in a star, and settled in the sky.'*

*Whene'er their balmy sweets you mean to seize,
And take the liquid labours of the bees,
Spurt draughts of water from your mouth, and drive
A loathsome cloud of smoke amidst their hive,
Twice in the year their flowery toils begin,*

300
And twice they fetch their dewy harvest in;
Once, when the lovely Pleiades arise,
And add fresh lustre to the summer skies;
And once, when hastening from the watery sign,
They quit their station, and forbear to shine.

The bees are prone to rage, and often found
To perish for revenge, and die upon the

Page 30

wound

Their venom'd sting produces aching pains,
And swells the flesh, and shoots among the veins.
When first a cold hard winter's storms arrive,

310

*And threaten death or famine to their hive,
If now their sinking state and low affairs
Can move your pity, and provoke your cares,
Fresh burning thyme before their cells convey,
And cut their dry and husky wax away;
For often lizards seize the luscious spoils,
Or drones, that riot on another's toils:
Oft broods of moths infest the hungry swarms,
And oft the furious wasp their hive alarms
With louder hums, and with unequal arms;*

320

Or else the spider at their entrance sets.
Her snares, and spins her bowels into nets.
When sickness reigns, for they as well as we
Feel all the effects of frail mortality,
By certain marks the new disease is seen,
Their colour changes, and their looks are thin;
Their funeral rites are formed, and every bee
With grief attends the sad solemnity;
The few diseased survivors hang before
Their sickly cells, and droop about the door,

330

*Or slowly in their hives their limbs unfold,
Shrunk up with hunger, and benumbed with cold;
In drawling hums the feeble insects grieve,
And doleful buzzes echo through the hive,
Like winds that softly murmur through the trees,
Like flames pent up, or like retiring seas.
Now lay fresh honey near their empty rooms,
In troughs of hollow reeds, whilst frying gums
Cast round a fragrant mist of spicy fumes.
Thus kindly tempt the famished swarm to eat,*

340

And gently reconcile them to their meat.
Mix juice of galls, and wine, that grow in time
Condensed by fire, and thicken to a slime;
To these, dried roses, thyme, and centaury join,



And raisins, ripened on the Psythian vine.

Besides, there grows a flower in marshy ground,
Its name amellus, easy to be found;
A mighty spring works in its root, and cleaves
The sprouting stalk, and shows itself in leaves:
The flower itself is of a golden hue,

350

*The leaves inclining to a darker blue;
The leaves shoot thick about the flower, and grow
Into a bush, and shade the turf below:
The plant in holy garlands often twines
The altars' posts, and beautifies the shrines;
Its taste is sharp, in vales new-shorn it grows,
Where Mella's stream in watery mazes flows.
Take plenty of its roots, and boil them well
In wine, and heap them up before the cell.*

But if the whole stock fail, and none survive;

360

To raise new people, and recruit the hive,
I'll here the great experiment declare,
That spread the Arcadian shepherd's name so far.
How bees from blood of slaughtered bulls have fled,
And swarms amidst the red corruption bred.

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For where the Egyptians yearly see their bounds
Refreshed with floods, and sail about their grounds,
Where Persia borders, and the rolling Nile
Drives swiftly down the swarthy Indian's soil,
Till into seven it multiplies its stream,

370

*And fattens Egypt with a fruitful slime:
In this last practice all their hope remains,
And long experience justifies their pains.*

*First, then, a close contracted space of ground,
With straitened walls and low-built roof, they found;
A narrow shelving light is next assign'd
To all the quarters, one to every wind;
Through these the glancing rays obliquely pierce:
Hither they lead a bull that's young and fierce,
When two years' growth of horn he proudly shows,*

380

*And shakes the comely terrors of his brows:
His nose and mouth, the avenues of breath,
They muzzle up, and beat his limbs to death;
With violence to life and stifling pain
He flings and spurns, and tries to snort in vain,
Loud heavy blows fall thick on every side,
Till his bruised bowels burst within the hide;
When dead, they leave him rotting on the ground,
With branches, thyme, and cassia, strowed around.
All this is done, when first the western breeze*

390

*Becalms the year, and smooths the troubled seas;
Before the chattering swallow builds her nest,
Or fields in spring's embroidery are dress'd.
Meanwhile the tainted juice ferments within,
And quickens as its works: and now are seen
A wondrous swarm, that o'er the carcase crawls,
Of shapeless, rude, unfinished animals.
No legs at first the insect's weight sustain,
At length it moves its new-made limbs with pain;
Now strikes the air with quivering wings, and tries*

400

To lift its body up, and learns to rise;



Now bending thighs and gilded wings it wears
Full grown, and all the bee at length appears;
From every side the fruitful carcase pours
Its swarming brood, as thick as summer showers,
Or flights of arrows from the Parthian bows,
When twanging strings first shoot them on the foes.

Thus have I sung the nature of the bee;
While Caesar, towering to divinity,
The frightened Indians with his thunder awed,

410

*And claimed their homage, and commenced a god;
I flourished all the while in arts of peace,
Retired and sheltered in inglorious ease;
I who before the songs of shepherds made,
When gay and young my rural lays I play'd,
And set my Tityrus beneath his shade.*

A SONG FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY,

AT OXFORD.

I.

Cecilia, whose exalted hymns
With joy and wonder fill the blest,
In choirs of warbling seraphims,
Known and distinguished from the rest,
Attend, harmonious saint, and see
Thy vocal sons of harmony;
Attend, harmonious saint, and hear our prayers;
Enliven all our earthly airs,
And, as thou sing'st thy God, teach us to sing of thee;
Tune every string and every tongue,
Be thou the Muse and subject of our song.



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II.

Let all Cecilia's praise proclaim,
Employ the echo in her name,
Hark how the flutes and trumpets raise,
At bright Cecilia's name, their lays;
The organ labours in her praise.
Cecilia's name does all our numbers grace,
From every voice the tuneful accents fly,
In soaring trebles now it rises high,
And now it sinks, and dwells upon the base.
Cecilia's name through all the notes we sing,
The work of every skilful tongue,
The sound of every trembling string,
The sound and triumph of our song.

III.

For ever consecrate the day,
To music and Cecilia;
Music, the greatest good that mortals know,
And all of heaven we have below.
Music can noble hints impart,
Engender fury, kindle love;
With unsuspected eloquence can move,
And manage all the man with secret art.
When Orpheus strikes the trembling lyre,
The streams stand still, the stones admire;
The listening savages advance,
The wolf and lamb around him trip,
The bears in awkward measures leap,
And tigers mingle in the dance.
The moving woods attended, as he play'd,
And Rhodope was left without a shade.

IV.

Music religious heats inspires,
It wakes the soul, and lifts it high,
And wings it with sublime desires,
And fits it to bespeak the Deity.
The Almighty listens to a tuneful tongue,
And seems well-pleased and courted with a song.
Soft moving sounds and heavenly airs



Give force to every word, and recommend our prayers.
When time itself shall be no more,
And all things in confusion hurled,
Music shall then exert its power,
And sound survive the ruins of the world:
Then saints and angels shall agree
In one eternal jubilee:
All heaven shall echo with their hymns divine,
And God himself with pleasure see
The whole creation in a chorus join.

CHORUS.

Consecrate the place and day,
To music and Cecilia.
Let no rough winds approach, nor dare
Invade the hallowed bounds,
Nor rudely shake the tuneful air,
Nor spoil the fleeting sounds.
Nor mournful sigh nor groan be heard,
But gladness dwell on every tongue;
Whilst all, with voice and strings prepared,
Keep up the loud harmonious song,
And imitate the blest above,
In joy, and harmony, and love.

AN ODE FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY.

SET TO MUSIC BY MR DANIEL PURCELL. PERFORMED AT OXFORD 1699.

Prepare the hallowed strain, my Muse,
Thy softest sounds and sweetest numbers choose;
The bright Cecilia's praise rehearse,
In warbling words, and gliding verse,
That smoothly run into a song,
And gently die away, and melt upon the tongue.
First let the sprightly violin
The joyful melody begin,

And none of all her strings be mute;

While the sharp sound and shriller lay

10

*In sweet harmonious notes decay,
Softened and mellowed by the flute.
'The flute that sweetly can complain,
Dissolve the frozen nymph's disdain;*

*Panting sympathy impart,
Till she partake her lover's smart.'*[4]



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CHORUS.

Next, let the solemn organ join
Religious airs, and strains divine,
Such as may lift us to the skies,
And set all Heaven before our eyes:

20

*'Such as may lift us to the skies;
So far at least till they
Descend with kind surprise,
And meet our pious harmony half-way.'*

Let then the trumpet's piercing sound
Our ravished ears with pleasure wound.

The soul o'erpowering with delight,
As, with a quick uncommon ray,
A streak of lightning clears the day,
And flashes on the sight.

30

*Let Echo too perform her part,
Prolonging every note with art,
And in a low expiring strain
Play all the concert o'er again.*

Such were the tuneful notes that hung
On bright Cecilia's charming tongue:
Notes that sacred heats inspired,
And with religious ardour fired:
The love-sick youth, that long suppress'd
His smothered passion in his breast,

40

*No sooner heard the warbling dame,
But, by the secret influence turn'd,
He felt a new diviner flame,
And with devotion burn'd.*

With ravished soul, and looks amazed,
Upon her beauteous face he gazed;
Nor made his amorous complaint:
In vain her eyes his heart had charm'd,
Her heavenly voice her eyes disarm'd,
And changed the lover to a saint.

50



GRAND CHORUS.

And now the choir complete rejoices,
With trembling strings and melting voices.
The tuneful ferment rises high,
And works with mingled melody:
Quick divisions run their rounds,
A thousand trills and quivering sounds
In airy circles o'er us fly,
Till, wafted by a gentle breeze,
They faint and languish by degrees,
And at a distance die.
60

AN ACCOUNT OF THE GREATEST ENGLISH POETS

TO MR HENRY SACHEVERELL. APRIL 3, 1694.

Since, dearest Harry, you will needs request
A short account of all the Muse-possess'd,
That, down from Chaucer's days to Dryden's times,
Have spent their noble rage in British rhymes;
Without more preface, writ in formal length,
To speak the undertaker's want of strength,
I'll try to make their several beauties known,
And show their verses' worth, though not my own.

Long had our dull forefathers slept supine,
Nor felt the raptures of the tuneful Nine;
10

*Till Chaucer first, the merry bard, arose,
And many a story told in rhyme and prose.
But age has rusted what the poet writ,
Worn out his language, and obscured his wit;
In vain he jests in his unpolished strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.
Old Spenser next, warmed with poetic rage,
In ancient tales amused a barbarous age;*



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*An age that yet uncultivate and rude,
Where'er the poet's fancy led, pursued*

20

Through pathless fields, and unfrequented floods,
To dens of dragons and enchanted woods.
But now the mystic tale, that pleased of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more;
The long-spun allegories fulsome grow,
While the dull moral lies too plain below.
We view well-pleased at distance all the sights
Of arms and palfreys, battles, fields, and fights,
And damsels in distress, and courteous knights;
But when we look too near, the shades decay,

30

*And all the pleasing landscape fades away.
Great Cowley then (a mighty genius) wrote,
O'errun with wit, and lavish of his thought:
His turns too closely on the reader press;
He more had pleased us, had he pleased us less.
One glittering thought no sooner strikes our eyes
With silent wonder, but new wonders rise.
As in the milky-way a shining white
O'erflows the heavens with one continued light;
That not a single star can show his rays,*

40

Whilst jointly all promote the common blaze.
Pardon, great poet, that I dare to name
The unnumbered beauties of thy verse with blame;
Thy fault is only wit in its excess,
But wit like thine in any shape will please.
What Muse but thine can equal hints inspire,
And fit the deep-mouthed Pindar to thy lyre;
Pindar, whom others, in a laboured strain
And forced expression, imitate in vain?
Well-pleased in thee he soars with new delight,

50

*And plays in more unbounded verse, and takes a nobler flight.
Blest man! whose spotless life and charming lays
Employed the tuneful prelate in thy praise:
Blest man! who now shalt be for ever known
In Sprat's successful labours and thy own.*



*But Milton next, with high and haughty stalks,
Unfettered in majestic numbers walks;
No vulgar hero can his Muse engage;
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallowed rage.
See! see! he upward springs, and towering high,*
60

*Spurns the dull province of mortality,
Shakes heaven's eternal throne with dire alarms,
And sets the Almighty thunderer in arms.
Whate'er his pen describes I more than see,
Whilst every verse arrayed in majesty,
Bold, and sublime, my whole attention draws,
And seems above the critic's nicer laws.
How are you struck with terror and delight,
When angel with archangel copes in fight!
When great Messiah's outspread banner shines,*
70

*How does the chariot rattle in his lines!
What sounds of brazen wheels, what thunder, scare,
And stun the reader with the din of war!
With fear my spirits and my blood retire,
To see the seraphs sunk in clouds of fire;
But when, with eager steps, from hence I rise,
And view the first gay scenes of Paradise,*

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*What tongue, what words of rapture, can express
A vision so profuse of pleasantness!
Oh, had the poet ne'er profaned his pen,*

80

To varnish o'er the guilt of faithless men,
His other works might have deserved applause;
But now the language can't support the cause;
While the clean current, though serene and bright,
Betrays a bottom odious to the sight.

But now, my Muse, a softer strain rehearse,
Turn every line with art, and smooth thy verse;
The courtly Waller next commands thy lays:
Muse, tune thy verse with art to Waller's praise.
While tender airs and lovely dames inspire

90

*Soft melting thoughts, and propagate desire;
So long shall Waller's strains our passion move,
And Sacharissa's beauties kindle love.
Thy verse, harmonious bard, and flattering song,
Can make the vanquished great, the coward strong.
Thy verse can show even Cromwell's innocence,
And compliment the storms that bore him hence.
Oh, had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
But seen great Nassau on the British throne,
How had his triumphs glittered in thy page,*

100

And warmed thee to a more exalted rage!
What scenes of death and horror had we view'd,
And how had Boyne's wide current reeked in blood!
Or, if Maria's charms thou wouldst rehearse,
In smoother numbers and a softer verse,
Thy pen had well described her graceful air,
And Gloriana would have seemed more fair.

Nor must Roscommon pass neglected by,
That makes even rules a noble poetry:
Rules, whose deep sense and heavenly numbers show

110

*The best of critics, and of poets too.
Nor, Denham, must we e'er forget thy strains,
While Cooper's Hill commands the neighbouring plains.
But see where artful Dryden next appears,*



*Grown old in rhyme, but charming even in years.
Great Dryden next, whose tuneful Muse affords
The sweetest numbers, and the fittest words.
Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs
She forms her voice, she moves our smiles or tears.
If satire or heroic strains she writes,*

120

*Her hero pleases and her satire bites.
From her no harsh unartful numbers fall,
She wears all dresses, and she charms in all.
How might we fear our English poetry,
That long has flourished, should decay with thee;
Did not the Muses' other hope appear,
Harmonious Congreve, and forbid our fear:
Congreve! whose fancy's unexhausted store
Has given already much, and promised more.
Congreve shall still preserve thy fame alive,*

130

*And Dryden's Muse shall in his friend survive.
I'm tired with rhyming, and would fain give o'er,
But justice still demands one labour more:
The noble Montague remains unnamed,
For wit, for humour, and for judgment*



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famed;

*To Dorset he directs his artful Muse,
In numbers such as Dorset's self might use.
How negligently graceful he unreins
His verse, and writes in loose familiar strains!
How Nassau's godlike acts adorn his lines,*

140

*And all the hero in full glory shines!
We see his army set in just array,
And Boyne's dyed waves run purple to the sea.
Nor Simois choked with men, and arms, and blood;
Nor rapid Xanthus' celebrated flood,
Shall longer be the poet's highest themes,
Though gods and heroes fought promiscuous in their streams.
But now, to Nassau's secret councils raised,
He aids the hero, whom before he praised.*

I've done at length; and now, dear friend, receive

150

*The last poor present that my Muse can give.
I leave the arts of poetry and verse
To them that practise them with more success.
Of greater truths I'll now prepare to tell,
And so at once, dear friend and Muse, farewell.*

A LETTER FROM ITALY,

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES LORD HALIFAX, IN THE YEAR 1701.

*Salve magna parens frugum Saturnia tellus,
Magna virum! tibi res antiquae laudis et artis
Aggredior, sanctos ausus recludere fontes.*
VIRG., Geor. ii.

*While you, my lord, the rural shades admire,
And from Britannia's public posts retire,
Nor longer, her ungrateful sons to please,
For their advantage sacrifice your ease;
Me into foreign realms my fate conveys,
Through nations fruitful of immortal lays,
Where the soft season and inviting clime
Conspire to trouble your repose with rhyme.*

*For wheresoe'er I turn my ravished eyes,
Gay gilded scenes and shining prospects rise,*



10

*Poetic fields encompass me around
And still I seem to tread on classic ground;
For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung,
That not a mountain rears its head unsung,
Renowned in verse each shady thicket grows,
And every stream in heavenly numbers flows.*

*How am I pleased to search the hills and woods
For rising springs and celebrated floods!
To view the Nar, tumultuous in his course,
And trace the smooth Clitumnus to his source,*

20

*To see the Mincio draw his watery store
Through the long windings of a fruitful shore,
And hoary Albula's infected tide
O'er the warm bed of smoking sulphur glide.*

*Fired with a thousand raptures I survey
Eridanus[5] through flowery meadows stray,
The king of floods! that, rolling o'er the plains,
The towering Alps of half their moisture drains,
And proudly swoln with a whole winter's snows,
Distributes wealth and plenty where he flows.*

30

Sometimes, misguided by the tuneful throng

Page 37

*I look for streams immortalised in song,
That lost in silence and oblivion lie,
(Dumb are their fountains and their channels dry,)
Yet run for ever by the Muse's skill,
And in the smooth description murmur still.*

*Sometimes to gentle Tiber I retire,
And the famed river's empty shores admire,
That, destitute of strength, derives its course
From thrifty urns and an unfruitful source,*

40

*Yet sung so often in poetic lays,
With scorn the Danube and the Nile surveys;
So high the deathless Muse exalts her theme!
Such was the Boyne, a poor inglorious stream,
That in Hibernian vales obscurely stray'd,
And unobserved in wild meanders play'd;
Till by your lines and Nassau's sword renowned,
Its rising billows through the world resound,
Where'er the hero's godlike acts can pierce,
Or where the fame of an immortal verse.*

50

*Oh could the Muse my ravished breast inspire
With warmth like yours, and raise an equal fire,
Unnumbered beauties in my verse should shine,
And Virgil's Italy should yield to mine!*

*See how the golden groves around me smile,
That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle,
Or when transplanted and preserved with care,
Curse the cold clime, and starve in northern air.
Here kindly warmth their mounting juice ferments
To nobler tastes, and more exalted scents:*

60

*Even the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,
And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume.
Bear me, some god, to Baia's gentle seats,
Or cover me in Umbria's green retreats;
Where western gales eternally reside,
And all the seasons lavish all their pride:
Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.*

Immortal glories in my mind revive,



And in my soul a thousand passions strive,
70

*When Rome's exalted beauties I descry
Magnificent in piles of ruin lie.
An amphitheatre's amazing height
Here fills my eye with terror and delight,
That on its public shows unpeopled Rome,
And held uncrowded nations in its womb;
Here pillars rough with sculpture pierce the skies;
And here the proud triumphal arches rise,
Where the old Romans' deathless acts displayed,
Their base, degenerate progeny upbraid:*

80

Whole rivers here forsake the fields below,
And wondering at their height through airy channels flow.

Still to new scenes my wandering Muse retires,
And the dumb show of breathing rocks admires;
Where the smooth chisel all its force has shown,
And softened into flesh the rugged stone.
In solemn silence, a majestic band,
Heroes, and gods, and Roman consuls stand;
Stern tyrants, whom their cruelties renown,
And emperors in Parian marble frown;

90

While the bright dames, to whom they humble

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sued,

Still show the charms that their proud hearts subdued.

*Fain would I Raphael's godlike art rehearse,
And show the immortal labours in my verse,
Where from the mingled strength of shade and light
A new creation rises to my sight,
Such heavenly figures from his pencil flow,
So warm with life his blended colours glow.
From theme to theme with secret pleasure toss'd,
Amidst the soft variety I'm lost:*

100

Here pleasing airs my ravish'd soul confound
With circling notes and labyrinths of sound;
Here domes and temples rise in distant views,
And opening palaces invite my Muse.

How has kind Heaven adorned the happy land,
And scattered blessings with a wasteful hand!
But what avail her unexhausted stores,
Her blooming mountains and her sunny shores,
With all the gifts that heaven and earth impart,
The smiles of nature, and the charms of art,

110

*While proud oppression in her valleys reigns,
And tyranny usurps her happy plains?
The poor inhabitant beholds in vain
The reddening orange and the swelling grain:
Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,
And in the myrtle's fragrant shade repines:
Starves, in the midst of nature's bounty curs'd,
And in the loaden vineyard dies for thirst.*

O Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,

120

Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight!
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train;
Eased 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!



130

*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 heaven 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.*

140

Others with towering piles may please the sight,
And in their proud aspiring domes delight;
A nicer touch to the stretched canvas 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' prayer.
The Dane and Swede, roused up by fierce



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alarms,

Bless the wise conduct of her pious arms:

150

*Soon as her fleets appear, their terrors cease,
And all the northern world lies hushed in peace.*

*The ambitious Gaul beholds with secret dread
Her thunder aimed at his aspiring head,
And fain her godlike sons would disunite
By foreign gold, or by domestic spite;
But strives in vain to conquer or divide,
Whom Nassau's arms defend and counsels guide.*

*Fired with the name, which I so oft have found
The distant climes and different tongues resound,*

160

I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a bolder strain.

But I've already troubled you too long,
Nor dare attempt a more adventurous song.
My humble verse demands a softer theme,
A painted meadow, or a purling stream;
Unfit for heroes, whom immortal lays,
And lines like Virgil's, or like yours, should praise.

MILTON'S STYLE IMITATED,

IN A TRANSLATION OF A STORY OUT OF THE THIRD AENEID.

Lost in the gloomy horror of the night,
We struck upon the coast where AEtna lies,
Horrid and waste, its entrails fraught with fire,
That now casts out dark fumes and pitchy clouds,
Vast showers of ashes hovering in the smoke;
Now belches molten stones and ruddy flame,
Incensed, or tears up mountains by the roots,
Or slings a broken rock aloft in air.
The bottom works with smothered fire involved
In pestilential vapours, stench, and smoke.

10

*'Tis said, that thunder-struck Enceladus
Groveling beneath the incumbent mountain's weight,
Lies stretched supine, eternal prey of flames;
And, when he heaves against the burning load,*



*Reluctant, to invert his broiling limbs,
A sudden earthquake shoots through all the isle,
And AEtna thunders dreadful under-ground,
Then pours out smoke in wreathing curls convolved,
And shades the sun's bright orb, and blots out day.
Here in the shelter of the woods we lodged,*

20

*And frightened heard strange sounds and dismal yells,
Nor saw from whence they came; for all the night
A murky storm deep lowering o'er our heads
Hung imminent, that with impervious gloom
Opposed itself to Cynthia's silver ray,
And shaded all beneath. But now the sun
With orient beams had chased the dewy night
From earth and heaven; all nature stood disclosed:
When, looking on the neighbouring woods, we saw
The ghastly visage of a man unknown,*

30

*An uncouth feature, meagre, pale, and wild;
Affliction's foul and terrible dismay
Sat in his looks, his face, impaired and worn
With marks of famine, speaking sore distress;
His locks were tangled, and his shaggy beard
Matted with filth; in all things else a Greek.
He first advanced in*

Page 40

*haste; but, when he saw
Trojans and Trojan arms, in mid career
Stopp'd short, he back recoiled as one surprised:
But soon recovering speed he ran, he flew
Precipitant, and thus with piteous cries*

40

*Our ears assailed: 'By heaven's eternal fires,
By every god that sits enthroned on high,
By this good light, relieve a wretch forlorn,
And bear me hence to any distant shore,
So I may shun this savage race accursed.
'Tis true I fought among the Greeks that late
With sword and fire o'erturned Neptunian Troy
And laid the labours of the gods in dust;
For which, if so the sad offence deserves,*

50

*Plunged in the deep, for ever let me lie
Whelmed under seas; if death must be my doom,
Let man inflict it, and I die well-pleased.'
He ended here, and now profuse to tears
In suppliant mood fell prostrate at our feet:
We bade him speak from whence and what he was,
And how by stress of fortune sunk thus low;
Anchises too, with friendly aspect mild,
Gave him his hand, sure pledge of amity;
When, thus encouraged, he began his tale.*

60

*'I'm one,' says he, 'of poor descent; my name
Is Achaemenides, my country Greece;
Ulysses' sad compeer, who, whilst he fled
The raging Cyclops, left me here behind,
Disconsolate, forlorn; within the cave
He left me, giant Polypheme's dark cave;
A dungeon wide and horrible, the walls
On all sides furred with mouldy damp, and hung
With clots of ropy gore, and human limbs,
His dire repast: himself of mighty size,*

70

*Hoarse in his voice, and in his visage grim,
Intractable, that riots on the flesh
Of mortal men, and swills the vital blood.
Him did I see snatch up with horrid grasp
Two sprawling Greeks, in either hand a man;*



*I saw him when with huge, tempestuous sway
He dashed and broke them on the grundsil edge;
The pavement swam in blood, the walls around
Were spattered o'er with brains. He lapp'd the blood,
And chewed the tender flesh still warm with life,*
80

That swelled and heaved itself amidst his teeth
As sensible of pain. Not less meanwhile
Our chief, incensed and studious of revenge,
Plots his destruction, which he thus effects.
The giant, gorged with flesh, and wine, and blood,
Lay stretched at length and snoring in his den,
Belching raw gobbets from his maw, o'ercharged
With purple wine and cruddled gore confused.
We gathered round, and to his single eye,
The single eye that in his forehead glared
90

*Like a full moon, or a broad burnished shield,
A forky staff we dexterously applied,
Which, in the spacious socket turning round,
Scooped out the big round jelly from its orb.
But let me not thus interpose delays;
Fly, mortals, fly this cursed, detested*

Page 41

race:

*A hundred of the same stupendous size,
A hundred Cyclops live among the hills,
Gigantic brotherhood, that stalk along
With horrid strides o'er the high mountains' tops,*

100

*Enormous in their gait; I oft have heard
Their voice and tread, oft seen them as they passed,
Sculking and cowering down, half dead with fear.
Thrice has the moon washed all her orb in light,
Thrice travelled o'er, in her obscure sojourn,
The realms of night inglorious, since I've lived
Amidst these woods, gleaning from thorns and shrubs
A wretched sustenance.' As thus he spoke,
We saw descending from a neighbouring hill
Blind Polypheme; by weary steps and slow*

110

*The groping giant with a trunk of pine
Explored his way; around, his woolly flocks
Attended grazing; to the well-known shore
He bent his course, and on the margin stood,
A hideous monster, terrible, deformed;
Full in the midst of his high front there gaped
The spacious hollow where his eye-ball rolled,
A ghastly orifice: he rinsed the wound,
And washed away the strings and clotted blood
That caked within; then, stalking through the deep,*

120

*He fords the ocean, while the topmost wave
Scarce reaches up his middle side; we stood
Amazed, be sure; a sudden horror chill
Ran through each nerve, and thrilled in every vein,
Till, using all the force of winds and oars,
We sped away; he heard us in our course,
And with his outstretched arms around him groped,
But finding nought within his reach, he raised
Such hideous shouts that all the ocean shook.
Even Italy, though many a league remote,*

130

*In distant echoes answered; AEtna roared,
Through all its inmost winding caverns roared.
Roused with the sound, the mighty family
Of one-eyed brothers hasten to the shore,*



*And gather round the bellowing Polypheme,
A dire assembly: we with eager haste
Work every one, and from afar behold
A host of giants covering all the shore.*

*So stands a forest tall of mountain oaks
Advanced to mighty growth: the traveller*

140

Hears from the humble valley where he rides
The hollow murmurs of the winds that blow
Amidst the boughs, and at the distance sees
The shady tops of trees unnumbered rise,
A stately prospect, waving in the clouds.

THE CAMPAIGN, A POEM.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

Rheni paeator et Istri.

Omnis in hoc uno variis discordia cessit
Ordinibus; laectatur eques, plauditque senator,
Votaque patricio certant plebeia favori.

CLAUD. DE LAUD. STILIC.

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Esse aliquam in terris gentem quae sua impensa, suo labore ac periculo bella gerat pro libertate aliorum. Nec hoc finitimis, aut propinquae vicinitatis hominibus, aut terris continenti junctis praestet. Maria trajiciat: ne quod toto orbe terrarum injustum imperium sit, et ubique jus, fas, lex, potentissima sint.

LIV. HIST. lib. 36.

While crowds of princes your deserts proclaim,
Proud in their number to enrol your name;
While emperors to you commit their cause,
And Anna's praises crown the vast applause;
Accept, great leader, what the Muse recites,
That in ambitious verse attempts your fights.
Fired and transported with a theme so new,
Ten thousand wonders opening to my view
Shine forth at once; sieges and storms appear,
And wars and conquests fill the important year,
10

*Rivers of blood I see, and hills of slain,
An Iliad rising out of one campaign.
The haughty Gaul beheld, with towering pride,
His ancient bounds enlarged on every side,
Pirene's lofty barriers were subdued,
And in the midst of his wide empire stood;
Ausonia's states, the victor to restrain,
Opposed their Alps and Apennines in vain,
Nor found themselves, with strength of rocks immured,
Behind their everlasting hills secured;
20*

The rising Danube its long race began,
And half its course through the new conquests ran;
Amazed and anxious for her sovereign's fates,
Germania trembled through a hundred states;
Great Leopold himself was seized with fear;
He gazed around, but saw no succour near;
He gazed, and half abandoned to despair
His hopes on Heaven, and confidence in prayer.
To Britain's queen the nations turn their eyes,
On her resolves the Western world relies,
30

*Confiding still, amidst its dire alarms,
In Anna's councils and in Churchill's arms.*



*Thrice happy Britain, from the kingdoms rent,
To sit the guardian of the continent!
That sees her bravest son advanced so high,
And flourishing so near her prince's eye;
Thy favourites grow not up by fortune's sport,
Or from the crimes or follies of a court;
On the firm basis of desert they rise,
From long-trying, faith, and friendship's holy ties:*

40

*Their sovereign's well-distinguished smiles they share,
Her ornaments in peace, her strength in war;
The nation thanks them with a public voice,
By showers of blessings Heaven approves their choice;
Envy itself is dumb, in wonder lost,
And factions strive who shall applaud them most.
Soon as soft vernal breezes warm the sky,
Britannia's colours in the zephyrs fly;
Her chief already has his march begun,
Crossing the provinces himself had won,*

50

*Till the Moselle, appearing from afar,
Retards the progress of the moving war.
Delightful stream, had Nature bid her fall
In distant climes, far from the perjured Gaul;*

Page 43

*But now a purchase to the sword she lies,
Her harvests for uncertain owners rise,
Each vineyard doubtful of its master grows,
And to the victor's bowl each vintage flows.
The discontented shades of slaughtered hosts,
That wandered on her banks, her heroes' ghosts,*
60

Hoped, when they saw Britannia's arms appear,
The vengeance due to their great deaths was near.
Our godlike leader, ere the stream he passed,
The mighty scheme of all his labours cast,
Forming the wondrous year within his thought;
His bosom glowed with battles yet unfought.
The long, laborious march he first surveys,
And joins the distant Danube to the Maese,
Between whose floods such pathless forests grow,
Such mountains rise, so many rivers flow:
70

*The toil looks lovely in the hero's eyes,
And danger serves but to enhance the prize.
Big with the fate of Europe, he renews
His dreadful course, and the proud foe pursues:
Infected by the burning Scorpion's heat,
The sultry gales round his chafed temples beat,
Till on the borders of the Maine he finds
Defensive shadows and refreshing winds.
Our British youth, with inborn freedom bold,
Unnumbered scenes of servitude behold,*
80

Nations of slaves, with tyranny debased,
(Their Maker's image more than half defaced,)
Hourly instructed, as they urge their toil,
To prize their queen, and love their native soil.
Still to the rising sun they take their way
Through clouds of dust, and gain upon the clay;
When now the Neckar on its friendly coast
With cooling streams revives the fainting host,
That cheerfully its labours past forgets,
The midnight watches, and the noonday heats.
90

O'er prostrate towns and palaces they pass,



*(Now covered o'er with weeds and hid in grass,)
Breathing revenge; whilst anger and disdain
Fire every breast, and boil in every vein:
Here shattered walls, like broken rocks, from far
Rise up in hideous views, the guilt of war,
Whilst here the vine o'er hills of ruin climbs,
Industrious to conceal great Bourbon's crimes,
At length the fame of England's hero drew,
Eugenio to the glorious interview.*

100

Great souls by instinct to each other turn,
Demand alliance, and in friendship burn;
A sudden friendship, while with stretched-out rays
They meet each other, mingling blaze with blaze.
Polished in courts, and hardened in the field,
Renowned for conquest, and in council skilled,
Their courage dwells not in a troubled flood
Of mounting spirits, and fermenting blood:
Lodged in the soul, with virtue overruled,
Inflamed by reason, and by reason cooled,

110

*In hours of peace content to be unknown,
And only in the field of battle shown:
To souls like these, in mutual friendship joined,
Heaven dares intrust the cause of humankind.
Britannia's graceful sons appear in arms,*

Page 44

*Her harassed troops the hero's presence warms,
Whilst the high hills and rivers all around
With thundering peals of British shouts resound:
Doubling their speed, they march with fresh delight,
Eager for glory, and require the fight.*

120

So the staunch hound the trembling deer pursues,
And smells his footsteps in the tainted dews,
The tedious track unravelling by degrees:
But when the scent comes warm in every breeze,
Fired at the near approach, he shoots away
On his full stretch, and bears upon his prey.
The march concludes, the various realms are past,
The immortal Schellenberg appears at last:
Like hills the aspiring ramparts rise on high,
Like valleys at their feet the trenches lie;

130

*Batteries on batteries guard each fatal pass,
Threatening destruction; rows of hollow brass,
Tube behind tube, the dreadful entrance keep,
Whilst in their wombs ten thousand thunders sleep:
Great Churchill owns, charmed with the glorious sight,
His march o'erpaid by such a promised fight.
The western sun now shot a feeble ray,
And faintly scattered the remains of day;
Evening approached; but, oh! what hosts of foes
Were never to behold that evening close!*

140

Thickening their ranks, and wedged in firm array,
The close-compacted Britons win their way:
In vain the cannon their thronged war defaced
With tracts of death, and laid the battle waste;
Still pressing forward to the fight, they broke
Through flames of sulphur, and a night of smoke,
Till slaughtered legions filled the trench below,
And bore their fierce avengers to the foe.
High on the works the mingling hosts engage;
The battle, kindled into tenfold rage

150

*With showers of bullets and with storms of fire,
Burns in full fury; heaps on heaps expire;*



*Nations with nations mixed confus'dly die,
And lost in one promiscuous carnage lie.
How many generous Britons meet their doom,
New to the field, and heroes in the bloom!
The illustrious youths, that left their native shore
To march where Britons never marched before,
(O fatal love of fame! O glorious heat,
Only destructive to the brave and great!)*

160

After such toils o'ercome, such dangers past,
Stretched on Bavarian ramparts breathe their last.
But hold, my Muse, may no complaints appear,
Nor blot the day with an ungrateful tear:
While Marlborough lives, Britannia's stars dispense
A friendly light, and shine in innocence.
Plunging through seas of blood his fiery steed
Where'er his friends retire, or foes succeed;
Those he supports, these drives to sudden flight,
And turns the various fortune of the fight.

170

*Forbear, great man, renowned in arms, forbear
To brave the thickest terrors of the war,
Nor hazard thus, confused in crowds of foes,
Britannia's safety, and the world's*



Page 45

repose;

*Let nations, anxious for thy life, abate
This scorn of danger and contempt of fate:
Thou liv'st not for thyself; thy queen demands
Conquest and peace from thy victorious hands;
Kingdoms and empires in thy fortune join,
And Europe's destiny depends on thine.*

180

*At length the long-disputed pass they gain,
By crowded armies fortified in vain;
The war breaks in, the fierce Bavarians yield,
And see their camp with British legions filled.
So Belgian mounds bear on their shattered sides
The sea's whole weight, increased with swelling tides;
But if the rushing wave a passage finds,
Enraged by watery moons, and warring winds,
The trembling peasant sees his country round
Covered with tempests, and in oceans drowned.*

190

*The few surviving foes dispersed in flight,
(Refuse of swords, and gleanings of a fight,)
In every rustling wind the victor hear,
And Marlborough's form in every shadow fear,
Till the dark cope of night with kind embrace
Befriends the rout, and covers their disgrace.
To Donawert, with unresisted force,
The gay, victorious army bends its course.
The growth of meadows, and the pride of fields,
Whatever spoils Bavaria's summer yields,*

200

*(The Danube's great increase,) Britannia shares,
The food of armies, and support of wars:
With magazines of death, destructive balls,
And cannons doomed to batter Landau's walls,
The victor finds each hidden cavern stored,
And turns their fury on their guilty lord.
Deluded prince! how is thy greatness crossed,
And all the gaudy dream of empire lost,
That proudly set thee on a fancied throne,
And made imaginary realms thy own!*

210

*Thy troops that now behind the Danube join,
Shall shortly seek for shelter from the Rhine,*



*Nor find it there: surrounded with alarms,
Thou hopest the assistance of the Gallic arms;
The Gallic arms in safety shall advance,
And crowd thy standards with the power of France,
While to exalt thy doom, the aspiring Gaul
Shares thy destruction, and adorns thy fall.
Unbounded courage and compassion joined,
Tempering each other in the victor's mind,
220*

*Alternately proclaim him good and great,
And make the hero and the man complete.
Long did he strive the obdurate foe to gain
By proffered grace, but long he strove in vain;
Till fired at length, he thinks it vain to spare
His rising wrath, and gives a loose to war.
In vengeance roused, the soldier fills his hand
With sword and fire, and ravages the land,
A thousand villages to ashes turns,
In crackling flames a thousand harvests burns.
230*

*To the thick woods the woolly flocks retreat,
And mixed with bellowing herds confus'dly bleat;
Their trembling lords the common shade partake,
And cries of infants sound in every brake:
The listening soldier fixed in sorrow stands,*

Page 46

*Loth to obey his leader's just commands;
The leader grieves, by generous pity swayed,
To see his just commands so well obeyed.
But now the trumpet, terrible from far,
In shriller clangors animates the war,*
240

Confederate drums in fuller consort beat,
And echoing hills the loud alarm repeat:
Gallia's proud standards, to Bavaria's joined,
Unfurl their gilded lilies in the wind;
The daring prince his blasted hopes renews,
And while the thick embattled host he views
Stretched out in deep array, and dreadful length,
His heart dilates, and glories in his strength.
The fatal day its mighty course began,
That the grieved world had long desired in vain:
250

*States that their new captivity bemoaned,
Armies of martyrs that in exile groaned,
Sighs from the depth of gloomy dungeons heard,
And prayers in bitterness of soul preferred,
Europe's loud cries, that Providence assailed,
And Anna's ardent vows, at length prevailed;
The day was come when heaven designed to show
His care and conduct of the world below.
Behold, in awful march and dread array
The long-expected squadrons shape their way!*
260

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, advantaged by his post,
Lessen his numbers, and contract his host.
Though fens and floods possessed the middle space,
That unprovoked they would have feared to pass,
270

*Nor fens nor floods can stop Britannia's bands,
When her proud foe ranged on their borders stands.*



*But, O my Muse, what numbers wilt thou find
To sing the furious troops in battle joined!
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 Marlborough's mighty soul was proved,
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
280*

*Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examined all the dreadful scenes of war;
In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
Inspired repulsed 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 passed,[6]
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
290*

*And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Hides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.
But see the haughty household-troops advance!
The dread of Europe, and the pride of France.
The war's whole art each private soldier knows,
And with a general's love of conquest glows;*



Page 47

*Proudly he marches on, and, void of fear,
Laughs at the shaking of the British spear:
Vain insolence! with native freedom brave,
The meanest Briton scorns the highest slave;*
300

Contempt and fury fire their souls by turns,
Each nation's glory in each warrior burns,
Each fights, as in his arm the important day
And all the fate of his great monarch lay:
A thousand glorious actions, that might claim
Triumphant laurels, and immortal fame,
Confused in clouds of glorious actions lie,
And troops of heroes undistinguished die.
O Dormer, how can I behold thy fate,
And not the wonders of thy youth relate!

310

*How can I see the gay, the brave, the young,
Fall in the cloud of war and lie unsung!
In joys of conquest he resigns his breath,
And, filled with England's glory, smiles in death.
The rout begins, the Gallic squadrons run,
Compelled in crowds to meet the fate they shun;
Thousands of fiery steeds with wounds transfixed
Floating in gore, with their dead masters mixed,
Midst heaps of spears and standards driven around,
Lie in the Danube's bloody whirlpools drowned,*
320

Troops of bold youths, born on the distant Soane,
Or sounding borders of the rapid Rhone,
Or where the Seine her flowery fields divides,
Or where the Loire through winding vineyards glides;
In heaps the rolling billows sweep away,
And into Scythian seas their bloated corps convey.
From Blenheim's towers the Gaul, with wild affright,
Beholds the various havoc of the fight;
His waving banners, that so oft had stood,
Planted in fields of death, and streams of blood,

330

*So wont the guarded enemy to reach,
And rise triumphant in the fatal breach,
Or pierce the broken foe's remotest lines,*



*The hardy veteran with tears resigns.
Unfortunate Tallard![7] Oh, who can name
The pangs of rage, of sorrow, and of shame,
That with mixed tumult in thy bosom swelled!
When first thou saw'st thy bravest troops repelled,
Thine only son pierced with a deadly wound,
Choked in his blood, and gasping on the ground,*
340

Thyself in bondage by the victor kept!
The chief, the father, and the captive wept.
An English Muse is touched with generous woe,
And in the unhappy man forgets the foe.
Greatly distressed! thy loud complaints forbear,
Blame not the turns of fate, and chance of war;
Give thy brave foes their due, nor blush to own
The fatal field by such great leaders won,
The field whence famed Eugenio bore away
Only the second honours of the day.

350

*With floods of gore that from the vanquished fell,
The marshes stagnate, and the rivers swell.
Mountains of slain lie heaped upon the ground,
Or 'midst the roarings of the Danube drowned;
Whole captive hosts the conqueror detains
In painful bondage and inglorious chains;
Even those who'scape the fetters and the sword,*



Page 48

*Nor seek the fortunes of a happier lord,
Their raging king dishonours, to complete
Marlborough's great work, and finish the defeat.*

360

*From Memminghen's high domes, and Augsburg's walls,
The distant battle drives the insulting Gauls;
Freed by the terror of the victor's name,
The rescued states his great protection claim;
Whilst Ulm the approach of her deliverer waits,
And longs to open her obsequious gates.
The hero's breast still swells with great designs,
In every thought the towering genius shines:
If to the foe his dreadful course he bends,
O'er the wide continent his march extends;*

370

*If sieges in his labouring thoughts are formed,
Camps are assaulted, and an army stormed;
If to the fight his active soul is bent,
The fate of Europe turns on its event.
What distant land, what region, can afford
An action worthy his victorious sword?
Where will he next the flying Gaul defeat,
To make the series of his toils complete?
Where the swoln Rhine, rushing with all its force,
Divides the hostile nations in its course,*

380

*While each contracts its bounds, or wider grows,
Enlarged or straitened as the river flows,
On Gallia's side a mighty bulwark stands,
That all the wide extended plain commands;
Twice, since the war was kindled, has it tried
The victor's rage, and twice has changed its side;
As oft whole armies, with the prize o'erjoyed,
Have the long summer on its walls employed.
Hither our mighty chief his arms directs,
Hence future triumphs from the war expects;*

390

*And though the dog-star had its course begun,
Carries his arms still nearer to the sun:
Fixed on the glorious action, he forgets
The change of seasons, and increase of heats:*



*No toils are painful that can danger show,
No climes unlovely that contain a foe.
The roving Gaul, to his own bounds restrained,
Learns to encamp within his native land,
But soon as the victorious host he spies,
From hill to hill, from stream to stream he flies:*

400

Such dire impressions in his heart remain
Of Marlborough's sword, and Hochstet's fatal plain:
In vain Britannia's mighty chief besets
Their shady coverts, and obscure retreats;
They fly the conqueror's approaching fame,
That bears the force of armies in his name,
Austria's young monarch, whose imperial sway
Sceptres and thrones are destined to obey,
Whose boasted ancestry so high extends
That in the pagan gods his lineage ends,

410

*Comes from afar, in gratitude to own
The great supporter of his father's throne;
What tides of glory to his bosom ran,
Clasped in the embraces of the godlike man!
How were his eyes with pleasing wonder fixed
To see such fire with so much sweetness mixed,
Such easy greatness, such a graceful port,
So turned and finished for the camp or court!*



Page 49

*Achilles thus was formed with every grace,
And Nireus shone but in the second place;
420*

Thus the great father of almighty Rome
(Divinely flushed with an immortal bloom,
That Cytherea's fragrant breath bestowed)
In all the charms of his bright mother glowed.
The royal youth by Marlborough's presence charmed,
Taught by his counsels, by his actions warmed,
On Landau with redoubled fury falls,
Discharges all his thunder on its walls,
O'er mines and caves of death provokes the fight,
And learns to conquer in the hero's sight.
430

*The British chief, for mighty toils renowned,
Increased in titles, and with conquests crowned,
To Belgian coasts his tedious march renews,
And the long windings of the Rhine pursues,
Clearing its borders from usurping foes,
And blessed by rescued nations as he goes.
Treves fears no more, freed from its dire alarms;
And Traerbach feels the terror of his arms,
Seated on rocks her proud foundations shake,
While Marlborough presses to the bold attack,
440*

Plants all his batteries, bids his cannon roar,
And shows how Landau might have fallen before.
Scared at his near approach, great Louis fears
Vengeance reserved for his declining years,
Forgets his thirst of universal sway,
And scarce can teach his subjects to obey;
His arms he finds on vain attempts employed,
The ambitious projects for his race destroyed,
The work of ages sunk in one campaign,
And lives of millions sacrificed in vain.
450

*Such are the effects of Anna's royal cares:
By her, Britannia, great in foreign wars,
Ranges through nations, wheresoo'er disjoined,
Without the wonted aid of sea and wind.
By her the unfettered Ister's states are free,*



*And taste the sweets of English liberty:
But who can tell the joys of those that lie
Beneath the constant influence of her eye!
Whilst in diffusive showers her bounties fall,
Like heaven's indulgence, and descend on all,*
460

Secure the happy, succour the distressed,
Make every subject glad, and a whole people blessed.
Thus would I fain Britannia's wars rehearse,
In the smooth records of a faithful verse;
That, if such numbers can o'er time prevail,
May tell posterity the wondrous tale.
When actions, unadorned, are faint and weak,
Cities and countries must be taught to speak;
Gods may descend in factions from the skies,
And rivers from their oozy beds arise;
470

*Fiction may deck the truth with spurious rays,
And round the hero cast a borrowed blaze.
Marlborough's exploits appear divinely bright,
And proudly shine in their own native light;
Raised of themselves, their genuine charms they boast,
And those who paint them truest praise them most.*

COWLEY'S EPITAPH ON HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED BY MR ADDISON.

Page 50

From life's superfluous cares enlarged,
His debt of human toil discharged,
Here Cowley lies! beneath this shed,
To every worldly interest dead;
With decent poverty content,
His hours of ease not idly spent;
To fortune's goods a foe profess'd,
And hating wealth by all caress'd.
'Tis true he's dead; for oh! how small

A spot of earth is now his all:

10

*Oh! wish that earth may lightly lay,
And every care be far away;
Bring flowers; the short-lived roses bring,
To life deceased, fit offering:
And sweets around the poet strow,
Whilst yet with life his ashes glow.*

PROLOGUE TO THE TENDER HUSBAND.[8]

SPOKEN BY MR WILKS.

In the first rise and infancy of Farce,
When fools were many, and when plays were scarce,
The raw, unpractised authors could, with ease,
A young and unexperienced audience please:
No single character had e'er been shown,
But the whole herd of fops was all their own;
Rich in originals, they set to view,
In every piece, a coxcomb that was new.

But now our British theatre can boast
Drolls of all kinds, a vast, unthinking host!

10

*Fruitful of folly and of vice, it shows
Cuckolds, and cits, and bawds, and pimps, and beaux;
Rough country knights are found of every shire;
Of every fashion gentle fops appear;
And punks of different characters we meet,
As frequent on the stage as in the pit.
Our modern wits are forced to pick and cull,
And here and there by chance glean up a fool:
Long ere they find the necessary spark,*



They search the town, and beat about the Park;
20

To all his most frequented haunts resort,
Oft dog him to the ring, and oft to court,
As love of pleasure or of place invites;
And sometimes catch him taking snuff at White's.

Howe'er, to do you right, the present age
Breeds very hopeful monsters for the stage;
That scorn the paths their dull forefathers trod,
And wont be blockheads in the common road.
Do but survey this crowded house to-night:—
Here's still encouragement for those that write.
30

*Our author, to divert his friends to-day,
Stocks with variety of fools his play;
And that there may be something gay and new,
Two ladies-errant has exposed to view:
The first a damsel, travelled in romance;
The t'other more refined; she comes from France:
Rescue, like courteous knights, the nymph from danger;
And kindly treat, like well-bred men, the stranger.*

EPILOGUE TO THE BRITISH

ENCHANTERS.[9]

Page 51

When Orpheus tuned his lyre with pleasing woe,
Rivers forgot to run, and winds to blow,
While listening forests covered as he played,
The soft musician in a moving shade.
That this night's strains the same success may find,
The force of magic is to music joined;
Where sounding strings and artful voices fail,
The charming rod and muttered spells prevail.
Let sage Urganda wave the circling wand
On barren mountains, or a waste of sand,

10

*The desert smiles; the woods begin to grow,
The birds to warble, and the springs to flow.
The same dull sights in the same landscape mixed,
Scenes of still life, and points for ever fixed,
A tedious pleasure on the mind bestow,
And pall the sense with one continued show;
But as our two magicians try their skill,
The vision varies, though the place stands still,
While the same spot its gaudy form renews,
Shifting the prospect to a thousand views.*

20

Thus (without unity of place transgressed)
The enchanter turns the critic to a jest.
But howsoe'er, to please your wandering eyes,
Bright objects disappear and brighter rise:
There's none can make amends for lost delight,
While from that circle we divert your sight.

PROLOGUE TO SMITH'S[10] PHAEDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

SPOKEN BY MR WILKS.

Long has a race of heroes fill'd the stage,
That rant by note, and through the gamut rage;
In songs and airs express their martial fire,
Combat in trills, and in a fugue expire:
While, lull'd by sound, and undisturb'd by wit,
Calm and serene you indolently sit,
And, from the dull fatigue of thinking free,
Hear the facetious fiddle's repartee:



Our home-spun authors must forsake the field,
And Shakspeare to the soft Scarletti yield.

10

*To your new taste the poet of this day
Was by a friend advised to form his play.
Had Valentini, musically coy,
Shunn'd Phaedra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy,
It had not moved your wonder to have seen
An eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen:
How would it please, should she in English speak,
And could Hippolitus reply in Greek!
But he, a stranger to your modish way,
By your old rules must stand or fall to-day,*

20

And hopes you will your foreign taste command,
To bear, for once, with what you understand.

HORACE.-ODE III., BOOK III.

Augustus had a design to rebuild Troy, and make it the metropolis of the Roman empire, having closeted several senators on the project: Horace is supposed to have written the following Ode on this occasion.

Page 52

The man resolved, and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill, and obstinately just,
May the rude rabble's insolence despise,
Their senseless clamours and tumultuous cries;
The tyrant's fierceness he beguiles,
And the stern brow, and the harsh voice defies,
And with superior greatness smiles.

Not the rough whirlwind, that deforms
Adria's black gulf, and vexes it with storms,
The stubborn virtue of his soul can move;

10

*Not the red arm of angry Jove,
That flings the thunder from the sky,
And gives it rage to roar, and strength to fly.*

*Should the whole frame of nature round him break,
In ruin and confusion hurled,
He, unconcerned, would hear the mighty crack,
And stand secure amidst a falling world.*

*Such were the godlike arts that led
Bright Pollux to the blest abodes;
Such did for great Alcides plead,*

20

And gained a place among the gods;
Where now Augustus, mixed with heroes, lies,
And to his lips the nectar bowl applies:
His ruddy lips the purple tincture show,
And with immortal strains divinely glow.

By arts like these did young Lyaeus [11] rise:
His tigers drew him to the skies,
Wild from the desert and unbroke:
In vain they foamed, in vain they stared,
In vain their eyes with fury glared;

30

He tamed them to the lash, and bent them to the yoke.

*Such were the paths that Rome's great founder trod,
When in a whirlwind snatched on high,
He shook off dull mortality,
And lost the monarch in the god.*

*Bright Juno then her awful silence broke,
And thus the assembled deities bespoke.*

*'Troy,' says the goddess, 'perjured Troy has felt
The dire effects of her proud tyrant's guilt;
The towering pile, and soft abodes,*



40

Walled by the hand of servile gods,
Now spreads its ruins all around,
And lies inglorious on the ground.
An umpire, partial and unjust,
And a lewd woman's impious lust,
Lay heavy on her head, and sunk her to the dust.

Since false Laomedon's tyrannic sway,
That durst defraud the immortals of their pay,
Her guardian gods renounced their patronage,
Nor would the fierce invading foe repel;

50

*To my resentment, and Minerva's rage,
The guilty king and the whole people fell.
And now the long protracted wars are o'er,
The soft adulterer shines no more;
No more does Hector's force the Trojans shield,
That drove whole armies back, and singly cleared the field.*

*My vengeance sated, I at length resign
To Mars his offspring of the Trojan line:
Advanced to godhead let him rise,
And take his station in the skies;*

60

There entertain his ravished sight
With scenes of glory, fields of light;
Quaff with the gods immortal wine,

Page 53

And see adoring nations crowd his shrine:
The thin remains of Troy's afflicted host,
In distant realms may seats unenvied find,
And flourish on a foreign coast;
But far be Rome from Troy disjoined,
Removed by seas from the disastrous shore;
May endless billows rise between, and storms unnumbered roar.

70

*Still let the cursed, detested place,
Where Priam lies, and Priam's faithless race,
Be cover'd o'er with weeds, and hid in grass.
There let the wanton flocks unguarded stray;
Or, while the lonely shepherd sings,
Amidst the mighty ruins play,
And frisk upon the tombs of kings.
May tigers there, and all the savage kind,
Sad, solitary haunts and silent deserts find;
In gloomy vaults, and nooks of palaces,*

80

May the unmolested lioness
Her brindled whelps securely lay,
Or couched, in dreadful slumbers waste the day.

While Troy in heaps of ruins lies,
Rome and the Roman Capitol shall rise;
The illustrious exiles unconfined
Shall triumph far and near, and rule mankind.

In vain the sea's intruding tide
Europe from Afric shall divide,
And part the severed world in two:

90

*Through Afric's sands their triumphs they shall spread,
And the long train of victories pursue
To Nile's yet undiscovered head.
Riches the hardy soldier shall despise,
And look on gold with undesiring eyes,
Nor the disbowelled earth explore
In search of the forbidden ore;
Those glittering ills concealed within the mine,
Shall lie untouched, and innocently shine.
To the last bounds that nature sets,*



100

The piercing colds and sultry heats,
The godlike race shall spread their arms;
Now fill the polar circle with alarms,
Till storms and tempests their pursuits confine;
Now sweat for conquest underneath the line.

This only law the victor shall restrain,
On these conditions shall he reign;
If none his guilty hand employ
To build again a second Troy,
If none the rash design pursue,

110

Nor tempt the vengeance of the gods anew.

*A curse there cleaves to the devoted place,
That shall the new foundations raze:
Greece shall in mutual leagues conspire
To storm the rising town with fire,
And at their armies' head myself will show
What Juno, urged to all her rage, can do.
Thrice should Apollo's self the city raise,
And line it round with walls of brass,
Thrice should my favourite Greeks his works confound,*

120

And hew the shining fabric to the ground;
Thrice should her captive dames to Greece return,
And their dead sons and slaughtered husbands mourn.'

But hold, my Muse, forbear thy towering flight,
Nor bring the secrets of the gods to light:
In vain would thy presumptuous verse
The immortal rhetoric rehearse;
The mighty strains, in lyric numbers bound,
Forget their majesty, and lose their sound.

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THE VESTAL.

FROM OVID DE FASTIS, LIB. III. EL. 1.

Blanda quies victis furtim subrepat ocellis, &c.

As the fair vestal to the fountain came,
(Let none be startled at a vestal's name)
Tired with the walk, she laid her down to rest,
And to the winds exposed her glowing breast,
To take the freshness of the morning-air,
And gather'd in a knot her flowing hair;
While thus she rested, on her arm reclined,
The hoary willows waving with the wind,
And feather'd choirs that warbled in the shade,
And purling streams that through the meadow stray'd,

10

*In drowsy murmurs lull'd the gentle maid.
The god of war beheld the virgin lie,
The god beheld her with a lover's eye;
And by so tempting an occasion press'd,
The beauteous maid, whom he beheld, possess'd:
Conceiving as she slept, her fruitful womb
Swell'd with the founder of immortal Rome.*

OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK II.

THE STORY OF PHAETON.

The sun's bright palace, on high columns raised,
With burnished gold and flaming jewels blazed;
The folding gates diffused a silver light,
And with a milder gleam refreshed the sight;
Of polished ivory was the covering wrought:
The matter vied not with the sculptor's thought,
For in the portal was displayed on high
(The work of Vulcan) a fictitious sky;
A waving sea the inferior earth embraced,
And gods and goddesses the waters graced.

10

AEgeon here a mighty whale bestrode;



*Triton, and Proteus, (the deceiving god,)
With Doris here were carved, and all her train,
Some loosely swimming in the figured main,
While some on rocks their dropping hair divide,
And some on fishes through the waters glide:
Though various features did the sisters grace,
A sister's likeness was in every face.
On earth a different landscape courts the eyes,
Men, towns, and beasts, in distant prospects rise,*

20

*And nymphs, and streams, and woods, and rural deities.
O'er all, the heaven's refulgent image shines;
On either gate were six engraven signs.*

*Here Phaeton, still gaining on the ascent,
To his suspected father's palace went,
Till, pressing forward through the bright ahode,
He saw at distance the illustrious god:
He saw at distance, or the dazzling light
Had flashed too strongly on his aching sight.*

The god sits high, exalted on a throne

30

*Of blazing gems, with purple garments on:
The Hours, in order ranged on either hand,
And days, and months, and years, and ages, stand.
Here Spring appears with flowery chaplets bound;
Here Summer in her wheaten garland crowned;
Here Autumn the rich trodden grapes besmear;*



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And hoary Winter shivers in the rear.

Phoebus beheld the youth from off his throne;

That eye, which looks on all, was fixed on one.

He saw the boy's confusion in his face,

40

Surprised at all the wonders of the place;

And cries aloud, 'What wants my son? for know

My son thou art, and I must call thee so.'

'Light of the world,' the trembling youth replies,

'Illustrious parent! since you don't despise

The parent's name, some certain token give,

That I may Clymene's proud boast believe,

Nor longer under false reproaches grieve.'

The tender sire was touched with what he said.

And flung the blaze of glories from his head,

50

And bid the youth advance: 'My son,' said he,

'Come to thy father's arms! for Clymene

Has told thee true; a parent's name I own,

And deem thee worthy to be called my son.

As a sure proof, make some request, and I,

Whate'er it be, with that request comply;

By Styx I swear, whose waves are hid in night,

And roll impervious to my piercing sight.'

The youth transported, asks, without delay,

To guide the Sun's bright chariot for a day.

60

The god repented of the oath he took,

For anguish thrice his radiant head he shook;

'My son,' says he, 'some other proof require,

Rash was my promise, rash is thy desire.

I'd fain deny this wish which thou hast made,

Or, what I can't deny, would fain dissuade.

Too vast and hazardous the task appears,

Nor suited to thy strength, nor to thy years.

Thy lot is mortal, but thy wishes fly

Beyond the province of mortality:

70

There is not one of all the gods that dares

(However skilled in other great affairs)

To mount the burning axle-tree, but I;



*Not Jove himself, the ruler of the sky,
That hurls the three-forked thunder from above,
Dares try his strength; yet who so strong as Jove?
The steeds climb up the first ascent with pain:
And when the middle firmament they gain,
If downward from the heavens my head I bow,
And see the earth and ocean hang below;*

80

Even I am seized with horror and affright,
And my own heart misgives me at the sight.
A mighty downfall steeps the evening stage,
And steady reins must curb the horses' rage.
Tethys herself has feared to see me driven
Down headlong from the precipice of heaven.
Besides, consider what impetuous force
Turns stars and planets in a different course:
I steer against their motions; nor am I 89
Born back by all the current of the sky.

90

*But how could you resist the orbs that roll
In adverse whirls, and stem the rapid pole?
But you perhaps may hope for pleasing woods,
And stately domes, and cities filled with gods;
While through a thousand snares your progress*

Page 56

lies,

*Where forms of starry monsters stock the skies:
For, should you hit the doubtful way aright,
The Bull with stooping horns stands opposite;
Next him the bright Haemonian Bow is strung;
And next, the Lion's grinning visage hung:*

100

*The Scorpion's claws here clasp a wide extent,
And here the Crab's in lesser clasps are bent.
Nor would you find it easy to compose
The mettled steeds, when from their nostrils flows
The scorching fire, that in their entrails glows.
Even I their headstrong fury scarce restrain,
When they grow warm and restive to the rein.
Let not my son a fatal gift require,
But, oh! in time recall your rash desire;
You ask a gift that may your parent tell,*

110

*Let these my fears your parentage reveal;
And learn a father from a father's care:
Look on my face; or if my heart lay bare,
Could you but look, you'd read the father there.
Choose out a gift from seas, or earth, or skies,
For open to your wish all nature lies,
Only decline this one unequal task,
For 'tis a mischief, not a gift you ask;
You ask a real mischief, Phaeton:
Nay, hang not thus about my neck, my son:*

120

*I grant your wish, and Styx has heard my voice,
Choose what you will, but make a wiser choice.'*
Thus did the god the unwary youth advise;
But he still longs to travel through the skies,
When the fond father (for in vain he pleads)
At length to the Vulcanian chariot leads.
A golden axle did the work uphold,
Gold was the beam, the wheels were orbed with gold.
The spokes in rows of silver pleased the sight,
The seat with party-coloured gems was bright;

130

*Apollo shined amid the glare of light.
The youth with secret joy the work surveys;
When now the morn disclosed her purple rays;*



*The stars were fled; for Lucifer had chased
The stars away, and fled himself at last.
Soon as the father saw the rosy morn,
And the moon shining with a blunter horn,
He bid the nimble Hours without delay
Bring forth the steeds; the nimble Hours obey:
From their full racks the generous steeds retire,*

140

*Dropping ambrosial foams and snorting fire.
Still anxious for his son, the god of day,
To make him proof against the burning ray,
His temples with celestial ointment wet,
Of sovereign virtue to repel the heat;
Then fixed the beaming circle on his head,
And fetched a deep, foreboding sigh, and said,
'Take this at least, this last advice, my son:
Keep a stiff rein, and move but gently on:
The coursers of themselves will run too fast,*

150

*Your art must be to moderate their haste.
Drive them not on directly through the skies,
But where the Zodiac's winding circle lies,
Along the midmost zone; but sally forth*

Page 57

*Nor to the distant south, nor stormy north.
The horses' hoofs a beaten track will show,
But neither mount too high nor sink too low,
That no new fires or heaven or earth infest;
Keep the mid-way, the middle way is best.
Nor, where in radiant folds the Serpent twines,*

160

*Direct your course, nor where the Altar shines.
Shun both extremes; the rest let Fortune guide,
And better for thee than thyself provide!
See, while I speak the shades disperse away,
Aurora gives the promise of a day;
I'm called, nor can I make a longer stay.
Snatch up the reins; or still the attempt forsake,
And not my chariot, but my counsel take,
While yet securely on the earth you stand;
Nor touch the horses with too rash a hand.*

170

*Let me alone to light the world, while you
Enjoy those beams which you may safely view.'
He spoke in vain: the youth with active heat
And sprightly vigour vaults into the seat;
And joys to hold the reins, and fondly gives
Those thanks his father with remorse receives.*

*Meanwhile the restless horses neighed aloud,
Breathing out fire, and pawing where they stood.
Tethys, not knowing what had passed, gave way,
And all the waste of heaven before them lay.*

180

*They spring together out, and swiftly bear
The flying youth through clouds and yielding air;
With wingy speed outstrip the eastern wind,
And leave the breezes of the morn behind.
The youth was light, nor could he fill the seat,
Or poise the chariot with its wonted weight:
But as at sea the unballast vessel rides,
Cast to and fro, the sport of winds and tides;
So in the bounding chariot tossed on high,
The youth is hurried headlong through the sky.*

190

Soon as the steeds perceive it, they forsake



Their stated course, and leave the beaten track.

The youth was in a maze, nor did he know

Which way to turn the reins, or where to go;

Nor would the horses, had he known, obey.

Then the Seven Stars first felt Apollo's ray

And wished to dip in the forbidden sea.

The folded Serpent next the frozen pole,

Stiff and benumbed before, began to roll,

And raged with inward heat, and threatened war,

200

And shot a redder light from every star;

Nay, and 'tis said, Bootes, too, that fain

Thou wouldst have fled, though cumbered with thy wain.

The unhappy youth then, bending down his head,

Saw earth and ocean far beneath him spread:

His colour changed, he startled at the sight,

And his eyes darkened by too great a light.

Now could he wish the fiery steeds untried,

His birth obscure, and his request denied:

Now would he Merops for his father own,

210

And quit his boasted kindred to the Sun.

So fares the pilot, when his ship is tossed



Page 58

*In troubled seas, and all its steerage lost,
He gives her to the winds, and in despair
Seeks his last refuge in the gods and prayer.*

*What could he do? his eyes, if backward cast,
Find a long path he had already passed;
If forward, still a longer path they find:
Both he compares, and measures in his mind;
And sometimes casts an eye upon the east,*

220

*And sometimes looks on the forbidden west.
The horses' names he knew not in the fright:
Nor would he loose the reins, nor could he hold them tight.*

*Now all the horrors of the heavens he spies,
And monstrous shadows of prodigious size,
That, decked with stars, lie scattered o'er the skies.
There is a place above, where Scorpio, bent
In tail and arms, surrounds a vast extent;
In a wide circuit of the heavens he shines,
And fills the space of two celestial signs.*

230

*Soon as the youth beheld him, vexed with heat,
Brandish his sting, and in his poison sweat,
Half dead with sudden fear he dropped the reins;
The horses felt them loose upon their manes,
And, flying out through all the plains above,
Ran uncontrolled where'er their fury drove;
Rushed on the stars, and through a pathless way
Of unknown regions hurried on the day.
And now above, and now below they flew,
And near the earth the burning chariot drew.*

240

*The clouds disperse in fumes, the wondering Moon
Beholds her brother's steeds beneath her own;
The highlands smoke, cleft by the piercing rays,
Or, clad with woods, in their own fuel blaze.
Next o'er the plains, where ripened harvests grow,
The running conflagration spreads below.
But these are trivial ills; whole cities burn,
And peopled kingdoms into ashes turn.*

*The mountains kindle as the car draws near,
Athos and Tmolus red with fires appear;*



250

*Oeagrian Haemus (then a single name)
And virgin Helicon increase the flame;
Taurus and Oete glare amid the sky,
And Ida, spite of all her fountains, dry.
Eryx, and Othrys, and Cithgeron, glow;
And Rhodope, no longer clothed in snow;
High Pindus, Mimas, and Parnassus sweat,
And AEtna rages with redoubled heat.
Even Scythia, through her hoary regions warmed,
In vain with all her native frost was armed.*

260

Covered with flames, the towering Apennine,
And Caucasus, and proud Olympus, shine;
And, where the long extended Alps aspire,
Now stands a huge, continued range of fire.
The astonished youth, where'er his eyes could turn,
Beheld the universe around him burn:
The world was in a blaze; nor could he bear
The sultry vapours and the scorching air,
Which from below as from a furnace flowed,
And now the axle-tree beneath him glowed:

270

Lost in the whirling clouds, that round



Page 59

him broke,

*And white with ashes, hovering in the smoke,
He flew where'er the horses drove, nor knew
Whither the horses drove, or where he flew.*

*'Twas then, they say, the swarthy Moor begun
To change his hue, and blacken in the sun.
Then Libya first, of all her moisture drained,
Became a barren waste, a wild of sand.
The water-nymphs lament their empty urns,
Boeotia, robbed of silver Dirce, mourns;*

280

*Corinth, Pyrene's wasted spring bewails,
And Argos grieves whilst Anymone fails.
The floods are drained from every distant coast,
Even Tanais, though fixed in ice, was lost.
Enraged Caicus and Lycormas roar,
And Xanthus, fated to be burned once more.
The famed Meeander, that unwearied strays
Through mazy windings, smokes in every maze.
From his loved Babylon Euphrates flies;
The big-swoln Ganges and the Danube rise*

290

*In thickening fumes, and darken half the skies.
In flames Ismenos and the Phasis rolled,
And Tagus floating in his melted gold.
The swans, that on Cayster often tried
Their tuneful songs, now sung their last, and died.
The frightened Nile ran off, and under-ground
Concealed his head, nor can it yet be found:
His seven divided currents all are dry,
And where they rolled seven gaping trenches lie.
No more the Rhine or Rhone their course maintain,*

300

*Nor Tiber, of his promised empire vain.
The ground, deep cleft, admits the dazzling ray,
And startles Pluto with the flash of day.
The seas shrink in, and to the sight disclose
Wide, naked plains, where once their billows rose;
Their rocks are all discovered, and increase
The number of the scattered Cyclades.
The fish in shoals about the bottom creep,
Nor longer dares the crooked dolphin leap;
Gasping for breath, the unshapen phocae die,*



310

*And on the boiling wave extended lie.
Nereus, and Doris with her virgin train,
Seek out the last recesses of the main;
Beneath unfathomable depths they faint,
And secret in their gloomy regions pant,
Stern Neptune thrice above the waves upheld
His face, and thrice was by the flames repelled.*

*The Earth at length, on every side embraced
With scalding seas, that floated round her waist,
When now she felt the springs and rivers come,*

320

*And crowd within the hollow of her womb.
Uplifted to the heavens her blasted head,
And clapped her hands upon her brows, and said;
(But first, impatient of the sultry heat,
Sunk deeper down, and sought a cooler seat:)
'If you, great king of gods, my death approve,
And I deserve it, let me die by Jove;
If I must perish by the force of fire,
Let me transfixed with thunderbolts expire.
See, whilst I speak, my breath the vapours*



Page 60

choke,

330

(For now her face lay wrapt in clouds of smoke,) See my singed hair, behold my faded eye And withered face, where heaps of cinders lie! And does the plough for this my body tear? This the reward for all the fruits I bear, Tortured with rakes, and harassed all the year? That herbs for cattle daily I renew, And food for man, and frankincense for you? But grant me guilty; what has Neptune done? Why are his waters boiling in the sun?

340

The wavy empire, which by lot was given,
Why does it waste, and further shrink from heaven?
If I nor lie your pity can provoke,
See your own heavens, the heavens begin to smoke!
Should once the sparkles catch those bright abodes,
Destruction seizes on the heavens and gods;
Atlas becomes unequal to his freight,
And almost faints beneath the glowing weight.
If heaven, and earth, and sea together burn,
All must again into their chaos turn.

350

*Apply some speedy cure, prevent our fate,
And succour nature, e'er it be too late.'*
*She ceased; for, choked with vapours round her spread,
Down to the deepest shades she sunk her head.*
*Jove called to witness every power above,
And even the god whose son the chariot drove,
That what he acts he is compelled to do,
Or universal ruin must ensue.*
*Straight he ascends the high ethereal throne,
From whence he used to dart his thunder down,*

360

From whence his showers and storms he used to pour,
But now could meet with neither storm nor shower.
Then aiming at the youth, with lifted hand,
Full at his head he hurled the forky brand,
In dreadful thunderings. Thus the almighty sire
Suppressed the raging of the fires with fire.
At once from life and from the chariot driven,



The ambitious boy fell thunder-struck from heaven.
The horses started with a sudden bound,
And flung the reins and chariot to the ground:

370

*The studded harness from their necks they broke,
Here fell a wheel, and here a silver spoke,
Here were the beam and axle torn away;
And, scattered o'er the earth, the shining fragments lay.
The breathless Phaeton, with flaming hair,
Shot from the chariot, like a falling star,
That in a summer's evening from the top
Of heaven drops down, or seems at least to drop;
Till on the Po his blasted corpse was hurled,
Far from his country, in the western world.*

380

PHAETON'S SISTERS TRANSFORMED INTO TREES.

The Latian nymphs came round him, and amazed
On the dead youth, transfixed with thunder, gazed;
And, whilst yet smoking from the bolt he lay,
His shattered body to a tomb convey;
And o'er the tomb an epitaph devise:
'Here he who drove the Sun's bright chariot lies;

Page 61

His father's fiery steeds he could not guide,
But in the glorious enterprise he died.'

Apollo hid his face, and pined for grief,
And, if the story may deserve belief,

10

*The space of one whole day is said to run,
From morn to wonted even, without a sun:
The burning ruins, with a fainter ray,
Supply the sun, and counterfeit a day,
A day that still did nature's face disclose:
This comfort from the mighty mischief rose.*

*But Clymene, enraged with grief, laments,
And, as her grief inspires, her passion vents:
Wild for her son, and frantic in her woes,
With hair dishevelled, round the world she goes,*

20

To seek where'er his body might be cast;
Till, on the borders of the Po, at last
The name inscribed on the new tomb appears:
The dear, dear name she bathes in flowing tears,
Hangs o'er the tomb, unable to depart,
And hugs the marble to her throbbing heart.

Her daughters too lament, and sigh, and mourn,
(A fruitless tribute to their brother's urn,)
And beat their naked bosoms, and complain,
And call aloud for Phaeton in vain:

30

*All the long night their mournful watch they keep,
And all the day stand round the tomb, and weep.*

*Four times revolving the full moon returned;
So long the mother and the daughters mourned:
When now the eldest, Phaethusa, strove
To rest her weary limbs, but could not move;
Lampetia would have helped her, but she found
Herself withheld, and rooted to the ground:
A third in wild affliction, as she grieves,
Would rend her hair, but fills her hands with leaves;*

40

One sees her thighs transformed, another views
Her arms shot out, and branching into boughs.



And now their legs and breasts and bodies stood
Crusted with bark, and hardening into wood;
But still above were female heads displayed,
And mouths, that called the mother to their aid.
What could, alas! the weeping mother do?
From this to that with eager haste she flew,
And kissed her sprouting daughters as they grew.
She tears the bark that to each body cleaves,

50

*And from their verdant fingers strips the leaves:
The blood came trickling, where she tore away
The leaves and bark: the maids were heard to say,
'Forbear, mistaken parent, oh! forbear;
A wounded daughter in each tree you tear;
Farewell for ever.' Here the bark increased,
Closed on their faces, and their words suppressed.
The new-made trees in tears of amber run,
Which, hardened into value by the sun,
Distil for ever on the streams below:*

60

The limpid streams their radiant treasure show,
Mixed in the sand; whence the rich drops conveyed,
Shine in the dress of the bright Latian maid.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CYCNUS INTO A SWAN.



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Cycnus beheld the nymphs transformed, allied
To their dead brother on the mortal side,
In friendship and affection nearer bound;
He left the cities and the realms he owned,
Through pathless fields and lonely shores to range,
And woods, made thicker by the sisters' change.
Whilst here, within the dismal gloom, alone,
The melancholy monarch made his moan,
His voice was lessened, as he tried to speak,
And issued through a long extended neck;

10

*His hair transforms to down, his fingers mee
In skinny films, and shape his oary feet;
From both his sides the wings and feathers break;
And from his mouth proceeds a blunted beak:
All Cycnus now into a swan was turned,
Who, still remembering how his kinsman burned,
To solitary pools and lakes retires,
And loves the waters as opposed to fires.*

*Meanwhile Apollo, in a gloomy shade
(The native lustre of his brows decayed)*

20

Indulging sorrow, sickens at the sight
Of his own sunshine, and abhors the light:
The hidden griefs, that in his bosom rise,
Sadden his looks, and overcast his eyes,
As when some dusky orb obstructs his ray,
And sullies in a dim eclipse the day.

Now secretly with inward griefs he pined,
Now warm resentments to his grief he joined,
And now renounced his office to mankind.
'E'er since the birth of time,' said he, 'I've borne

30

*A long, ungrateful toil without return;
Let now some other manage, if he dare,
The fiery steeds, and mount the burning car;
Or, if none else, let Jove his fortune try,
And learn to lay his murdering thunder by;
Then will he own, perhaps, but own too late,
My son deserved not so severe a fate.'*

*The gods stand round him, as he mourns, and pray
He would resume the conduct of the day,
Nor let the world be lost in endless night:*



40

Jove too himself descending from his height,
Excuses what had happened, and entreats,
Majestically mixing prayers and threats.
Prevailed upon, at length, again he took
The harnessed steeds, that still with horror shook,
And plies them with the lash, and whips them on,
And, as he whips, upbraids them with his son.

THE STORY OF CALISTO.

The day was settled in its course; and Jove
Walked the wide circuit of the heavens above,
To search if any cracks or flaws were made;
But all was safe: the earth he then surveyed,
And cast an eye on every different coast,
And every land; but on Arcadia most.
Her fields he clothed, and cheered her blasted face
With running fountains, and with springing grass.
No tracks of heaven's destructive fire remain,
The fields and woods revive, and nature smiles again.

10

But as the god walked to and fro the earth,



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*And raised the plants, and gave the spring its birth,
By chance a fair Arcadian nymph he viewed,
And felt the lovely charmer in his blood.
The nymph nor spun, nor dressed with artful pride;
Her vest was gathered up, her hair was tied;
Now in her hand a slender spear she bore,
Now a light quiver on her shoulders wore;
To chaste Diana from her youth inclined,
The sprightly warriors of the wood she joined.*

20

*Diana too the gentle huntress loved,
Nor was there one of all the nymphs that roved
O'er Maenalus, amid the maiden throng,
More favoured once; but favour lasts not long.*

*The sun now shone in all its strength, and drove
The heated virgin panting to a grove;
The grove around a grateful shadow cast:
She dropped her arrows, and her bow unbraced;
She flung herself on the cool, grassy bed;
And on the painted quiver raised her head.*

30

*Jove saw the charming huntress unprepared,
Stretched on the verdant turf, without a guard.
'Here I am safe,' he cries, 'from Juno's eye;
Or should my jealous queen the theft descry,
Yet would I venture on a theft like this,
And stand her rage for such, for such a bliss!'
Diana's shape and habit straight he took,
Softened his brows, and smoothed his awful look,
And mildly in a female accent spoke.
'How fares my girl? How went the morning chase?'*

40

*To whom the virgin, starting from the grass,
'All hail, bright deity, whom I prefer
To Jove himself, though Jove himself were here.'
The god was nearer than she thought, and heard,
Well-pleased, himself before himself preferr'd.*

*He then salutes her with a warm embrace,
And, ere she half had told the morning chase,
With love inflamed, and eager on his bliss,
Smothered her words, and stopped her with a kiss;*



His kisses with unwonted ardour glow'd,
50
*Nor could Diana's shape conceal the god.
The virgin did whate'er a virgin could;
(Sure Juno must have pardoned, had she view'd;)
With all her might against his force she strove;
But how can mortal maids contend with Jove!
Possessed at length of what his heart desired,
Back to his heavens the exulting god retired.
The lovely huntress, rising from the grass,
With downcast eyes, and with a blushing face
By shame confounded, and by fear dismay'd,*
60

Flew from the covert of the guilty shade,
And almost, in the tumult of her mind,
Left her forgotten bow and shafts behind.
But now Diana, with a sprightly train
Of quivered virgins, bounding over the plain,
Called to the nymph; the nymph began to fear
A second fraud, a Jove disguised in her;
But, when she saw the sister nymphs, suppress'd
Her rising fears, and mingled with the rest.
How in the look does

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conscious guilt appear!

70

*Slowly she moved, and loitered in the rear;
Nor slightly tripped, nor by the goddess ran,
As once she used, the foremost of the train.
Her looks were flushed, and sullen was her mien,
That sure the virgin goddess (had she been
Aught but a virgin) must the guilt have seen.
'Tis said the nymphs saw all, and guessed aright:
And now the moon had nine times lost her light,
When Dian, fainting in the mid-day beams,
Found a cool covert, and refreshing streams*

80

*That in soft murmurs through the forest flow'd,
And a smooth bed of shining gravel show'd.
A covert so obscure, and streams so clear,
The goddess praised: 'And now no spies are near,
Let's strip, my gentle maids, and wash,' she cries.
Pleased with the motion, every maid complies;
Only the blushing huntress stood confused,
And formed delays, and her delays excused;
In vain excused; her fellows round her press'd,
And the reluctant nymph by force undress'd.*

90

*The naked huntress all her shame reveal'd,
In vain her hands the pregnant womb conceal'd;
'Begone!' the goddess cries with stern disdain,
'Begone! nor dare the hallowed stream to stain.'
She fled, for ever banished from the train.*

*This Juno heard, who long had watched her time
To punish the detested rival's crime:
The time was come; for, to enrage her more,
A lovely boy the teeming rival bore.
The goddess cast a furious look, and cried,*

100

*'It is enough! I'm fully satisfied!
This boy shall stand a living mark, to prove
My husband's baseness, and the strumpet's love:
But vengeance shall awake: those guilty charms,
That drew the Thunderer from Juno's arms,
No longer shall their wonted force retain,
Nor please the god, nor make the mortal vain.'*



This said, her hand within her hair she wound,
Swung her to earth, and dragged her on the ground.
The prostrate wretch lifts up her arms in prayer;

110

*Her arms grow shaggy, and deformed with hair,
Her nails are sharpened into pointed claws,
Her hands bear half her weight, and turn to paws;
Her lips, that once could tempt a god, begin
To grow distorted in an ugly grin.
And, lest the supplicating brute might reach
The ears of Jove, she was deprived of speech:
Her surly voice through a hoarse passage came
In savage sounds: her mind was still the same.
The furry monster fixed her eyes above,*

120

And heaved her new unwieldy paws to Jove,
And begged his aid with inward groans; and though
She could not call him false, she thought him so.

How did she fear to lodge in woods alone,
And haunt the fields and meadows once her own!
How often would the deep-mouthed dogs pursue,
Whilst from her hounds the frightened huntress



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flew!

How did she fear her fellow-brutes, and shun
The shaggy bear, though now herself was one!
How from the sight of rugged wolves retire,

130

*Although the grim Lycaon was her sire!
But now her son had fifteen summers told,
Fierce at the chase, and in the forest bold;
When, as he beat the woods in quest of prey,
He chanced to rouse his mother where she lay.
She knew her son, and kept him in her sight,
And fondly gazed: the boy was in a fright,
And aimed a pointed arrow at her breast,
And would have slain his mother in the beast;
But Jove forbade, and snatched them through the air*

140

In whirlwinds up to heaven, and fixed them there:
Where the new constellations nightly rise,
And add a lustre to the northern skies.

When Juno saw the rival in her height,
Spangled with stars, and circled round with light,
She sought old Ocean in his deep abodes,
And Tethys; both revered among the gods.
They ask what brings her there: 'Ne'er ask,' says she,
'What brings me here, heaven is no place for me.
You'll see, when night has covered all things o'er,

150

*Jove's starry bastard and triumphant whore
Usurp the heavens; you 'll see them proudly roll
In their new orbs, and brighten all the pole.
And who shall now on Juno's altars wait,
When those she hates grow greater by her hate?
I on the nymph a brutal form impress'd,
Jove to a goddess has transformed the beast;
This, this was all my weak revenge could do:
But let the god his chaste amours pursue,
And, as he acted after Io's rape,*

160

Restore the adulteress to her former shape.
Then may he cast his Juno off, and lead
The great Lycaon's offspring to his bed.
But you, ye venerable powers, be kind,



And, if my wrongs a due resentment find,
Receive not in your waves their setting beams,
Nor let the glaring strumpet taint your streams.'

The goddess ended, and her wish was given.
Back she returned in triumph up to heaven;
Her gaudy peacocks drew her through the skies,

170

*Their tails were spotted with a thousand eyes;
The eyes of Argus on their tails were ranged,
At the same time the raven's colour changed.*

THE STORY OF CORONIS, AND BIRTH OF AESCULAPIUS.

The raven once in snowy plumes was dress'd,
White as the whitest dove's unsullied breast,
Fair as the guardian of the Capitol,
Soft as the swan; a large and lovely fowl;
His tongue, his prating tongue, had changed him quite
To sooty blackness from the purest white.

The story of his change shall here be told:
In Thessaly there lived a nymph of old,
Coronis named; a peerless maid she shined,
Confessed the fairest of the fairer kind.

10

Apollo loved her, till her guilt he knew,

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*While true she was, or whilst he thought her true.
But his own bird, the raven, chanced to find
The false one with a secret rival joined.
Coronis begged him to suppress the tale,
But could not with repeated prayers prevail.
His milk-white pinions to the god he plied;
The busy daw flew with him, side by side,
And by a thousand teasing questions drew
The important secret from him as they flew.*

20

The daw gave honest counsel, though despised,
And, tedious in her tattle, thus advised:
'Stay, silly bird, the ill-natured task refuse,
Nor be the bearer of unwelcome news.
Be warned by my example: you discern
What now I am, and what I was shall learn.
My foolish honesty was all my crime;
Then hear my story. Once upon a time,
The two-shaped Ericthonius had his birth
(Without a mother) from the teeming earth;

30

*Minerva nursed him, and the infant laid
Within a chest, of twining osiers made.
The daughters of King Cecrops undertook
To guard the chest, commanded not to look
On what was hid within. I stood to see
The charge obeyed, perched on a neighbouring tree.
The sisters Pandrosos and Herse keep
The strict command; Aglauros needs would peep,
And saw the monstrous infant in a fright,
And called her sisters to the hideous sight:*

40

A boy's soft shape did to the waist prevail,
But the boy ended in a dragon's tail.
I told the stern Minerva all that passed,
But for my pains, discarded and disgraced,
The frowning goddess drove me from her sight,
And for her favourite chose the bird of night.
Be then no tell-tale; for I think my wrong
Enough to teach a bird to hold her tongue.
'But you, perhaps, may think I was removed,



As never by the heavenly maid beloved:
50

*But I was loved; ask Pallas if I lie;
Though Pallas hate me now, she won't deny:
For I, whom in a feathered shape you view,
Was once a maid, (by heaven, the story's true,)
A blooming maid, and a king's daughter too.
A crowd of lovers owned my beauty's charms;
My beauty was the cause of all my harms;
Neptune, as on his shores I went to rove,
Observed me in my walks, and fell in love.
He made his courtship, he confessed his pain,*

60

*And offered force when all his arts were vain;
Swift he pursued: I ran along the strand,
Till, spent and wearied on the sinking sand,
I shrieked aloud, with cries I filled the air
To gods and men; nor god nor man was there:
A virgin goddess heard a virgin's prayer.
For, as my arms I lifted to the skies,
I saw black feathers from my fingers rise;
I strove to fling my garment to the ground;
My garment turned to plumes, and girt me round:*

70

My hands to beat my naked bosom try;

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*Nor naked bosom now nor hands had I.
Lightly I tripped, nor weary as before
Sunk in the sand, but skimmed along the shore;
Till, rising on my wings, I was preferred
To be the chaste Minerva's virgin bird:
Preferred in vain! I now am in disgrace:
Nyctimene, the owl, enjoys my place.*

*'On her incestuous life I need not dwell,
(In Lesbos still the horrid tale they tell,)*

80

*And of her dire amours you must have heard,
For which she now does penance in a bird,
That, conscious of her shame, avoids the light,
And loves the gloomy covering of the night;
The birds, where'er she flutters, scare away
The hooting wretch, and drive her from the day.'*

*The raven, urged by such impertinence,
Grew passionate, it seems, and took offence,
And cursed the harmless daw; the daw withdrew:
The raven to her injured patron flew,*

90

*And found him out, and told the fatal truth
Of false Coronis and the favoured youth.*

*The god was wroth; the colour left his look,
The wreath his head, the harp his hand forsook:
His silver bow and feathered shafts he took,
And lodged an arrow in the tender breast,
That had so often to his own been pressed.
Down fell the wounded nymph, and sadly groaned,
And pulled his arrow reeking from the wound;
And weltering in her blood, thus faintly cried,*

100

*'Ah, cruel god! though I have justly died,
What has, alas! my unborn infant done,
That he should fall, and two expire in one?
This said, in agonies she fetched her breath.*

*The god dissolves in pity at her death;
He hates the bird that made her falsehood known,
And hates himself for what himself had done;
The feathered shaft, that sent her to the fates,
And his own hand that sent the shaft he hates.*



Fain would he heal the wound, and ease her pain,
110

*And tries the compass of his art in vain.
Soon as he saw the lovely nymph expire,
The pile made ready, and the kindling fire,
With sighs and groans her obsequies he kept,
And, if a god could weep, the god had wept.
Her corpse he kissed, and heavenly incense brought,
And solemnised the death himself had wrought.*

*But, lest his offspring should her fate partake,
Spite of the immortal mixture in his make,
He ripped her womb, and set the child at large,*
120

And gave him to the centaur Chiron's charge:
Then in his fury blacked the raven o'er,
And bid him prate in his white plumes no more.

OCYRRHOE TRANSFORMED TO A MARE.

Old Chiron took the babe with secret joy,
Proud of the charge of the celestial boy.
His daughter too, whom on the sandy shore
The nymph Chariclo to the centaur bore,
With hair dishevelled on her shoulders came
To see the child, Ocyrrhoe was her name;



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She knew her father's arts, and could rehearse
The depths of prophecy in sounding verse.
Once, as the sacred infant she surveyed,
The god was kindled in the raving maid,

10

*And thus she uttered her prophetic tale;
'Hail, great physician of the world, all hail;
Hail, mighty infant, who in years to come
Shalt heal the nations and defraud the tomb;
Swift be thy growth! thy triumphs unconfined!
Make kingdoms thicker, and increase mankind.
Thy daring art shall animate the dead,
And draw the thunder on thy guilty head:
Then shalt thou die; but from the dark abode
Rise up victorious, and be twice a god.*

20

And thou, my sire, not destined by thy birth
To turn to dust, and mix with common earth,
How wilt thou toss, and rave, and long to die,
And quit thy claim to immortality;
When thou shalt feel, enraged with inward pains,
The Hydra's venom rankling in thy veins'?
The gods, in pity, shall contract thy date,
And give thee over to the power of Fate.'

Thus, entering into destiny, the maid
The secrets of offended Jove betrayed;

30

*More had she still to say; but now appears
Oppressed with sobs and sighs, and drowned in tears.*

*'My voice,' says she, 'is gone, my language fails;
Through every limb my kindred shape prevails:
Why did the god this fatal gift impart,
And with prophetic raptures swell my heart!
What new desires are these? I long to pace
O'er flowery meadows, and to feed on grass:
I hasten to a brute, a maid no more;
But why, alas! am I transformed all o'er?*

40

My sire does half a human shape retain,
And in his upper parts preserves the man.'



Her tongue no more distinct complaints affords,
But in shrill accents and mishapen words
Pours forth such hideous wailings, as declare
The human form confounded in the mare:
Till by degrees accomplished in the beast,
She neighed outright, and all the steed expressed.
Her stooping body on her hands is borne,
Her hands are turned to hoofs, and shod in horn;
50

*Her yellow tresses ruffle in a mane,
And in a flowing tail she frisks her train.
The mare was finished in her voice and look,
And a new name from the new figure took.*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF BATTUS TO A TOUCHSTONE.

Sore wept the centaur, and to Phoebus prayed;
But how could Phoebus give the centaur aid?
Degraded of his power by angry Jove,
In Elis then a herd of beeves he drove;
And wielded in his hand a staff of oak,
And o'er his shoulders threw the shepherd's cloak;
On seven compacted reeds he used to play,
And on his rural pipe to waste the day.

As once, attentive to his pipe, he played,
The crafty Hermes from the god conveyed

Page 69

10

*A drove, that separate from their fellows strayed.
The theft an old insidious peasant viewed,
(They called him Battus in the neighbourhood,)
Hired by a wealthy Pylia prince to feed
His favourite mares, and watch the generous breed.
The thievish god suspected him, and took
The hind aside, and thus in whispers spoke:
'Discover not the theft, whoe'er thou be,
And take that milk-white heifer for thy fee.'
'Go, stranger,' cries the clown, 'securely on,*

20

*That stone shall sooner tell;' and showed a stone.
The god withdrew, but straight returned again,
In speech and habit like a country swain;
And cries out, 'Neighbour, hast thou seen a stray
Of bullocks and of heifers pass this way?
In the recovery of my cattle join,
A bullock and a heifer shall be thine.'
The peasant quick replies, 'You'll find 'em there,
In yon dark vale:' and in the vale they were.
The double bribe had his false heart beguiled:*

30

*The god, successful in the trial, smiled;
'And dost thou thus betray myself to me?
Me to myself dost thou betray?' says he:
Then to a touchstone turns the faithless spy,
And in his name records his infamy.*

THE STORY OF AGLAUROS, TRANSFORMED INTO A STATUE.

This done, the god flew up on high, and passed
O'er lofty Athens, by Minerva graced,
And wide Munichia, whilst his eyes survey
All the vast region that beneath him lay.

'Twas now the feast, when each Athenian maid
Her yearly homage to Minerva paid;
In canisters, with garlands covered o'er,
High on their heads their mystic gifts they bore;
And now, returning in a solemn train,
The troop of shining virgins filled the plain.

10



*The god well-pleased beheld the pompous show,
And saw the bright procession pass below;
Then veered about, and took a wheeling flight,
And hovered o'er them: as the spreading kite,
That smells the slaughtered victim from on high,
Flies at a distance, if the priests are nigh,
And sails around, and keeps it in her eye;
So kept the god the virgin choir in view,
And in slow winding circles round them flew.
As Lucifer excels the meanest star,*

20

*Or as the full-orbed Phoebe, Lucifer,
So much did Herse all the rest outvie,
And gave a grace to the solemnity.
Hermes was fired, as in the clouds he hung:
So the cold bullet, that with fury slung
From Balearic engines mounts on high,
Glowes in the whirl, and burns along the sky.
At length he pitched upon the ground, and showed
The form divine, the features of a god.
He knew their virtue o'er a female heart,*

30

*And yet he strives to better them by art.
He hangs his mantle loose, and sets to show
The golden edging on the seam below;*

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*Adjusts his flowing curls, and in his hand
Waves with an air the sleep-procuring wand;
The glittering sandals to his feet applies,
And to each heel the well-trimmed pinion ties.*

*His ornaments with nicest art displayed,
He seeks the apartment of the royal maid.
The roof was all with polished ivory lined,*

40

*That, richly mixed, in clouds of tortoise shined.
Three rooms, contiguous, in a range were placed,
The midmost by the beauteous Herse graced;
Her virgin sisters lodged on either side.
Aglauros first the approaching god descried,
And as he crossed her chamber, asked his name,
And what his business was, and whence he came.
'I come,' replied the god, 'from heaven, to woo
Your sister, and to make an aunt of you;
I am the son and messenger of Jove,*

50

*My name is Mercury, my business, love;
Do you, kind damsel, take a lover's part,
And gain admittance to your sister's heart.'
She stared him in the face with looks amazed,
As when she on Minerva's secret gazed,
And asks a mighty treasure for her hire,
And, till he brings it, makes the god retire.
Minerva grieved to see the nymph succeed;
And now remembering the late impious deed,
When, disobedient to her strict command,*

60

*She touched the chest with an unhallowed hand;
In big-swoln sighs her inward rage expressed,
That heaved the rising AEgis on her breast;
Then sought out Envy in her dark abode,
Defiled with ropy gore and clots of blood:
Shut from the winds, and from the wholesome skies,
In a deep vale the gloomy dungeon lies,
Dismal and cold, where not a beam of light
Invades the winter, or disturbs the night.*

Directly to the cave her course she steered;

70



*Against the gates her martial lance she reared;
The gates flew open, and the fiend appeared.
A poisonous morsel in her teeth she chewed,
And gorged the flesh of vipers for her food.
Minerva loathing turned away her eye;
The hideous monster, rising heavily,
Came stalking forward with a sullen pace,
And left her mangled offals on the place.
Soon as she saw the goddess gay and bright,
She fetched a groan at such a cheerful sight.*

80

*Livid and meagre were her looks, her eye
In foul, distorted glances turned awry;
A hoard of gall her inward parts possessed,
And spread a greenness o'er her cankered breast;
Her teeth were brown with rust; and from her tongue,
In dangling drops, the stringy poison hung.
She never smiles but when the wretched weep,
Nor lulls her malice with a moment's sleep,
Restless in spite: while watchful to destroy,
She pines and sickens at another's joy;*

90

*Foe to herself, distressing and distressed,
She bears her own tormentor in her breast.*

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*The goddess gave (for she abhorred her sight)
A short command: 'To Athens speed thy flight;
On cursed Aglauros try thy utmost art.
And fix thy rankest venoms in her heart.'
This said, her spear she pushed against the ground,
And mounting from it with an active bound,
Flew off to heaven: the hag with eyes askew
Looked up, and muttered curses as she flew;*

100

*For sore she fretted, and began to grieve
At the success which she herself must give.
Then takes her staff, hung round with wreaths of thorn,
And sails along, in a black whirlwind borne,
O'er fields and flowery meadows: where she steers
Her baneful course, a mighty blast appears,
Mildews and blights; the meadows are defaced,
The fields, the flowers, and the whole year laid waste;
On mortals next and peopled towns she falls,
And breathes a burning plague among their walls,*

110

*When Athens she beheld, for arts renowned,
With peace made happy, and with plenty crowned,
Scarce could the hideous fiend from tears forbear,
To find out nothing that deserved a tear.
The apartment now she entered, where at rest
Aglauros lay, with gentle sleep oppressed.
To execute Minerva's dire command,
She stroked the virgin with her cankered hand,
Then prickly thorns into her breast conveyed,
That stung to madness the devoted maid;*

120

*Her subtle venom still improves the smart,
Frets in the blood, and festers in the heart.
To make the work more sure, a scene she drew,
And placed before the dreaming virgin's view
Her sister's marriage, and her glorious fate:
The imaginary bride appears in state;
The bridegroom with unwonted beauty glows,
For Envy magnifies whate'er she shows.
Full of the dream, Aglauros pined away
In tears all night, in darkness all the day;*



130

*Consumed like ice, that just begins to run,
When feebly smitten by the distant sun;
Or like unwholesome weeds, that, set on fire,
Are slowly wasted, and in smoke expire.
Given up to Envy, (for in every thought,
The thorns, the venom, and the vision wrought).
Oft did she call on death, as oft decreed,
Rather than see her sister's wish succeed,
To tell her awful father what had passed:
At length before the door herself she cast;*

140

And, sitting on the ground with sullen pride,
A passage to the love-sick god denied.
The god caressed, and for admission prayed,
And soothed, in softest words, the envenomed maid.
In vain he soothed; 'Begone!' the maid replies,
'Or here I keep my seat, and never rise.'
'Then keep thy seat for ever!' cries the god,
And touched the door, wide-opening to his rod.
Fain would she rise, and stop him, but she found
Her trunk too heavy to forsake the ground;



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150

*Her joints are all benumbed, her hands are pale,
And marble now appears in every nail.
As when a cancer in her body feeds,
And gradual death from limb to limb proceeds;
So does the dullness to each vital part
Spread by degrees, and creeps into her heart;
Till, hardening everywhere, and speechless grown,
She sits unmoved, and freezes to a stone.
But still her envious hue and sullen mien
Are in the sedentary figure seen.*

160

EUROPA'S RAPE.

When now the god his fury had allayed,
And taken vengeance of the stubborn maid,
From where the bright Athenian turrets rise
He mounts aloft, and reascends the skies.
Jove saw him enter the sublime abodes,
And, as he mixed among the crowd of gods,
Beckoned him out, and drew him from the rest,
And in soft whispers thus his will expressed.
'My trusty Hermes, by whose ready aid
Thy sire's commands are through the world conveyed,

10

*Resume thy wings, exert their utmost force,
And to the walls of Sidon speed they course;
There find a herd of heifers wandering o'er
The neighbouring hill, and drive them to the shore.'*

*Thus spoke the god, concealing his intent.
The trusty Hermes on his message went,
And found the herd of heifers wandering o'er
A neighbouring hill, and drove them to the shore;
Where the king's daughter, with a lovely train
Of fellow-nymphs, was sporting on the plain.*

20

The dignity of empire laid aside,
(For love but ill agrees with kingly pride,)
The ruler of the skies, the thundering god,
Who shakes the world's foundations with a nod,



Among a herd of lowing heifers ran,
Frisked in a bull, and bellowed o'er the plain.
Large rolls of fat about his shoulders clung,
And from his neck the double dewlap hung.
His skin was whiter than the snow that lies
Unsullied by the breath of southern skies;

30

*Small shining horns on his curled forehead stand,
As turned and polished by the workman's hand;
His eye-balls rolled, not formidably bright,
But gazed and languished with a gentle light.
His every look was peaceful, and expressed
The softness of the lover in the beast.*

*Agenor's royal daughter, as she played
Among the fields, the milk-white bull surveyed,
And viewed his spotless body with delight,
And at a distance kept him in her sight.*

40

At length she plucked the rising flowers, and fed
The gentle beast, and fondly stroked his head.
He stood well pleased to touch the charming fair,
But hardly could confine his pleasure there.
And now he wantons o'er the neighbouring strand,
Now rolls his body on the yellow sand;
And now, perceiving all her fears decayed,
Comes tossing forward to the royal maid;

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Gives her his breast to stroke, and downward turns
His grisly brow, and gently stoops his horns.

50

*In flowery wreaths the royal virgin dressed
His bending horns, and kindly clapped his breast.
Till now grown wanton, and devoid of fear,
Not knowing that she pressed the Thunderer,
She placed herself upon his back, and rode
O'er fields and meadows, seated on the god.*

*He gently marched along, and by degrees
Left the dry meadow, and approached the seas;
Where now he dips his hoofs and wets his thighs,
Now plunges in, and carries off the prize.*

60

The frightened nymph looks backward on the shore,
And hears the tumbling billows round her roar;
But still she holds him fast: one hand is borne
Upon his back, the other grasps a horn:
Her train of ruffling garments flies behind,
Swells in the air and hovers in the wind.

Through storms and tempests he the virgin bore,
And lands her safe on the Dictæan shore;
Where now, in his divinest form arrayed,
In his true shape he captivates the maid;

70

*Who gazes on him, and with wondering eyes
Beholds the new majestic figure rise,
His glowing features, and celestial light,
And all the god discovered to her sight.*

BOOK III.

THE STORY OF CADMUS.

When now Agenor had his daughter lost,
He sent his son to search on every coast;
And sternly bid him to his arms restore
The darling maid, or see his face no more,
But live an exile in a foreign clime:
Thus was the father pious to a crime.



The restless youth searched all the world around;
But how can Jove in his amours be found?
When tired at length with unsuccessful toil,
To shun his angry sire and native soil,

10

*He goes a suppliant to the Delphic dome;
There asks the god what new-appointed home
Should end his wanderings and his toils relieve.
The Delphic oracles this answer give:
'Behold among the fields a lonely cow,
Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plough;
Mark well the place where first she lays her down,
There measure out thy walls, and build thy town,
And from thy guide, Boetia call the land,
In which the destined walls and town shall stand.'*

20

No sooner had he left the dark abode,
Big with the promise of the Delphic god,
When in the fields the fatal cow he viewed,
Nor galled with yokes, nor worn with servitude:
Her gently at a distance he pursued;
And, as he walked aloof, in silence prayed
To the great power whose counsels he obeyed.
Her way through flowery Panope she took,
And now, Cephissus, crossed thy silver brook;
When to the heavens her spacious front she raised,

30

And bellowed thrice, then backward turning,

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gazed

*On those behind, till on the destined place
She stooped, and couched amid the rising grass.*

*Cadmus salutes the soil, and gladly hails
The new-found mountains, and the nameless vales,
And thanks the gods, and turns about his eye
To see his new dominions round him lie;
Then sends his servants to a neighbouring grove
For living streams, a sacrifice to Jove.
O'er the wide plain there rose a shady wood*

40

*Of aged trees; in its dark bosom stood
A bushy thicket, pathless and unworn,
O'errun with brambles, and perplexed with thorn:
Amidst the brake a hollow den was found,
With rocks and shelving arches vaulted round.*

*Deep in the dreary den, concealed from day,
Sacred to Mars, a mighty dragon lay,
Bloated with poison to a monstrous size;
Fire broke in flashes when he glanced his eyes;
His towering crest was glorious to behold,*

50

*His shoulders and his sides were scaled with gold;
Three tongues he brandished when he charged his foes;
His teeth stood jagged in three dreadful rows.
The Tyrians in the den for water sought,
And with their urns explored the hollow vault:
From side to side their empty urns rebound,
And rouse the sleepy serpent with the sound.
Straight he bestirs him, and is seen to rise;
And now with dreadful hissings fills the skies,
And darts his forked tongues, and rolls his glaring eyes.*

60

*The Tyrians drop their vessels in their fright,
All pale and trembling at the hideous sight
Spire above spire upreared in air he stood,
And gazing round him, overlooked the wood:
Then floating on the ground, in circles rolled;
Then leaped upon them in a mighty fold.
Of such a bulk, and such a monstrous size,
The serpent in the polar circle lies,
That stretches over half the northern skies.
In vain the Tyrians on their arms rely,*



70

*In vain attempt to fight, in vain to fly:
All their endeavours and their hopes are vain;
Some die entangled in the winding train;
Some are devoured; or feel a loathsome death,
Swoln up with blasts of pestilential breath.*

*And now the scorching sun was mounted high,
In all its lustre, to the noonday sky;
When, anxious for his friends, and filled with cares,
To search the woods the impatient chief prepares.
A lion's hide around his loins he wore,*

80

*The well-poised javelin to the field he bore,
Inured to blood, the far-destroying dart,
And, the best weapon, an undaunted heart.*

*Soon as the youth approached the fatal place,
He saw his servants breathless on the grass;
The scaly foe amid their corps he viewed,
Basking at ease, and feasting in their blood,
'Such friends,' he cries, 'deserved a longer date;
But Cadmus will revenge, or share their*



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fate.'

Then heaved a stone, and rising to the throw
90

*He sent it in a whirlwind at the foe:
A tower, assaulted by so rude a stroke,
With all its lofty battlements had shook;
But nothing here the unwieldy rock avails,
Rebounding harmless from the plaited scales,
That, firmly joined, preserved him from a wound,
With native armour crusted all around. 97
The pointed javelin more successful flew,
Which at his back the raging warrior threw;
Amid the plaited scales it took its course,*

100

And in the spinal marrow spent its force.
The monster hissed aloud, and raged in vain,
And writhed his body to and fro with pain;
And bit the spear, and wrenched the wood away;
The point still buried in the marrow lay.
And now his rage, increasing with his pain,
Reddens his eyes, and beats in every vein;
Churned in his teeth the foamy venom rose,
Whilst from his mouth a blast of vapours flows,
Such as the infernal Stygian waters cast;

110

*The plants around him wither in the blast.
Now in a maze of rings he lies enrolled,
Now all unravelled, and without a fold;
Now, like a torrent, with a mighty force,
Bears down the forest in his boisterous course.
Cadmus gave back, and on the lion's spoil
Sustained the shock, then forced him to recoil;
The pointed javelin warded off his rage:
Mad with his pains, and furious to engage,
The serpent champs the steel, and bites the spear,*

120

Till blood and venom all the point besmear.
But still the hurt he yet received was slight;
For, whilst the champion with redoubled might
Strikes home the javelin, his retiring foe
Shrinks from the wound, and disappoints the blow.
The dauntless hero still pursues his stroke,



And presses forward, till a knotty oak
Retards his foe, and stops him in the rear;
Full in his throat he plunged the fatal spear,
That in the extended neck a passage found,

130

*And pierced the solid timber through the wound.
Fixed to the reeling trunk, with many a stroke
Of his huge tail, he lashed the sturdy oak;
Till spent with toil, and labouring hard for breath,
He now lay twisting in the pangs of death.*

*Cadmus beheld him wallow in a flood
Of swimming poison, intermixed with blood;
When suddenly a speech was heard from high,
(The speech was heard, nor was the speaker nigh,)
'Why dost thou thus with secret pleasure see,*

140

*Insulting man! what thou thyself shalt be?'
Astonished at the voice, he stood amazed,
And all around with inward horror gazed:
When Pallas, swift descending from the skies,
Pallas, the guardian of the bold and wise,
Bids him plough up the field, and scatter round
The dragon's teeth o'er all the furrowed ground;*



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Then tells the youth how to his wondering eyes
Embattled armies from the field should rise.

He sows the teeth at Pallas's command,

150

*And flings the future people from his hand.
The clods grow warm, and crumble where he sows;
And now the pointed spears advance in rows;
Now nodding plumes appear, and shining crests,
Now the broad shoulders and the rising breasts:
O'er all the field the breathing harvest swarms,
A growing host, a crop of men and arms.*

*So through the parting stage a figure rears
Its body up, and limb by limb appears
By just degrees; till all the man arise,*

160

And in his full proportion strikes the eyes.

Cadmus surprised, and startled at the sight
Of his new foes, prepared himself for fight:
When one cried out, 'Forbear, fond man, forbear
To mingle in a blind, promiscuous war.'
This said, he struck his brother to the ground,
Himself expiring by another's wound;
Nor did the third his conquest long survive,
Dying ere scarce he had begun to live.

The dire example ran through all the field,

170

*Till heaps of brothers were by brothers killed;
The furrows swam in blood: and only five
Of all the vast increase were left alive.
Echion one, at Pallas's command,
Let fall the guiltless weapon from his hand;
And with the rest a peaceful treaty makes,
Whom Cadmus as his friends and partners takes:
So founds a city on the promised earth,
And gives his new Boeotian empire birth.*

Here Cadmus reigned; and now one would have guessed

180

The royal founder in his exile blessed:
Long did he live within his new abodes,
Allied by marriage to the deathless gods;



And, in a fruitful wife's embraces old,
A long increase of children's children told:
But no frail man, however great or high,
Can be concluded blessed before he die.
Actaeon was the first of all his race,
Who grieved his grandsire in his borrowed face;
Condemned by stern Diana to bemoan

190

*The branching horns, and visage not his own;
To shun his once-loved dogs, to bound away,
And from their huntsman to become their prey.
And yet consider why the change was wrought,
You'll find it his misfortune, not his fault;
Or if a fault, it was the fault of chance:
For how can guilt proceed from ignorance?*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ACTAEON INTO A STAG.

In a fair chase a shady mountain stood,
Well stored with game, and marked with trails of blood.
Here did the huntsmen till the heat of day
Pursue the stag, and load themselves with prey;
When thus Actaeon calling to the rest:
'My friends,' says he, 'our sport is at the best.
The sun is high advanced, and downward sheds
His burning beams directly on our heads;

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Then by consent abstain from further spoils,
Call off the dogs, and gather up the toils;

10

*And ere to-morrow's sun begins his race,
Take the cool morning to renew the chase.'
They all consent, and in a cheerful train
The jolly huntsmen, loaden with the slain,
Return in triumph from the sultry plain.*

*Down in a vale with pine and cypress clad,
Refreshed with gentle winds, and brown with shade,
The chaste Diana's private haunt, there stood
Full in the centre of the darksome wood
A spacious grotto, all around o'ergrown*

20

With hoary moss, and arched with pumice-stone.
From out its rocky clefts the waters flow,
And trickling swell into a lake below.
Nature had everywhere so played her part,
That everywhere she seemed to vie with art.
Here the bright goddess, toiled and chafed with heat,
Was wont to bathe her in the cool retreat.

Here did she now with all her train resort,
Panting with heat, and breathless from the sport;
Her armour-bearer laid her bow aside,

30

*Some loosed her sandals, some her veil untied;
Each busy nymph her proper part undressed;
While Crocale, more handy than the rest,
Gathered her flowing hair, and in a noose
Bound it together, whilst her own hung loose.
Five of the more ignoble sort by turns
Fetch up the water, and unlade their urns.*

*Now all undressed the shining goddess stood,
When young Actaeon, wildered in the wood,
To the cool grot by his hard fate betrayed,*

40

The fountains filled with naked nymphs surveyed.
The frightened virgins shrieked at the surprise,
(The forest echoed with their piercing cries,)
Then in a huddle round their goddess pressed:



She, proudly eminent above the rest,
With blushes glowed; such blushes as adorn
The ruddy welkin, or the purple morn;
And though the crowding nymphs her body hide,
Half backward shrunk, and viewed him from aside.
Surprised, at first she would have snatched her bow,

50

*But sees the circling waters round her flow;
These in the hollow of her hand she took,
And dashed them in his face, while thus she spoke:
'Tell if thou canst the wondrous sight disclosed,
A goddess naked to thy view exposed.'*

*This said, the man began to disappear
By slow degrees, and ended in a deer.
A rising horn on either brow he wears,
And stretches out his neck, and pricks his ears;
Rough is his skin, with sudden hairs o'ergrown,*

60

His bosom pants with fears before unknown.
Transformed at length, he flies away in haste,
And wonders why he flies away so fast.
But as by chance, within a neighbouring brook,
He saw his branching horns and altered look,
Wretched Actaeon! in a doleful tone
He tried to speak, but only gave a groan;

Page 78

And as he wept, within the watery glass
He saw the big round drops, with silent pace,
Run trickling down a savage hairy face.

70

*What should he do? Or seek his old abodes,
Or herd among the deer, and skulk in woods?
Here shame dissuades him, there his fear prevails,
And each by turns his aching heart assails.*

*As he thus ponders, he behind him spies
His opening hounds, and now he hears their cries:
A generous pack, or to maintain the chase,
Or snuff the vapour from the scented grass.*

*He bounded off with fear, and swiftly ran
O'er craggy mountains, and the flowery plain;*

80

Through brakes and thickets forced his way, and flew
Through many a ring, where once he did pursue.
In vain he oft endeavoured to proclaim
His new misfortune, and to tell his name;
Nor voice nor words the brutal tongue supplies;
From shouting men, and horns, and dogs he flies,
Deafened and stunned with their promiscuous cries.
When now the fleetest of the pack, that pressed
Close at his heels, and sprung before the rest,
Had fastened on him, straight another pair

90

*Hung on his wounded haunch, and held him there,
Till all the pack came up, and every hound
Tore the sad huntsman, grovelling on the ground,
Who now appeared but one continued wound.
With dropping tears his bitter fate he moans,
And fills the mountain with his dying groans.
His servants with a piteous look he spies,
And turns about his supplicating eyes.
His servants, ignorant of what had chanced,
With eager haste and joyful shouts advanced,*

100

And called their lord Actaeon to the game:
He shook his head in answer to the name;
He heard, but wished he had indeed been gone,



Or only to have stood a looker-on.
But, to his grief, he finds himself too near,
And feels his ravenous dogs with fury tear
Their wretched master, panting in a deer.

THE BIRTH OF BACCHUS.

Actaeon's sufferings, and Diana's rage,
Did all the thoughts of men and gods engage;
Some called the evils which Diana wrought,
Too great, and disproportioned to the fault:
Others, again, esteemed Actaeon's woes
Fit for a virgin goddess to impose.
The hearers into different parts divide,
And reasons are produced on either side.

Juno alone, of all that heard the news,
Nor would condemn the goddess, nor excuse:

10

*She heeded not the justice of the deed,
But joyed to see the race of Cadmus bleed;
For still she kept Europa in her mind,
And, for her sake, detested all her kind.
Besides, to aggravate her hate, she heard
How Semele, to Jove's embrace preferred,
Was now grown big with an immortal load,
And carried in her womb a future god.*

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*Thus terribly incensed, the goddess broke
To sudden fury, and abruptly spoke.*

20

*'Are my reproaches of so small a force?
'Tis time I then pursue another course:
It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die,
If I'm indeed the mistress of the sky;
If rightly styled among the powers above
The wife and sister of the thundering Jove,
(And none can sure a sister's right deny,)
It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die.
She boasts an honour I can hardly claim;
Pregnant, she rises to a mother's name;*

30

*While proud and vain she triumphs in her Jove,
And shows the glorious tokens of his love:
But if I'm still the mistress of the skies,
By her own lover the fond beauty dies.'*
*This said, descending in a yellow cloud,
Before the gates of Semele she stood.*

*Old Beroe's decrepit shape she wears,
Her wrinkled visage, and her hoary hairs;
Whilst in her trembling gait she totters on,
And learns to tattle in the nurse's tone.*

40

*The goddess, thus disguised in age, beguiled
With pleasing stories her false foster-child.
Much did she talk of love, and when she came
To mention to the nymph her lover's name,
Fetching a sigh, and holding down her head,
'Tis well,' says she, 'if all be true that's said;
But trust me, child, I'm much inclined to fear
Some counterfeit in this your Jupiter.
Many an honest, well-designing maid,
Has been by these pretended gods betrayed.*

50

*But if he be indeed the thundering Jove,
Bid him, when next he courts the rites of love,
Descend, triumphant from the ethereal sky,
In all the pomp of his divinity;
Encompassed round by those celestial charms,*



With which he fills the immortal Juno's arms.'

*The unwary nymph, insnared with what she said,
Desired of Jove, when next he sought her bed,
To grant a certain gift which she would choose;
'Fear not,' replied the god, 'that I'll refuse*

60

*Whate'er you ask: may Styx confirm my voice,
Choose what you will, and you shall have your choice.'*
*'Then,' says the nymph, 'when next you seek my arms,
May you descend in those celestial charms,
With which your Juno's bosom you inflame,
And fill with transport heaven's immortal dame.'*
*The god surprised, would fain have stopped her voice:
But he had sworn, and she had made her choice.*

*To keep his promise he ascends, and shrouds
His awful brow in whirlwinds and in clouds;*

70

*Whilst all around, in terrible array,
His thunders rattle, and his lightnings play.
And yet, the dazzling lustre to abate,
He set not out in all his pomp and state,
Clad in the mildest lightning of the skies,
And armed with thunder of the smallest size:
Not those huge bolts, by which the giants*



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slain,

Lay overthrown on the Phlegraeon plain.

'Twas of a lesser mould, and lighter weight;

They call it thunder of a second-rate.

80

For the rough Cyclops, who by Jove's command

Tempered the bolt, and turned it to his hand,

Worked up less flame and fury in its make,

And quenched it sooner in the standing lake.

Thus dreadfully adorned, with horror bright,

The illustrious god, descending from his height,

Came rushing on her in a storm of light.

The mortal dame, too feeble to engage

The lightning's flashes and the thunder's rage,

Consumed amidst the glories she desired,

90

And in the terrible embrace expired.

But, to preserve his offspring from the tomb,

Jove took him smoking from the blasted womb;

And, if on ancient tales we may rely,

Enclosed the abortive infant in his thigh.

Here, when the babe had all his time fulfilled,

Ino first took him for her foster-child;

Then the Niseans, in their dark abode,

Nursed secretly with milk the thriving god.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TIRESIAS.

'Twas now, while these transactions passed on earth,

And Bacchus thus procured a second birth,

When Jove, disposed to lay aside the weight

Of public empire and the cares of state,

As to his queen in nectar bowls he quaffed,

'In troth,' says he, and as he spoke he laughed,

'The sense of pleasure in the male is far

More dull and dead than what you females share.'

Juno the truth of what was said denied;

Tiresias therefore must the cause decide;

10

For he the pleasure of each sex had tried.

It happened once, within a shady wood,

Two twisted snakes he in conjunction viewed;

When with his staff their slimy folds he broke,

And lost his manhood at the fatal stroke.



*But, after seven revolving years, he viewed
The self-same serpents in the self-same wood;
'And if,' says he, 'such virtue in you lie,
That he who dares your slimy folds untie
Must change his kind, a second stroke I'll try.'*

20

Again he struck the snakes, and stood again
New-sexed, and straight recovered into man.
Him therefore both the deities create
The sovereign umpire in their grand debate;
And he declared for Jove; when Juno, fired
More than so trivial an affair required,
Deprived him, in her fury, of his sight,
And left him groping round in sudden night.
But Jove (for so it is in heaven decreed,
That no one god repeal another's deed)

30

*Irradiates all his soul with inward light,
And with the prophet's art relieves the want of sight.*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ECHO.



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Famed far and near for knowing things to come,
From him the inquiring nations sought their doom;
The fair Liriope his answers tried,
And first the unerring prophet justified;
This nymph the god Cephissus had abused,
With all his winding waters circumfused,
And on the Nereid got a lovely boy,
Whom the soft maids even then beheld with joy.

The tender dame, solicitous to know
Whether her child should reach old age or no,

10

*Consults the sage Tiresias, who replies,
'If e'er he knows himself, he surely dies.'
Long lived the dubious mother in suspense,
Till time unriddled all the prophet's sense.*

*Narcissus now his sixteenth year began,
Just turned of boy, and on the verge of man;
Many a friend the blooming youth caressed,
Many a love-sick maid her flame confessed:
Such was his pride, in vain the friend caressed,
The love-sick maid in vain her flame confessed.*

20

Once, in the woods, as he pursued the chase,
The babbling Echo had descried his face;
She, who in others' words her silence breaks,
Nor speaks herself but when another speaks.
Echo was then a maid, of speech bereft,
Of wonted speech; for though her voice was left,
Juno a curse did on her tongue impose,
To sport with every sentence in the close.
Full often, when the goddess might have caught
Jove and her rivals in the very fault,

30

*This nymph with subtle stories would delay
Her coming, till the lovers slipped away.
The goddess found out the deceit in time,
And then she cried, 'That tongue, for this thy crime,
Which could so many subtle tales produce,
Shall be hereafter but of little use.'*

*Hence 'tis she prattles in a fainter tone,
With mimic sounds, and accents not her own.*

*This love-sick virgin, overjoyed to find
The boy alone, still followed him behind;*



40

When, glowing warmly at her near approach,
As sulphur blazes at the taper's touch,
She longed her hidden passion to reveal,
And tell her pains, but had not words to tell:
She can't begin, but waits for the rebound,
To catch his voice, and to return the sound.
The nymph, when nothing could Narcissus move,
Still dashed with blushes for her slighted love,
Lived in the shady covert of the woods,
In solitary caves and dark abodes;

50

*Where pining wandered the rejected fair,
Till harassed out, and worn away with care,
The sounding skeleton, of blood bereft,
Besides her bones and voice had nothing left.
Her bones are petrified, her voice is found
In vaults, where still it doubles every sound.*

THE STORY OF NARCISSUS.

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Thus did the nymphs in vain caress the boy,
He still was lovely, but he still was coy;
When one fair virgin of the slighted train
Thus prayed the gods, provoked by his disdain,
'Oh, may he love like me, and love like me in vain!'
Rhamnusia pitied the neglected fair,
And with just vengeance answered to her prayer.

There stands a fountain in a darksome wood,
Nor stained with falling leaves nor rising mud;
Untroubled by the breath of winds it rests,

10

*Unsullied by the touch of men or beasts:
High bowers of shady trees above it grow,
And rising grass and cheerful greens below.
Pleased with the form and coolness of the place,
And over-heated by the morning chase,
Narcissus on the grassy verdure lies:
But whilst within the crystal fount he tries
To quench his heat, he feels new heats arise.
For as his own bright image he surveyed,
He fell in love with the fantastic shade;*

20

And o'er the fair resemblance hung unmoved,
Nor knew, fond youth! it was himself he loved.
The well-turned neck and shoulders he describes,
The spacious forehead, and the sparkling eyes;
The hands that Bacchus might not scorn to show,
And hair that round Apollo's head might flow,
With all the purple youthfulness of face,
That gently blushes in the watery glass.
By his own flames consumed the lover lies,
And gives himself the wound by which he dies.

30

*To the cold water oft he joins his lips,
Oft catching at the beauteous shade he dips
His arms, as often from himself he slips.
Nor knows he who it is his arms pursue
With eager clasps, but loves he knows not who.
What could, fond youth, this helpless passion move?
What kindle in thee this unpitied love?
Thy own warm blush within the water glows,
With thee the coloured shadow comes and goes,
Its empty being on thyself relies;*



40

Step thou aside, and the frail charmer dies.

Still o'er the fountain's watery gleam he stood,
Mindless of sleep, and negligent of food;
Still viewed his face, and languished as he viewed.
At length he raised his head, and thus began
To vent his griefs, and tell the woods his pain.
'You trees,' says he, 'and thou surrounding grove,
Who oft have been the kindly scenes of love,
Tell me, if e'er within your shades did lie
A youth so tortured, so perplexed as I?

50

*I who before me see the charming fair,
Whilst there he stands, and yet he stands not there:
In such a maze of love my thoughts are lost;
And yet no bulwarked town, nor distant coast,
Preserves the beauteous youth from being seen,
No mountains rise, nor oceans flow between.
A shallow water hinders my embrace;
And yet the lovely mimic wears a face
That kindly smiles, and when I bend to*



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join

My lips to his, he fondly bends to mine.

60

Hear, gentle youth, and pity my complaint,
Come from thy well, thou fair inhabitant.
My charms an easy conquest have obtained
O'er other hearts, by thee alone disdained.
But why should I despair? I'm sure he burns
With equal flames, and languishes by turns.
Whene'er I stoop he offers at a kiss,
And when my arms I stretch, he stretches his.
His eye with pleasure on my face he keeps,
He smiles my smiles, and when I weep he weeps.

70

*Whene'er I speak, his moving lips appear
To utter something, which I cannot hear.
'Ah wretched me! I now begin too late
To find out all the long-perplexed deceit;
It is myself I love, myself I see;
The gay delusion is a part of me.
I kindle up the fires by which I burn,
And my own beauties from the well return.
Whom should I court? how utter my complaint?
Enjoyment but produces my restraint,*

80

And too much plenty makes me die for want.
How gladly would I from myself remove!
And at a distance set the thing I love.
My breast is warmed with such unusual fire,
I wish him absent whom I most desire.
And now I faint with grief; my fate draws nigh;
In all the pride of blooming youth I die.
Death will the sorrows of my heart relieve.
Oh, might the visionary youth survive,
I should with joy my latest breath resign!

90

But oh! I see his fate involved in mine.'
*This said, the weeping youth again returned
To the clear fountain, where again he burned;
His tears defaced the surface of the well
With circle after circle, as they fell:
And now the lovely face but half appears,
O'errun with wrinkles, and deformed with tears.*



*'All whither,' cries Narcissus, 'dost thou fly?
Let me still feed the flame by which I die;
Let me still see, though I'm no further blessed.'*

100

Then rends his garment off, and beats his breast:
His naked bosom reddened with the blow,
In such a blush as purple clusters show,
Ere yet the sun's autumnal heats refine
Their sprightly juice, and mellow it to wine.
The glowing beauties of his breast he spies,
And with a new redoubled passion dies.
As wax dissolves, as ice begins to run,
And trickle into drops before the sun;
So melts the youth, and languishes away,

110

*His beauty withers, and his limbs decay;
And none of those attractive charms remain,
To which the slighted Echo sued in vain.*

*She saw him in his present misery,
Whom, spite of all her wrongs, she grieved to see.
She answered sadly to the lover's moan,
Sighed back his sighs, and groaned to every groan:
'Ah youth! beloved in vain,' Narcissus cries;
'Ah youth! beloved in vain,' the nymph replies.*



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'Farewell,' says he; the parting sound scarce fell
120

From his faint lips, but she replied, 'Farewell.'
Then on the unwholesome earth he gasping lies,
Till death shuts up those self-admiring eyes.
To the cold shades his flitting ghost retires,
And in the Stygian waves itself admires.

For him the Naiads and the Dryads mourn,
Whom the sad Echo answers in her turn;
And now the sister-nymphs prepare his urn:
When, looking for his corpse, they only found
A rising stalk, with yellow blossoms crowned.
130

THE STORY OF PENTHEUS.

This sad event gave blind Tiresias fame,
Through Greece established in a prophet's name.

The unhallowed Pentheus only durst deride
The cheated people, and their eyeless guide,
To whom the prophet in his fury said,
Shaking the hoary honours of his head;
'Twere well, presumptuous man, 'twere well for thee
If thou wert eyeless too, and blind, like me:
For the time comes, nay, 'tis already here,
When the young god's solemnities appear;
10

*Which, if thou dost not with just rites adorn,
Thy impious carcase, into pieces torn,
Shall strew the woods, and hang on every thorn.
Then, then, remember what I now foretell,
And own the blind Tiresias saw too well.'*
*Still Pentheus scorns him, and derides his skill,
But time did all the promised threats fulfil.
For now through prostrate Greece young Bacchus rode,
Whilst howling matrons celebrate the god.
All ranks and sexes to his orgies ran,*
20

To mingle in the pomps, and fill the train.
When Pentheus thus his wicked rage express'd;
'What madness, Thebans, has your soul possess'd?



Can hollow timbrels, can a drunken shout,
And the lewd clamours of a beastly rout,
Thus quell your courage? can the weak alarm
Of women's yells those stubborn souls disarm,
Whom nor the sword nor trumpet e'er could fright,
Nor the loud din and horror of a fight?
And you, our sires, who left your old abodes,

30

*And fixed in foreign earth your country gods;
Will you without a stroke your city yield,
And poorly quit an undisputed field?
But you, whose youth and vigour should inspire
Heroic warmth, and kindle martial fire,
Whom burnished arms and crested helmets grace,
Not flowery garlands and a painted face;
Remember him to whom you stand allied:
The serpent for his well of waters died.
He fought the strong; do you his courage show,*

40

And gain a conquest o'er a feeble foe.
If Thebes must fall, oh might the Fates afford
A nobler doom from famine, fire, or sword!
Then might the Thebans perish with renown:
But now a beardless victor sacks the town;
Whom nor the prancing steed, nor ponderous



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shield,

Nor the hacked helmet, nor the dusty field,
But the soft joys of luxury and ease,
The purple vests, and flowery garlands, please.
Stand then aside, I'll make the counterfeit

50

*Renounce his godhead, and confess the cheat.
Acrisius from the Grecian walls repelled
This boasted power; why then should Pentheus yield?
Go quickly, drag the audacious boy to me;
I'll try the force of his divinity.'*
*Thus did the audacious wretch those rites profane;
His friends dissuade the audacious wretch in vain;
In vain his grandsire urged him to give o'er
His impious threats; the wretch but raves the more.
So have I seen a river gently glide,*

60

In a smooth course and inoffensive tide;
But if with dams its current we restrain,
It bears down all, and foams along the plain.
But now his servants came besmeared with blood,
Sent by their haughty prince to seize the god;
The god they found not in the frantic throng
But dragged a zealous votary along.

THE MARINERS TRANSFORMED TO DOLPHINS.

Him Pentheus viewed with fury in his look,
And scarce withheld his hands, while thus he spoke:
'Vile slave! whom speedy vengeance shall pursue,
And terrify thy base, seditious crew:
Thy country and thy parentage reveal,
And why thou join'st in these mad orgies tell.'
The captive views him with undaunted eyes,
And, armed with inward innocence, replies.
'From high Meonia's rocky shores I came,
Of poor descent, Acaetes is my name:

10

*My sire was meanly born; no oxen ploughed
His fruitful fields, nor in his pastures lowed.
His whole estate within the waters lay;
With lines and hooks he caught the finny prey.*



*His art was all his livelihood; which he
Thus with his dying lips bequeathed to me:
In streams, my boy, and rivers, take thy chance;
There swims,' said he, 'thy whole inheritance.*

*'Long did I live on this poor legacy;
Till tired with rocks, and my own native sky,*

20

*To arts of navigation I inclined,
Observed the turns and changes of the wind:
Learned the fit havens, and began to note
The stormy Hyades, the rainy Goat,
The bright Taeygete, and the shining Bears,
With all the sailor's catalogue of stars.*

*'Once, as by chance for Delos I designed,
My vessel, driven by a strong gust of wind,
Moored in a Chian creek; ashore I went,
And all the following night in Chios spent.*

30

*When morning rose, I sent my mates to bring
Supplies of water from a neighbouring spring,
Whilst I the motion of the winds explored;
Then summoned in my crew, and went aboard.
Opheltes heard my summons, and with joy
Brought to the shore a soft and lovely boy,
With more than female sweetness in his*



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look,

*Whom straggling in the neighbouring fields he took.
With fumes of wine the little captive glows,
And nods with sleep, and staggers as he goes.*

40

'I viewed him nicely, and began to trace
Each heavenly feature, each immortal grace,
And saw divinity in all his face.
"I know not who," said I, "this god should be;
But that he is a god I plainly see:
And thou, whoever thou art, excuse the force
These men have used; and, oh! befriend our course!"
"Pray not for us," the nimble Dictys cried,
Dictys, that could the main-top-mast bestride,
And down the ropes with active vigour slide.

50

*To the same purpose old Epopeus spoke,
Who overlooked the oars, and timed the stroke;
The same the pilot, and the same the rest;
Such impious avarice their souls possessed.
"Nay, heaven forbid that I should bear away
Within my vessel so divine a prey,"
Said I; and stood to hinder their intent:
When Lycabas, a wretch for murder sent
From Tuscany, to suffer banishment,
With his clenched fist had struck me overboard,*

60

Had not my hands, in falling, grasped a cord.
'His base confederates the fact approve;
When Bacchus (for 'twas he) began to move,
Waked by the noise and clamours which they raised;
And shook his drowsy limbs, and round him gazed:
"What means this noise?" he cries; "am I betrayed?
All! whither, whither must I be conveyed?"
"Fear not," said Proreus, "child, but tell us where
You wish to land, and trust our friendly care."
"To Naxos then direct your course," said he;

70

*"Naxos a hospitable port shall be
To each of you, a joyful home to me."
By every god that rules the sea or sky,
The perjured villains promise to comply,
And bid me hasten to unmoor the ship.*



*With eager joy I launch into the deep;
And, heedless of the fraud, for Naxos stand:
They whisper oft, and beckon with the hand,
And give me signs, all anxious for their prey,
To tack about, and steer another way.*

80

*"Then let some other to my post succeed,"
Said I, "I'm guiltless of so foul a deed."
"What," says Ethalion, "must the ship's whole crew
Follow your humour, and depend on you?"
And straight himself he seated at the prore,
And tacked about, and sought another shore.
'The beauteous youth now found himself betrayed,
And from the deck the rising waves surveyed,
And seemed to weep, and as he wept he said;
"And do you thus my easy faith beguile?"*

90

*Thus do you bear me to my native isle?
Will such a multitude of men employ
Their strength against a weak, defenceless boy?"
'In vain did I the godlike youth deplore,
The more I begged, they thwarted me the more.
And now by all the gods in heaven that*



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hear

*This solemn oath, by Bacchus' self, I swear,
The mighty miracle that did ensue,
Although it seems beyond belief, is true.
The vessel, fixed and rooted in the flood,*

100

*Unmoved by all the beating billows stood.
In vain the mariners would plough the main
With sails unfurled, and strike their oars in vain;
Around their oars a twining ivy cleaves,
And climbs the mast and hides the cords in leaves:
The sails are covered with a cheerful green,
And berries in the fruitful canvas seen.
Amidst the waves a sudden forest rears
Its verdant head, and a new spring appears.
'The god we now behold with open eyes;*

110

*A herd of spotted panthers round him lies
In glaring forms; the grapy clusters spread
On his fair brows, and dangle on his head.
And whilst he frowns, and brandishes his spear,
My mates, surprised with madness or with fear,
Leaped overboard; first perjured Madon found
Rough scales and fins his stiffening sides surround;
"Ah! what," cries one, "has thus transformed thy look?"
Straight his own mouth grew wider as he spoke;
And now himself he views with like surprise.*

120

*Still at his oar the industrious Libys plies;
But, as he plies, each busy arm shrinks in,
And by degrees is fashioned to a fin.
Another, as he catches at a cord,
Misses his arms, and, tumbling overboard,
With his broad fins and forky tail he laves
The rising surge, and flounces in the waves.
Thus all my crew transformed around the ship,
Or dive below, or on the surface leap,
And spout the waves, and wanton in the deep.*

130

*Full nineteen sailors did the ship convey,
A shoal of nineteen dolphins round her play.
I only in my proper shape appear,
Speechless with wonder, and half dead with fear,*



*Till Bacchus kindly bid me fear no more.
With him I landed on the Chian shore,
And him shall ever gratefully adore.'*

*'This forging slave,' says Pentheus, 'would prevail
O'er our just fury by a far-fetched tale:
Go, let him feel the whips, the swords, the fire,*

140

*And in the tortures of the rack expire.'
The officious servants hurry him away,
And the poor captive in a dungeon lay.
But, whilst the whips and tortures are prepared.
The gates fly open, of themselves unbarred;
At liberty the unfettered captive stands,
And flings the loosened shackles from his hands.*

THE DEATH OF PENTHEUS.

But Pentheus, grown more furious than before,
Resolved to send his messengers no more,
But went himself to the distracted throng,
Where high Cithaeron echoed with their song.
And as the fiery war-horse paws the ground,
And snorts and trembles at the trumpet's



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sound;

Transported thus he heard the frantic rout,
And raved and maddened at the distant shout.

A spacious circuit on the hill there stood,
Level and wide, and skirted round with wood;

10

*Here the rash Pentheus, with unhallowed eyes,
The howling dames and mystic orgies spies.
His mother sternly viewed him where he stood,
And kindled into madness as she viewed:
Her leafy javelin at her son she cast,
And cries, 'The boar that lays our country waste!
The boar, my sisters! aim the fatal dart,
And strike the brindled monster to the heart.'*

*Pentheus astonished heard the dismal sound,
And sees the yelling matrons gathering round:*

20

He sees, and weeps at his approaching fate,
And begs for mercy, and repents too late.
'Help, help! my aunt Autonoe,' he cried;
'Remember how your own Actaeon died.'
Deaf to his cries, the frantic matron crops
One stretched-out arm, the other Ino lops.
In vain does Pentheus to his mother sue,
And the raw bleeding stumps presents to view:
His mother howled; and heedless of his prayer,
Her trembling hand she twisted in his hair,

30

*'And this,' she cried, 'shall be Agave's share,'
When from the neck his struggling head she tore,
And in her hands the ghastly visage bore,
With pleasure all the hideous trunk survey;
Then pulled and tore the mangled limbs away,
As starting in the pangs of death it lay.
Soon as the wood its leafy honours casts,
Blown off and scattered by autumnal blasts,
With such a sudden death lay Pentheus slain,
And in a thousand pieces strowed the plain.*

40

By so distinguishing a judgment awed,
The Thebans tremble, and confess the god.

BOOK IV.

THE STORY OF SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITES.

How Salmacis, with weak enfeebling streams
Softens the body, and unnerves the limbs,
And what the secret cause, shall here be shown;
The cause is secret, but the effect is known.

The Naiads nursed an infant heretofore,
That Cytherea once to Hermes bore:
From both the illustrious authors of his race
The child was named; nor was it hard to trace
Both the bright parents through the infant's face.
When fifteen years, in Ida's cool retreat,

10

*The boy had told, he left his native seat,
And sought fresh fountains in a foreign soil;
The pleasure lessened the attending toil.
With eager steps the Lycian fields he crossed,
And fields that border on the Lycian coast;
A river here he viewed so lovely bright,
It showed the bottom in a fairer light,
Nor kept a sand concealed from human sight.
The stream produced nor slimy ooze, nor weeds,
Nor miry rushes, nor the spiky reeds;*

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20

But dealt enriching moisture all around,
The fruitful banks with cheerful verdure crowned,
And kept the spring eternal on the ground.
A nymph presides, nor practised in the chase,
Nor skilful at the bow, nor at the race;
Of all the blue-eyed daughters of the main,
The only stranger to Diana's train:
Her sisters often, as 'tis said, would cry,
'Fie, Salmacis, what always idle! fie,
Or take thy quiver, or thy arrows seize,

30

*And mix the toils of hunting with thy ease.'
Nor quiver she nor arrows e'er would seize,
Nor mix the toils of hunting with her ease.
But oft would bathe her in the crystal tide,
Oft with a comb her dewy locks divide;
Now in the limpid streams she viewed her face,
And dressed her image in the floating glass:
On beds of leaves she now reposed her limbs,
Now gathered flowers that grew about her streams:
And then by chance was gathering, as she stood*

40

To view the boy, and longed for what she viewed.
Fain would she meet the youth with hasty feet,
She fain would meet him, but refused to meet
Before her looks were set with nicest care,
And well deserved to be reputed fair.
'Bright youth,' she cries, 'whom all thy features prove
A god, and, if a god, the god of love;
But if a mortal, bless'd thy nurse's breast,
Bless'd are thy parents, and thy sisters bless'd:
But, oh! how bless'd! how more than bless'd thy bride,

50

*Allied in bliss, if any yet allied.
If so, let mine the stolen enjoyments be;
If not, behold a willing bride in me.'*
The boy knew nought of love, and, touched with shame,
He strove, and blushed, but still the blush became:
In rising blushes still fresh beauties rose;



*The sunny side of fruit such blushes shows,
And such the moon, when all her silver white
Turns in eclipses to a ruddy light.*

The nymph still begs, if not a nobler bliss,

60

A cold salute at least, a sister's kiss:
And now prepares to take the lovely boy
Between her arms. He, innocently coy,
Replies, 'Or leave me to myself alone,
You rude, uncivil nymph, or I'll begone.'
'Fair stranger then,' says she, 'it shall be so;'
And, for she feared his threats, she feigned to go;
But hid within a covert's neighbouring green,
She kept him still in sight, herself unseen.
The boy now fancies all the danger o'er,

70

*And innocently sports about the shore,
Playful and wanton to the stream he trips,
And dips his foot, and shivers as he dips.
The coolness pleased him, and with eager haste
His airy garments on the banks he cast;
His godlike features, and his heavenly hue,
And all his beauties were exposed to view.
His naked limbs the nymph with rapture spies,
While hotter passions in her bosom rise,*



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Flush in her cheeks, and sparkle in her eyes.

80

She longs, she burns to clasp him in her arms,
And looks, and sighs, and kindles at his charms.

Now all undressed upon the banks he stood,
And clapped his sides and leaped into the flood:
His lovely limbs the silver waves divide,
His limbs appear more lovely through the tide;
As lilies shut within a crystal case,
Receive a glossy lustre from the glass.
'He's mine, he's all my own,' the Naiad cries,
And flings off all, and after him she flies.

90

*And now she fastens on him as he swims,
And holds him close, and wraps about his limbs.
The more the boy resisted, and was coy,
The more she clipped and kissed the struggling boy.
So when the wriggling snake is snatched on high
In eagle's claws, and hisses in the sky,
Around the foe his twirling tail he flings,
And twists her legs, and writhes about her wings.
The restless boy still obstinately strove
To free himself, and still refused her love.*

100

Amidst his limbs she kept her limbs entwined,
'And why, coy youth,' she cries, 'why thus unkind!
Oh may the gods thus keep us ever joined!
Oh may we never, never part again!'
So prayed the nymph, nor did she pray in vain:
For now she finds him, as his limbs she pressed,
Grow nearer still, and nearer to her breast;
Till, piercing each the other's flesh, they run
Together, and incorporate in one:
Last in one face are both their faces joined,

110

*As when the stock and grafted twig combined
Shoot up the same, and wear a common rind:
Both bodies in a single body mix,
A single body with a double sex.*

*The boy, thus lost in woman, now surveyed
The river's guilty stream, and thus he prayed:*



*(He prayed, but wondered at his softer tone,
Surprised to hear a voice but half his own:)
You parent gods, whose heavenly names I bear,
Hear your Hermaphrodite, and grant my prayer;*

120

Oh grant, that whomsoe'er these streams contain,
If man he entered, he may rise again
Supple, unsinewed, and but half a man!

The heavenly parents answered, from on high,
Their two-shaped son, the double votary;
Then gave a secret virtue to the flood,
And tinged its source to make his wishes good.

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES,[12]

WITH THE TRAGEDY OF CATO, NOV. 1714.

The Muse that oft, with sacred raptures fired,
Has generous thoughts of liberty inspired,
And, boldly rising for Britannia's laws,
Engaged great Cato in her country's cause,
On you submissive waits, with hopes assured,
By whom the mighty blessing stands secured,
And all the glories that our age adorn,
Are promised to a people yet unborn.

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No longer shall the widowed land bemoan
A broken lineage, and a doubtful throne;

10

*But boast her royal progeny's increase,
And count the pledges of her future peace.
O, born to strengthen and to grace our isle!
While you, fair Princess, in your offspring smile,
Supplying charms to the succeeding age,
Each heavenly daughter's triumphs we presage;
Already see the illustrious youths complain,
And pity monarchs doomed to sigh in vain.*

*Thou too, the darling of our fond desires,
Whom Albion, opening wide her arms, requires,*

20

With manly valour and attractive air
Shalt quell the fierce and captivate the fair.
O England's younger hope! in whom conspire
The mother's sweetness and the father's fire!
For thee perhaps, even now, of kingly race,
Some dawning beauty blooms in every grace,
Some Carolina, to heaven's dictates true,
Who, while the sceptred rivals vainly sue,
Thy inborn worth with conscious eyes shall see,
And slight the imperial diadem for thee.

30

*Pleased with the prospect of successive reigns,
The tuneful tribe no more in daring strains
Shall vindicate, with pious fears oppressed,
Endangered rights, and liberty distressed:
To milder sounds each Muse shall tune the lyre,
And gratitude, and faith to kings inspire,
And filial love; bid impious discord cease,
And soothe the madding factions into peace;
Or rise ambitious in more lofty lays,
And teach the nation their new monarch's praise,*

40

Describe his awful look and godlike mind,
And Caesar's power with Cato's virtue joined.

Meanwhile, bright Princess, who, with graceful ease
And native majesty, are formed to please,



Behold those arts with a propitious eye,
That suppliant to their great protectress fly!
Then shall they triumph, and the British stage
Improve her manners and refine her rage,
More noble characters expose to view,
And draw her finished heroines from you.

50

*Nor you the kind indulgence will refuse,
Skilled in the labours of the deathless Muse:
The deathless Muse with undiminished rays
Through distant times the lovely dame conveys:
To Gloriana[13] Waller's harp was strung;
The queen still shines, because the poet sung.
Even all those graces, in your frame combined,
The common fate of mortal charms may find,
(Content our short-lived praises to engage,
The joy and wonder of a single age,)*

60

Unless some poet in a lasting song
To late posterity their fame prolong,
Instruct our sons the radiant form to prize.
And see your beauty with their fathers' eyes.

TO SIR GODFREY KNELLER[14] ON HIS PICTURE OF THE KING.[15]



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Kneller, with silence and surprise
We see Britannia's monarch rise,
A godlike form, by thee displayed
In all the force of light and shade;
And, awed by thy delusive hand,
As in the presence-chamber stand.

The magic of thy art calls forth
His secret soul and hidden worth,
His probity and mildness shows,
His care of friends and scorn of foes:

10

*In every stroke, in every line,
Does some exalted virtue shine,
And Albion's happiness we trace
Through all the features of his face.*

*Oh may I live to hail the day,
When the glad nation shall survey
Their sovereign, through his wide command,
Passing in progress o'er the land!
Each heart shall bend, and every voice
In loud applauding shouts rejoice,*

20

Whilst all his gracious aspect praise,
And crowds grow loyal as they gaze.

This image on the medal placed,
With its bright round of titles graced,
And stamped on British coins, shall live,
To richest ores the value give,
Or, wrought within the curious mould,
Shape and adorn the running gold.
To bear this form, the genial sun
Has daily, since his course begun,

30

*Rejoiced the metal to refine,
And ripened the Peruvian mine.*

*Thou, Kneller, long with noble pride,
The foremost of thy art, hast vied
With nature in a generous strife,
And touched the canvas into life.
Thy pencil has, by monarchs sought,
From reign to reign in ermine wrought,
And, in their robes of state arrayed,
The kings of half an age displayed.*



40

Here swarthy Charles appears, and there
His brother with dejected air:
Triumphant Nassau here we find,
And with him bright Maria joined;
There Anna, great as when she sent
Her armies through the continent,
Ere yet her hero was disgraced:
Oh may famed Brunswick be the last,
(Though heaven should with my wish agree,
And long preserve thy art in thee,)

50

*The last, the happiest British king,
Whom thou shalt paint, or I shall sing!
Wise Phidias, thus his skill to prove,
Through many a god advanced to Jove,
And taught the polished rocks to shine
With airs and lineaments divine;
Till Greece, amazed, and half afraid,
The assembled deities surveyed.
Great Pan, who wont to chase the fair,
And loved the spreading oak, was there;*

60

Old Saturn too, with up-cast eyes,
Beheld his abdicated skies;
And mighty Mars, for war renowned,
In adamantine armour frowned;
By him the childless goddess rose,
Minerva, studious to compose
Her twisted threads; the web she strung,
And o'er a loom of marble hung:
Thetis, the troubled ocean's queen.
Matched with a mortal, next was seen,

70

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*Reclining on a funeral urn,
Her short-lived darling son to mourn.
The last was he, whose thunder slew
The Titan race, a rebel crew,
That, from a hundred hills allied
In impious leagues, their king defied.*

*This wonder of the sculptor's hand
Produced, his art was at a stand:
For who would hope new fame to raise,
Or risk his well-established praise,*

80

*That, his high genius to approve,
Had drawn a GEORGE, or carved a Jove!*

THE PLAY-HOUSE.

*Where gentle Thames through stately channels glides,
And England's proud metropolis divides;
A lofty fabric does the sight invade,
And stretches o'er the waves a pompous shade;
Whence sudden shouts the neighbourhood surprise,
And thundering claps and dreadful hissings rise.*

*Here thrifty R——[16] hires monarchs by the day,
And keeps his mercenary kings in pay;
With deep-mouth'd actors fills the vacant scenes,
And rakes the stews for goddesses and queens:*

10

*Here the lewd punk, with crowns and sceptres graced,
Teaches her eyes a more majestic cast;
And hungry monarchs with a numerous train
Of suppliant slaves, like Sancho, starve and reign.*

*But enter in, my Muse; the stage survey,
And all its pomp and pageantry display;
Trap-doors and pit-falls, form the unfaithful ground,
And magic walls encompass it around:
On either side maim'd temples fill our eyes,
And intermixed with brothel-houses rise;*

20

*Disjointed palaces in order stand,
And groves obedient to the mover's hand
O'ershade the stage, and flourish at command.*



A stamp makes broken towns and trees entire:
So when Amphion struck the vocal lyre,
He saw the spacious circuit all around,
With crowding woods and rising cities crown'd.

But next the tiring-room survey, and see
False titles, and promiscuous quality,
Confus'dly swarm, from heroes and from queens,

30

*To those that swing in clouds and fill machines.
Their various characters they choose with art,
The frowning bully fits the tyrant's part:
Swoln cheeks and swaggering belly make an host,
Pale, meagre looks and hollow voice a ghost;
From careful brows and heavy downcast eyes,
Dull cits and thick-skull'd aldermen arise:
The comic tone, inspir'd by Congreve, draws
At every word, loud laughter and applause:
The whining dame continues as before,*

40

Her character unchanged, and acts a whore.

Above the rest, the prince with haughty stalks
Magnificent in purple buskins walks:
The royal robes his awful shoulders grace,
Profuse of spangles and of copper-lace:
Officious rascals to his mighty thigh,
Guiltless of blood, the unpointed weapon tie:
Then the gay glittering diadem put on,

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Ponderous with brass, and starr'd with Bristol-stone.
His royal consort next consults her glass,

50

*And out of twenty boxes culls a face;
The whitening first her ghastly looks besmears,
All pale and wan the unfinish'd form appears;
Till on her cheeks the blushing purple glows,
And a false virgin-modesty bestows.
Her ruddy lips the deep vermilion dyes;
Length to her brows the pencil's arts supplies,
And with black bending arches shades her eyes.
Well pleased at length the picture she beholds,
And spots it o'er with artificial molds;*

60

Her countenance complete, the beaux she warms
With looks not hers: and, spite of nature, charms.
Thus artfully their persons they disguise,
Till the last flourish bids the curtain rise.
The prince then enters on the stage in state;
Behind, a guard of candle-snuffers wait:
There swoln with empire, terrible and fierce,
He shakes the dome, and tears his lungs with verse:
His subjects tremble; the submissive pit,
Wrapt up in silence and attention, sit;

70

*Till, freed at length, he lays aside the weight
Of public business and affairs of state:
Forgets his pomp, dead to ambitious fires,
And to some peaceful brandy-shop retires;
Where in full gills his anxious thoughts he drowns,
And quaffs away the care that waits on crowns.
The princess next her painted charms displays,
Where every look the pencil's art betrays;
The callow squire at distance feeds his eyes,
And silently for paint and washes dies:*

80

But if the youth behind the scenes retreat,
He sees the blended colours melt with heat,
And all the trickling beauty run in sweat.
The borrow'd visage he admires no more,



And nauseates every charm he loved before:
So the famed spear, for double force renown'd,
Applied the remedy that gave the wound.

In tedious lists 'twere endless to engage,
And draw at length the rabble of the stage,
Where one for twenty years has given alarms,
90

*And call'd contending monarchs to their arms;
Another fills a more important post,
And rises every other night a ghost;
Through the cleft stage his mealy face he rears,
Then stalks along, groans thrice, and disappears;
Others, with swords and shields, the soldier's pride,
More than a thousand times have changed their side,
And in a thousand fatal battles died.*

*Thus several persons several parts perform;
Soft lovers whine, and blustering heroes storm.*
100

The stern exasperated tyrants rage,
Till the kind bowl of poison clears the stage.
Then honours vanish, and distinctions cease;
Then, with reluctance, haughty queens undress.
Heroes no more their fading laurels boast,
And mighty kings in private men are lost.
He, whom such titles swell'd, such power made proud,
To whom whole realms and vanquish'd nations bow'd,
Throws off the gaudy plume, the purple train,
And in his own vile tatters stinks again.

110

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ON THE LADY MANCHESTER.

WRITTEN ON THE TOASTING-GLASSES OF THE KIT-CAT CLUB.

While haughty Gallia's dames, that spread
O'er their pale cheeks an artful red,
Beheld this beauteous stranger there,
In native charms divinely fair;
Confusion in their looks they show'd;
And with unborrow'd blushes glow'd.

AN ODE.

1

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled Heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes, to every land,
The work of an almighty hand.

2

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly, to the listening Earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

3

What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice, nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found:
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;



For ever singing as they shine:
'The hand that made us is divine.'

AN HYMN.

- 1
When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.
- 2
O how shall words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare,
That glows within my ravish'd heart!
But thou canst read it there.
- 3
Thy providence my life sustain'd,
And all my wants redress'd,
When in the silent womb I lay,
And hung upon the breast.
- 4
To all my weak complaints and cries
Thy mercy lent an ear,
Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learnt
To form themselves in prayer.
- 5
Unnumber'd comforts to my soul
Thy tender care bestow'd,
Before my infant heart conceiv'd
From whence these comforts flow'd.
- 6
When in the slippery paths of youth
With heedless steps I ran,
Thine arm unseen convey'd me safe,
And led me up to man.
- 7
Through hidden dangers, toils, and death,
It gently clear'd my way;
And through the pleasing snares of vice,
More to be fear'd than they.



8

When worn with sickness, oft hast thou
With health renew'd my face;
And when in sins and sorrows sunk,
Reviv'd my soul with grace.

9

Thy bounteous hand with worldly bliss
Has made my cup run o'er,
And in a kind and faithful friend
Has doubled all my store.

10

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes those gifts with joy.



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11

Through every period of my life,
Thy goodness I'll pursue;
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.[17]

12

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever-grateful heart, O Lord,
Thy mercy shall adore.

13

Through all eternity, to thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
For, oh! eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise.

AN ODE.

1

How are thy servants blest, O Lord!
How sure is their defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence.

2

In foreign realms, and lands remote,
Supported by thy care,
Through burning climes I pass'd unhurt,
And breath'd in tainted air.

3

Thy mercy sweeten'd every soil,
Made every region please;
The hoary Alpine hills it warm'd,
And smooth'd the Tyrrhene seas.

4

Think, O my soul, devoutly think,
How, with affrighted eyes,
Thou saw'st the wide-extended deep
In all its horrors rise.



5

Confusion dwelt in every face,
And fear in every heart;
When waves on waves, and gulphs on gulphs,
O'ercame the pilot's art.

6

Yet then from all my griefs, O Lord,
Thy mercy set me free;
Whilst, in the confidence of prayer,
My soul took hold on thee.

7

For though in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave,
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
Nor impotent to save.

8

The storm was laid, the winds retired,
Obedient to thy will;
The sea that roar'd at thy command,
At thy command was still.

9

In midst of dangers, fears, and death,
Thy goodness I'll adore;
And praise thee for thy mercies past,
And humbly hope for more.

10

My life, if thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, if death must be my doom,
Shall join my soul to thee.

AN HYMN.

1

When rising from the bed of death,
O'erwhelm'd with guilt and fear,
I see my Maker face to face;
O how shall I appear!

2

If yet, while pardon may be found,
And mercy may be sought,



My heart with inward horror shrinks,
And trembles at the thought:

3
When thou, O Lord, shalt stand disclos'd
In majesty severe,
And sit in judgment on my soul;
O how shall I appear!

4
But thou hast told the troubled soul,
Who does her sins lament,
The timely tribute of her tears
Shall endless woe prevent.

5
Then see the sorrows of my heart,
Ere yet it be too late;
And add my Saviour's dying groans,
To give those sorrows weight.

6
For never shall my soul despair
Her pardon to procure,
Who knows thy only Son has died
To make that pardon sure.

PARAPHRASE ON PSALM XXIII.



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1

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye:
My noon-day walks he shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend.

2

When in the sultry glebe I faint,
Or on the thirsty mountain pant;
To fertile vales and dewy meads
My weary wandering steps he leads:
Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amid the verdant landscape flow.

3

Though in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overspread,
My steadfast heart shall fear no ill,
For thou, O Lord, art with me still;
Thy friendly crook shall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful shade.

4

Though in a bare and rugged way,
Through devious lonely wilds I stray,
Thy bounty shall my wants beguile:
The barren wilderness shall smile,
With sudden greens and herbage crown'd,
And streams shall murmur all around.

END OF ADDISON'S POEMS.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 2: 'Majesty:' King William.]

[Footnote 3: 'Seneffe:' lost by William to the French in 1674. Claverhouse fought with him at this battle.]

[Footnote 4: The four last lines of the second and third stanzas were added by Mr Tate.]

[Footnote 5: 'Eridanus:' the Po.]

[Footnote 6: 'Such as of late.' See Macaulay's 'Essay on Addison,' and the 'Life' in this volume, for an account of this extraordinary tempest.]

[Footnote 7: 'Tallard,' or Tallart: an eminent French marshal, taken prisoner at Blenheim; he remained in England for seven years.]

[Footnote 8: A comedy written by Sir Richard Steel.]

[Footnote 9: A dramatic poem written by the Lord Lansdown.]

[Footnote 10: 'Smith:' Edmund, commonly called 'Rag;' see Johnson's 'Poets.']

[Footnote 11: 'Lyaeus:' Bacchus.]

[Footnote 12: 'Princess of Wales:' Willielina Dorothea Carolina of Brandenburg-Anspach—afterwards Caroline, Queen of George II.; she figures in the 'Heart of Mid-Lothian.']

[Footnote 13: 'Gloriana:' Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I. See our edition of Waller.]

[Footnote 14: 'Sir Godfrey Kneller:' born at Lubeck in 1648; became a painter of portraits; visited England; was knighted by William III.; died in 1723; lies in Westminster Abbey.]

[Footnote 15: This refers to a portrait of George I.]

[Footnote 16: 'R——:' Rich.]

[Footnote 17: Otherwise,
 'Thy goodness I'll proclaim;'
And,
 'Resume the glorious theme.']

THE LIFE OF JOHN GAY.

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This ingenious poet and child-like man was born, in 1688, at Barnstable, in Devonshire. His family, who were of Norman origin, had long possessed the manor of Goldworthy, or Holdworthy, which came into their hands through Gilbert Le Gay. He obtained possession of this estate by intermarrying with the family of Curtoyse, and gave his name, too, to a place called Hampton Gay, in Northamptonshire. The author of the “Fables” was brought up at the Free School of Barnstable—Pope says under one William Rayner, who had been educated at Westminster School, and who was the author of a volume of Latin and English verse, although Dr Johnson and others maintain that his master’s name was Luck. On leaving school, Gay was bound apprentice to a mercer in London—a trade not the most propitious to poetry, and which he did not long continue to prosecute. In 1712, he published his “Rural Sports,” and dedicated it to Pope, who was then rising toward the ascendant, having just published his brilliant tissue of centos, the “Essay on Criticism.” Pope was pleased with the honour, and ever afterwards took a deep interest in Gay. In the same year Gay had been appointed domestic secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth. This lady was Anne Scott, the daughter and heiress of the Duke of Buccleuch, and widow of the well-known and hapless Duke of Monmouth, who had been beheaded in 1685. She plays a prominent part in the “Lay of the Last Minstrel,” and of her a far greater poet than her secretary thus sings:—

“The Duchess mark’d his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:

For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty’s bloom,
Had wept o’er Monmouth’s bloody tomb.”

Dr Johnson says of her, rather sarcastically, that she was “remarkable for her inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess.” One biographer of Gay asserts—but on what authority we know not—that this secretaryship was rewarded with a handsome salary. With her, however, our poet did not long agree. She was scarcely so kind to him as to the “Last Minstrel” who sung to her at Newark. By June 8th, 1714, (see a letter of Arbuthnot’s of that date,) she had “turned Gay off,” having probably been provoked by his indolence of disposition and improvidence of conduct.

Ere this, however, he had been admitted to the intimacy of Pope, and was hired or flattered by him to engage in the famous “Battle of the Wits,” springing from the publication of the “Pastorals” of Ambrose Philips. This agreeable but nearly forgotten writer published some pastorals, which Steele, with his usual rashness and fatal favouritism, commended in the “Guardian” as superior to all productions of the class,

(including Pope's,) except those of Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope retorted in a style of inimitable irony, by a letter to the

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“Guardian,” where he professedly gives the preference to Philips, but damages his claim by producing four specimens of his composition, and contrasting them with the better portions of his own. Not contented with this, he prevailed on Gay to satirise Philips in the “Shepherd’s Week”—a poem which forms the *reductio ad absurdum* of that writer’s plan, and exhibits rural life in more than the vulgarity and grossness which the author of the “Pastorals” had ascribed to it.

Gay shortly after wrote his “Fan,” and his “Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London”—the former a mythological fiction, in three books, now entirely and deservedly neglected; the second still worthy of perusal on account of its fidelity to truth, in its pictures of the dirty London of 1713—a fidelity reminding you of Crabbe and of Swift; indeed, Gay is said to have been assisted in “Trivia” by the latter, who, we may not uncharitably suppose, supplied the filth of allusion and image which here and there taints the poem. In 1713, our author brought out on the stage a comedy, entitled the “Wife of Bath,” which met with no success, and which, when reproduced seventeen years later, after the “Beggars’ Opera” had taken the town by storm, fell as flat as before.

Gay had now fairly found his way into the centre of that brilliant circle called the Wits of Queen Anne. That was certainly one of the most varied in intellect and attainment which the world has ever seen. Highest far among them—we refer to the Tory side—darkled the stern brow of the author of “Gulliver’s Travels,” who had a mind cast by nature in a form of naked force, like a gloomy crag without a particle of beauty or any vegetation, save what will grow on the most horrid rocks, and the condition of whose existence there, seems to be that it deepens the desolation—a mind unredeemed by virtue save in the shape of remorse—unvisited by weakness, until it came transmuted into the tiger of madness—whose very sermons were satires on God and man—whose very prayers had a twang of blasphemy—whose loves were more loathsome than his hatreds, and yet over whose blasted might and most miserable and withered heart men mourn, while they shudder, blend tears with anathemas, and agree that the awful mystery of man itself is deepened by its relation to the mystery of the wickedness, remorse, and wretchedness of Jonathan Swift. Superior to him in outward show and splendour, but inferior in real intellect, and, if possible, in moral calibre, shone, although with lurid brilliance, the “fell genius” of St John or Henry Bolingbroke. In a former paper we said that Edmund Burke reminded us less of a man than of a tutelary Angel; and so we can sometimes think of the “ingrate and cankered Bolingbroke,” with his subtle intellect, his showy, sophistical eloquence, his power of intrigue, his consummate falsehood, his vice and his infidelity as a “superior fiend”—a kind of human Belial—

“In act more graceful than humane:
A fairer person lost not heaven: he seem’d

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For dignity composed and high exploit;
But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels.”

These two were the giants of the Tory confederacy of wits. But little inferior to them in brilliance, if vastly less in intellectual size, was Pope, with his epigrammatic style, his compact sense—like stimulating essence contained in small smelling bottles—his pungent personalities, his elegant glitter, and his splendid simulation of moral indignation and moral purpose. Less known, but more esteemed than any of them where he was known, was Dr Arbuthnot—a physician of skill, as some extant medical works prove—a man of science, and author of an “Essay on the Usefulness of Mathematical Learning”—a scholar, as evinced by his examination of Woodward’s “Account of the Deluge,” his treatise on “Ancient Coins and Medals,” and that on the “Altercation or Scolding of the Ancients”—a wit, whose grave irony, keen perception of the ridiculous, and magical power of turning the lead of learning into the most fine gold of humour, exhibited in his “Martinus Scriblerus,” his “Epitaph on the notorious Colonel Chartres,” and his “History of John Bull,” still extract shouts, screams, and tears of mirth from thousands who scarce know the author’s name—a politician without malice or self-seeking—and, best of all, a man without guile, and a Christian without cant. He, although a physician, was in effect the chaplain of the corps, and had enough to do in keeping them within due bounds; nay, is said on his deathbed to have called Pope to him, and given him serious advice in reference to the direction of his talents, and the restraint of his muse. Prior, though inferior to these, was no common man; and to learning, wit, and tale-telling power, added skill and energy in the conduct of public affairs. And last, (for Parnell, though beloved by this circle, could hardly be said to belong to it,) there was Gay, whom the others agreed to love and laugh at, who stood in much the same relation to the wits of Anne as Goldsmith did to those of George III., being at once their fool and their fondling; who, like Goldsmith, was

“In wit a man—simplicity a child;”

and who though he could not stab and sneer, and create new worlds more laughable than even this, like Swift, nor declaim and sap faith, like Bolingbroke, nor rhyme and glitter like Pope, nor discourse on medals and write comical “Pilgrims’ Progresses” like Arbuthnot, nor pour out floods of learning like Prior in “Alma,” could do things which they in their turn never equalled, (even as in Emerson’s poem, “The Mountain and the Squirrel,” the latter wisely remarks to the former—

“I cannot carry forests on my back,
But neither can you crack a nut,”))

could give a fabulous excellence to the construction and management of the “Fable;” extract interest from street crossings and scavengers, and let fly into the literary atmosphere an immortal Opera, the “Beggars’,” which, though feathered by the moultings of the very basest night-birds, has pursued a career of triumph ever since.

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To recur to the life of our poet. Losing his situation under the Duchess of Monmouth, he was patronised by the Earls of Oxford and Bolingbroke, and through them was appointed secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, who was going to Hanover as ambassador to that court. He was at this time so poor that, in order to equip himself with necessaries, such as shoes, stockings, and linen for the journey, he had to receive an advance of L100 from the treasury at Hanover. The Electoral Princess, afterwards Queen Caroline—wife of George II.—took some notice of Gay, and asked for a volume of his “Poems,” when, as Arbuthnot remarks, “like a true poet,” he was compelled to own that he had no copy in his possession. We suspect few poets, whether true or pretended, in our age would in this point resemble Gay.

Lord Clarendon's embassy lasted precisely fifteen days—Queen Anne having died in the meantime—and the Tory Government being consequently dismissed in disgrace. Poor Gay, who had offended the Whigs by dedicating his “Shepherd's Week” to Bolingbroke, came home in a worse plight than before. He had left England in a state of poverty—he returned to it in a state of proscription—although he perhaps felt comforted by an epistle of welcome from Pope, which did not, it is likely, affect him as it does us with the notion that its tricky author was laughing in his sleeve.

Arbuthnot, who was a wiser friend, advised Gay to write an “Epistle on the Arrival of the Princess of Wales,” which he did, and she and her lord were so far conciliated as to attend a play he now produced, entitled “What d'ye call it?”—a kind of hybrid between a farce and a tragedy—which, by the well-managed equivocal of its purpose, hit the house between wind and water; and not knowing “what” properly to “call it,” and whether it should be applauded or damned, they gave the benefit of their doubts to the author. To its success, doubtless too, the presence and praise of the Prince and the Princess contributed. Gay now tried for a while the trade of a courtier—sooth to say, with little success. He was for this at once too sanguine and too simple. Pope said, with his usual civil sneer, in a letter to Swift, “the Doctor (Arbuthnot) goes to cards—Gay to court; the one loses money, the other time.” It added to his chagrin, that having, in conjunction with Pope and Arbuthnot, produced, in 1717, a comedy, entitled “Three Months after Marriage,” to satirise Dr Woodward, then famous as a fossilist; the piece, being personal and indecent, was not only hissed but hooted off the stage. The chief offence was taken at the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile on the stage. To divert his grief, he, at the suggestion of Lord Burlington, who paid his expenses, rambled into Devonshire, went next with Pultney to Aix, in France, and when afterwards on a visit to Lord Harcourt's seat, witnessed the incident of the two country lovers killed by lightning in each other's arms, to which Pope alludes in one of his letters, and Goldsmith in his “Vicar of Wakefield.”

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In 1720 he published his "Poems" by subscription. The general kindness felt for Gay, notwithstanding his faults and feebleness, now found a vent. The Prince and Princess of Wales not only subscribed, but gave him a liberal present, and some of the nobility, who regarded him as an agreeable plaything and lapdog of genius, took a number of copies. The result was that he gained a thousand pounds. He asked the advice of his friends how to dispose of this sum, and, as usual, took his own. Lewis, steward to Lord Oxford, advised him to entrust it to the funds, and live on the interest; Arbuthnot, to live upon the principal; Pope and Swift, to buy an annuity. Gay preferred to sink it in the South-Sea Bubble, then in all its glory. At first he imagined himself master of £20,000, and when advised to sell out and purchase as much as his wise friend Elijah Fenton said would "procure him a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day," rejected the counsel, and in fine lost every farthing, and nearly lost next, through vexation, either his life or his reason.

Pope, who occasionally laughed at him, was now very kind, and partly through his assiduous attention, Gay recovered his health, spirits, and the use of his pen. He wrote a tragedy called the "Captives," and was invited to read it before the Princess of Wales. The sight of her and her assembled ladies frightened him, and in advancing he stumbled over a stool and overthrew a heavy japan screen. How he fared afterwards in the reading we are not informed; but as we are told that the Princess started and her ladies screamed, we fear it had been poorly. On this story Hawkesworth has founded an amusing story in the "Adventurer," and it was also, we think, in the eye of the author of the humorous tale, entitled "The Bashful Man." This unlucky play was afterwards acted seven nights, the author's third night being under the special patronage of her Royal Highness.

At the request of the same illustrious lady, he, in 1726, undertook to write a volume of "Fables" for the young Duke of Cumberland, afterwards of Culloden notoriety, and when at last, in 1727, the Prince became George II., and the Princess Queen Caroline, Gay's hopes of promotion boiled as high as his hopes of gain had during the South-Sea scheme. But here, too, he was deceived; and having only received the paltry appointment (as he deemed it, though the salary was £200,) of gentleman-usher to the Princess Louisa, a girl of two years old, he thought himself insulted. He first sent a message to the Queen that he was too old for the place,—an excuse which he made for himself, but which, being only thirty-nine, he would not have borne any other to make for him. He next condescended to court Mrs Howard, the mistress of George II., and that "good Howard" commemorated in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian;" but this too was in vain, and then he retired from the attempt, growling out probably (if we can imagine him in fable, not as Queen Caroline called him the "Hare," but a Bear) the words, "Put not your faith in princes." He was the more excusable, as, two years before, Sir Robert Walpole had, for his surmised Toryism, turned him out of the office of "Commissioner of the Lottery," which had brought him in £150 a-year.

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But now for once Gay catches Fortune on the wheel. There is a lucky hour in almost all lives, provided it be waited for with patience, and with prudence improved. Swift had some years before observed to Gay, what an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate pastoral would make. On this hint Gay acted, preferring, however, to expand it into a comedy. Hence came the “Beggars’ Opera,” a hit in literature second to none that ever occurred in that fluctuating region. It was first performed in 1728, although much of it had been written before, and only a few satirical strokes, founded on his disappointment at court, attested their recent origin. Swift and Pope watched its progress with interest, but without hope. Congreve pronounced that it would “either take greatly, or be damned confoundedly.” Gibber at Drury Lane refused it; it was accepted by his rival Rich, and soon the *on dit* ran that it had made Gay Rich, and Rich Gay. On its first night there was a brilliant assemblage. What painter shall give their heads and faces on that anxious evening—Swift’s lowering front—Pope’s bright eyes contrasting with the blind orbs of Congreve (if *he* indeed were there)—Addison’s quiet, thoughtful physiognomy, as of one retired into some “Vision of Mirza”—the Duke of Argyle, with his star and stately form and animated countenance—and poor Gay himself perhaps, like some other play-wrights in the same predicament, perspiring with trepidation, as if again about to recite the “Captives!” At first uncertainty prevails among the patron-critics, and strange looks are exchanged between Swift and Pope, till, by and by, the latter hears Argyle exclaim, “It will do, it must do! I see it in the eyes of ’em;” and then the critics breathe freely, and the applauses become incontrollable, and the curtain closes at last amidst thunders of applause; and Gay goes home triumphant, amidst a circle of friends, who do not know whether more to wonder at his success or at their own previous apprehensions. For sixty-three nights continuously the piece is acted in London; then it spreads through England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Ladies sing its favourite songs, or carry them in their fans. Miss Fenton, who acted Polly, becomes a universal favourite, nay, a *furor*. Her pictures are engraved, her life written, and her sayings and jests published, and in fine, the Italian Opera, which the piece was intended to ridicule, is extinguished for a season. Notwithstanding this unparalleled success of the “Beggars’ Opera,” Gay gained only L400 by it, although by “Polly,” the second part, (where Gay transports his characters to the colonies,) which the Lord Chamberlain suppressed, on account of its supposed immoral tendency, and which the author published in self-defence, he cleared nearly L1200.

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Altogether now worth above L3000, having been admitted by the Duke of Queensberry into his house, who generously undertook the care alike of the helpless being's purse and person, and still in the prime of life, Gay might have looked forward, humanly speaking, to long years of comfort, social happiness, and increased fame. *Dis aliter visum est*. He had been delicate for some time, and on the 4th December 1732, at the age of 44, and in the course of a three days' attack of inflammation of the bowels, this irresolute but amiable and gifted person breathed his last, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The last work he was occupied on was a second volume of "Fables," which was published after his death. He had become very popular, not merely for his powers, but for his presumed political principles, a "little Sacheverel," as Arbuthnot, his faithful friend and kind physician, calls him, and yet his modesty and simplicity of character remained entire, and he died while planning schemes of self-reformation, economy, and steady literary work. It is curious that Swift, when the letter arrived with the news of Gay's death, was so impressed with a presentiment of some coming evil, that he allowed it to lie five days unopened on his table. And when the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry erected a monument to his memory, Pope supplied an epitaph, familiar to most readers of poetry, and which is creditable to both. Two widow sisters survived Gay, amongst whom the profits of a posthumous opera, entitled "Achilles," as well as the small fortune which he left, were divided.

Gay's works lie in narrow compass, and hardly require minute criticism. His "Beggars' Opera" has the charm of daring singularity of plan, of great liveliness of song, and has some touches of light hurrying sarcasm, worthy of any pen. Burke used to deny its merit, but he was probably trying it by too lofty and ideal a standard. Hazlitt, on the other hand, has praised it overmuch, and perhaps "monstered" some of its "nothings." That it has power is proved by its effects on literature. It did not, we believe, create many robbers, but it created a large robber school in the drama and the novel; for instance, Schiller's "Robbers," Ainsworth's "Rookwood," and "Jack Shepherd," and Bulwer's "Paul Clifford," and "Eugene Aram," not to speak of the innumerable French tales and plays of a similar kind. The intention of these generally is not, perhaps, after all, to make an apology, far less an apotheosis of crime, but to teach us how there is a "soul of goodness" in all things. And has not Shakspeare long taught and been commended for teaching a similar lesson, although we cannot say of Gay and his brethren that they have "bettered the instruction?" Of "Trivia," we have spoken incidentally before; of "Rural Sports," and the "Shepherd's Week," it is unnecessary to say more than that the first is juvenile, and the second odd, graphic, and amusing. None of them is equal to the "Fables,"

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and therefore we have decided on omitting them from our edition. In the “Fables,” Gay is happy in proportion to the innocence and simplicity of his nature. He understands animals, because he has more than an ordinary share of the animal in his own constitution. AEsop, so far as we know, though an astute, was an uneducated and simple-minded man. Phaedrus was a myth, and we cannot, therefore, adduce him in point. But Fontaine was called the “Fable-tree,” and Gay is just the Fable-tree transplanted from France to England. In so doing we do not question our poet’s originality, but merely indicate a certain resemblance in spirit between two originals. An original in Fable-writing Gay certainly was. He has copied, neither in story, spirit, nor moral, any previous writer. His “Fables” are always graceful in literary execution, often interesting in story; their versification is ever smooth and flowing; and sometimes, as in the “Court of Death,” their moral darkens into sublimity. On the whole, these “Fables,” along with the “Beggars’ Opera,” and the delectable songs of “’Twas when the Seas were Roaring,” and “Black-eyed Susan,” shall long preserve the memory of their author. We have appended these two songs because of their rare excellence.

John Gay had his faults as a man and as a poet, and it were easy finding fault with him in both capacities. But

“Poor were the triumph o’er the timid hare;”

and he was, by his own shewing, as well as Queen Caroline’s, “the Hare with many friends.” Let us, instead, drop a “tear over his fate,” and pay a tribute, short, but sincere, to his true, though limited genius.

GAY’S FABLES.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION.

PART I.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

Remote from cities lived a swain,
Unvexed with all the cares of gain;
His head was silvered o’er with age,
And long experience made him sage;
In summer’s heat, and winter’s cold,
He fed his flock and penned the fold;



His hours in cheerful labour flew,
Nor envy nor ambition knew:
His wisdom and his honest fame
Through all the country raised his name.

10

*A deep philosopher (whose rules
Of moral life were drawn from schools)
The shepherd's homely cottage sought
And thus explored his reach of thought:
'Whence is thy learning? Hath thy toil
O'er books consumed the midnight oil?
Hast thou old Greece and Rome surveyed,
And the vast sense of Plato weighed?
Hath Socrates thy soul refined,
And hast thou fathomed Tully's mind?*

20

Or like the wise Ulysses, thrown
By various fates, on realms unknown,
Hast thou through many cities strayed,
Their customs, laws, and manners weighed?'

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The shepherd modestly replied,
'I ne'er the paths of learning tried;
Nor have I roamed in foreign parts
To read mankind, their laws and arts;
For man is practised in disguise,
He cheats the most discerning eyes;
30

*Who by that search shall wiser grow,
When we ourselves can never know?
The little knowledge I have gained,
Was all from simple nature drained;
Hence my life's maxims took their rise,
Hence grew my settled hate to vice.
The daily labours of the bee
Awake my soul to industry.
Who can observe the careful ant,
And not provide for future want?*

40
My dog (the trustiest of his kind)
With gratitude inflames my mind.
I mark his true, his faithful way,
And in my service copy Tray.
In constancy and nuptial love,
I learn my duty from the dove.
The hen, who from the chilly air,
With pious wing protects her care;
And every fowl that flies at large,
Instructs me in a parent's charge.

50
*From nature too I take my rule,
To shun contempt and ridicule.
I never, with important air,
In conversation overbear.
Can grave and formal pass for wise,
When men the solemn owl despise?
My tongue within my lips I rein;
For who talks much, must talk in vain.
We from the wordy torrent fly:
Who listens to the chattering pye?*

60



Nor would I, with felonious flight,
By stealth invade my neighbour's right;
Rapacious animals we hate:
Kites, hawks, and wolves deserve their fate.
Do not we just abhorrence find
Against the toad and serpent kind?
But envy, calumny, and spite,
Bear stronger venom in their bite.
Thus every object of creation
Can furnish hints to contemplation;
70

*And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.'*
*'Thy fame is just,' the sage replies;
'Thy virtue proves thee truly wise.
Pride often guides the author's pen,
Books as affected are as men:
But he who studies nature's laws,
From certain truth his maxims draws;
And those, without our schools, suffice
To make men moral, good, and wise.'*
80

* * * * *

TO HIS HIGHNESS

WILLIAM, DUXE OF CUMBERLAND.[1]

FABLE I.

THE LION, THE TIGER, AND THE TRAVELLER.

Accept, young Prince, the moral lay
And in these tales mankind survey;
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest.
Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are strangers to the voice of truth;
Learn to condemn all praise betimes;
For flattery's the nurse of crimes;
Friendship by sweet reproof is shown,



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(A virtue never near a throne);

10

*In courts such freedom must offend,
There none presumes to be a friend.
To those of your exalted station
Each courtier is a dedication.
Must I too flatter like the rest,
And turn my morals to a jest?
The Muse disdains to steal from those
Who thrive in courts by fulsome prose.
But shall I hide your real praise,
Or tell you what a nation says?*

20

*They in your infant bosom trace
The virtues of your royal race;
In the fair dawning of your mind
Discern you generous, mild, and kind;
They see you grieve to hear distress,
And pant already to redress.
Go on, the height of good attain,
Nor let a nation hope in vain.
For hence we justly may presage
The virtues of a riper age.*

30

*True courage shall your bosom fire,
And future actions own you sire.
Cowards are cruel, but the brave
Love mercy, and delight to save.
A tiger roaming for his prey,
Sprung on a traveller in the way;
The prostrate game a lion spies,
And on the greedy tyrant flies;
With mingled roar resounds the wood,
Their teeth, their claws distil with blood;*

40

*Till vanquished by the lion's strength,
The spotted foe extends his length.
The man besought the shaggy lord,
And on his knees for life implored.
His life the generous hero gave,*



Together walking to his cave,
The lion thus bespoke his guest:
 'What hardy beast shall dare contest
My matchless strength! you saw the fight,
And must attest my power and right.

50

*Forced to forego their native home,
My starving slaves at distance roam.
Within these woods I reign alone,
The boundless forest is my own.
Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood,
Have dyed the regal den with blood.
These carcasses on either hand,
Those bones that whiten all the land,
My former deeds and triumphs tell,
Beneath these jaws what numbers fell.'*

60

 'True,' says the man, 'the strength I saw
Might well the brutal nation awe:
But shall a monarch, brave like you,
Place glory in so false a view?
Robbers invade their neighbours' right,
Be loved: let justice bound your might.
Mean are ambitious heroes' boasts
Of wasted lands and slaughtered hosts.
Pirates their power by murders gain,
Wise kings by love and mercy reign.

70

*To me your clemency hath shown
The virtue worthy of a throne.
Heaven gives you power above the rest,
Like Heaven to succour the distress'd.'*

 'The case is plain,' the monarch said;
'False glory hath my youth misled;
For beasts of prey, a servile train,
Have been the flatterers of my reign.
You reason well: yet tell me, friend,
Did ever you in courts attend?

80

For all my fawning rogues agree,
That human heroes rule like me.'



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* * * * *

FABLE II.

THE SPANIEL AND THE CAMELEON.

A spaniel, bred with all the care
That waits upon a favourite heir,
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand;
Indulged to disobey command,
In pampered ease his hours were spent;
He never knew what learning meant.
Such forward airs, so pert, so smart,
Were sure to win his lady's heart;
Each little mischief gained him praise;
How pretty were his fawning ways!

10

*The wind was south, the morning fair,
He ventured forth to take the air.
He ranges all the meadow round,
And rolls upon the softest ground:
When near him a cameleon seen,
Was scarce distinguished from the green.*

*'Dear emblem of the flattering host,
What, live with clowns! a genius lost!
To cities and the court repair:
A fortune cannot fail thee there:*

20

*Preferment shall thy talents crown,
Believe me, friend; I know the town.'*

*'Sir,' says the sycophant, 'like you,
Of old, politer life I knew:
Like you, a courtier born and bred;
Kings leaned an ear to what I said.
My whisper always met success;
The ladies praised me for address,
I knew to hit each courtier's passion,
And flattered every vice in fashion.*

30

*But Jove, who hates the liar's ways,
At once cut short my prosperous days;
And, sentenced to retain my nature,
Transformed me to this crawling creature.*



*Doomed to a life obscure and mean,
I wander in the sylvan scene.
For Jove the heart alone regards;
He punishes what man rewards.
How different is thy case and mine!
With men at least you sup and dine;*
40

*While I, condemned to thinnest fare,
Like those I flattered feed on air.'*

* * * * *

FABLE III.

THE MOTHER, THE NURSE, AND THE FAIRY.

*Give me a son! The blessing sent,
Were ever parents more content?
How partial are their doting eyes!
No child is half so fair and wise.*

*Waked to the morning's pleasing care,
The mother rose, and sought her heir.
She saw the nurse, like one possess'd,
With wringing hands, and sobbing breast.*

*'Sure some disaster hath befell:
Speak, nurse; I hope the boy is well.'*

10

*'Dear madam, think not me to blame;
Invisible the fairy came:
Your precious babe is hence conveyed,
And in the place a changeling laid.
Where are the father's mouth and nose,
The mother's eyes, as black as sloes?
See here a shocking awkward creature,
That speaks a fool in every feature.'*

*'The woman's blind,' the mother cries;
'I see wit sparkle in his eyes.'*



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20

'Lord! madam, what a squinting leer;
No doubt the fairy hath been here.'

Just as she spoke, a pigmy sprite
Pops through the key-hole, swift as light;
Perched on the cradle's top he stands,
And thus her folly reprimands:

'Whence sprung the vain conceited lie,
That we the world with fools supply?
What! give our sprightly race away,
For the dull helpless sons of clay!

30

*Besides, by partial fondness shown,
Like you we doat upon our own.
Where yet was ever found a mother,
Who'd give her booby for another?
And should we change for human breed,
Well might we pass for fools indeed.'*

* * * * *

FABLE IV.

THE EAGLE, AND THE ASSEMBLY OF ANIMALS.

As Jupiter's all-seeing eye
Surveyed the worlds beneath the sky,
From this small speck of earth were sent,
Murmurs and sounds of discontent;
For every thing alive complained,
That he the hardest life sustained.
Jove calls his eagle. At the word
Before him stands the royal bird.
The bird, obedient, from heaven's height,
Downward directs his rapid flight;

10

*Then cited every living thing,
To hear the mandates of his king.
'Ungrateful creatures, whence arise
These murmurs which offend the skies?*



Why this disorder? say the cause:

For just are Jove's eternal laws.

Let each his discontent reveal;

To yon sour dog, I first appeal.'

'Hard is my lot,' the hound replies,

'On what fleet nerves the greyhound flies,

20

While I, with weary step and slow,

O'er plains and vales, and mountains go.

The morning sees my chase begun,

Nor ends it till the setting sun.'

'When,' says the greyhound, 'I pursue,

My game is lost, or caught in view;

Beyond my sight the prey's secure:

The hound is slow, but always sure.

And had I his sagacious scent,

Jove ne'er had heard my discontent.'

30

The lion craved the fox's art;

The fox, the lion's force and heart:

The cock implored the pigeon's flight,

Whose wings were rapid, strong, and light:

The pigeon strength of wing despised,

And the cock's matchless valour prized:

The fishes wished to graze the plain;

The beasts to skim beneath the main.

Thus, envious of another's state,

Each blamed the partial hand of Fate.

40

The bird of heaven then cried aloud,

'Jove bids disperse the murmuring crowd;

The god rejects your idle prayers.

Would ye, rebellious mutineers,

Entirely change your name and nature,

And be the very envied creature?

What, silent all, and none consent!

Be happy then, and learn content:

Nor imitate the restless mind,

And proud ambition, of mankind.'

50



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* * * * *

FABLE V.

THE WILD BOAR AND THE RAM.

Against an elm a sheep was tied,
The butcher's knife in blood was dyed:
The patient flock in silent fright,
From far beheld the horrid sight.
A savage boar, who near them stood,
Thus mocked to scorn the fleecy brood.
'All cowards should be served like you.
See, see, your murderer is in view:
With purple hands and reeking knife,
He strips the skin yet warm with life;

10

*Your quartered sires, your bleeding dams,
The dying bleat of harmless lambs,
Call for revenge. O stupid race!
The heart that wants revenge is base.'*
'I grant.' an ancient ram replies,
'We bear no terror in our eyes;
Yet think us not of soul so tame,
Which no repeated wrongs inflame;
Insensible of every ill,
Because we want thy tusks to kill.

20

Know, those who violence pursue,
Give to themselves the vengeance due;
For in these massacres we find
The two chief plagues that waste mankind:
Our skin supplies the wrangling bar,
It wakes their slumbering sons to war;
And well revenge may rest contented,
Since drums and parchment were invented.'

* * * * *

FABLE VI.

THE MISER AND PLUTUS.



The wind was high, the window shakes,
With sudden start the miser wakes;
Along the silent room he stalks;
Looks back, and trembles as he walks!
Each lock and every bolt he tries,
In every creek and corner prys,
Then opes the chest with treasure stored,
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard;
But, now with sudden qualms possess'd,
He wrings his hands, he beats his breast.

10

*By conscience stung, he wildly stares;
And thus his guilty soul declares:
'Had the deep earth her stores confined,
This heart had known sweet peace of mind.
But virtue's sold. Good gods, what price
Can recompense the pangs of vice!
O bane of good! seducing cheat!
Can man, weak man, thy power defeat?
Gold banished honour from the mind,
And only left the name behind;*

20

Gold sowed the world with every ill;
Gold taught the murderer's sword to kill:
'Twas gold instructed coward hearts,
In treachery's more pernicious arts.
Who can recount the mischiefs o'er?
Virtue resides on earth no more!
He spoke, and sighed. In angry mood,
Plutus, his god, before him stood.
The miser, trembling, locked his chest;
The vision frowned, and thus address'd:

30

*'Whence is this vile ungrateful rant?
Each sordid rascal's daily cant.
Did I, base wretch, corrupt mankind?*



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*The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
Because my blessings are abused,
Must I be censured, cursed, accused?
Even virtue's self by knaves is made
A cloak to carry on the trade;
And power (when lodged in their possession)
Grows tyranny, and rank oppression.*

40

Thus, when the villain crams his chest,
Gold is the canker of the breast;
'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
And every shocking vice beside.
But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
It blesses, like the dews of heaven:
Like Heaven, it hears the orphan's cries,
And wipes the tears from widows' eyes;
Their crimes on gold shall misers lay,
Who pawned their sordid souls for pay?

50

*Let bravoës then (when blood is spilt)
Upbraid the passive sword with guilt.'*

* * * * *

FABLE VII.

THE LION, THE FOX, AND THE GEESE.

A lion, tired with state affairs,
Quite sick of pomp, and worn with cares,
Resolved (remote from noise and strife)
In peace to pass his latter life.

It was proclaimed; the day was set;
Behold the general council met,
The fox was viceroy named. The crowd
To the new regent humbly bowed.
Wolves, bears, and mighty tigers bend,
And strive who most shall condescend.

10

*He straight assumes a solemn grace,
Collects his wisdom in his face.*



*The crowd admire his wit, his sense:
Each word hath weight and consequence.
The flatterer all his art displays:
He who hath power, is sure of praise.
A fox stept forth before the rest,
And thus the servile throng address'd.
'How vast his talents, born to rule,
And trained in virtue's honest school:*

20

*What clemency his temper sways!
How uncorrupt are all his ways!
Beneath his conduct and command,
Rapine shall cease to waste the land.
His brain hath stratagem and art;
Prudence and mercy rule his heart;
What blessings must attend the nation
Under this good administration!'*

*He said. A goose who distant stood,
Harangued apart the cackling brood:*

30

*'W'hene'er I hear a knave commend,
He bids me shun his worthy friend.
What praise! what mighty commendation!
But 'twas a fox who spoke the oration.
Foxes this government may prize,
As gentle, plentiful, and wise;
If they enjoy the sweets, 'tis plain
We geese must feel a tyrant reign.
What havoc now shall thin our race,
When every petty clerk in place,*

40

*To prove his taste and seem polite,
Will feed on geese both noon and night!'*

* * * * *

FABLE VIII.

THE LADY AND THE WASP.



Page 112

What whispers must the beauty bear!
What hourly nonsense haunts her ear!
Where'er her eyes dispense their charms,
Impertinence around her swarms.
Did not the tender nonsense strike,
Contempt and scorn might soon dislike.
Forbidding airs might thin the place,
The slightest flap a fly can chase.
But who can drive the numerous breed?
Chase one, another will succeed.

10

*Who knows a fool, must know his brother;
One fop will recommend another:
And with this plague she's rightly curs'd,
Because she listened to the first.*

*As Doris, at her toilet's duty,
Sat meditating on her beauty,
She now was pensive, now was gay,
And lolled the sultry hours away.
As thus in indolence she lies,
A giddy wasp around her flies.*

20

He now advances, now retires,
Now to her neck and cheek aspires.
Her fan in vain defends her charms;
Swift he returns, again alarms;
For by repulse he bolder grew,
Perched on her lip, and sipp'd the dew.
She frowns, she frets. 'Good God!' she cries,
'Protect me from these teasing flies!
Of all the plagues that heaven hath sent,
A wasp is most impertinent.'

30

*The hovering insect thus complained:
'Am I then slighted, scorned, disdained?
Can such offence your anger wake?
'Twas beauty caused the bold mistake.
Those cherry lips that breathe perfume,
That cheek so ripe with youthful bloom,
Made me with strong desire pursue
The fairest peach that ever grew.'
'Strike him not, Jenny,' Doris cries,
'Nor murder wasps like vulgar flies:*



40

For though he's free (to do him right)
The creature's civil and polite.'
In ecstasies away he posts;
Where'er he came, the favour boasts;
Braggs how her sweetest tea he sips,
And shows the sugar on his lips.

The hint alarmed the forward crew;
Sure of success, away they flew.
They share the dainties of the day,
Round her with airy music play;

50

*And now they flutter, now they rest,
Now soar again, and skim her breast.
Nor were they banished, till she found
That wasps have stings, and felt the wound.*

* * * * *

FABLE IX.

THE BULL AND THE MASTIFF.

Seek you to train your fav'rite boy?
Each caution, every care employ:
And ere you venture to confide,
Let his preceptor's heart be tried:
Weigh well his manners, life, and scope;
On these depends thy future hope.

As on a time, in peaceful reign,
A bull enjoyed the flowery plain,
A mastiff passed; inflamed with ire,
His eye-balls shot indignant fire;

10

He foamed, he raged with thirst of blood



Page 113

*Spurning the ground the monarch stood,
And roared aloud, 'Suspend the fight;
In a whole skin go sleep to-night:
Or tell me, ere the battle rage,
What wrongs provoke thee to engage?
Is it ambition fires thy breast,
Or avarice that ne'er can rest?
From these alone unjustly springs
The world-destroying wrath of kings.'*

20

The surly mastiff thus returns:
'Within my bosom glory burns.
Like heroes of eternal name,
Whom poets sing, I fight for fame.
The butcher's spirit-stirring mind
To daily war my youth inclined;
He trained me to heroic deed;
Taught me to conquer, or to bleed.'
'Cursed dog,' the bull replied, 'no more
I wonder at thy thirst of gore;

30

*For thou, beneath a butcher trained,
Whose hands with cruelty are stained;
His daily murders in thy view,
Must, like thy tutor, blood pursue.
Take then thy fate.' With goring wound,
At once he lifts him from the ground;
Aloft the sprawling hero flies,
Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.*

* * * * *

FABLE X.

THE ELEPHANT AND THE BOOKSELLER.

The man who, with undaunted toils,
Sails unknown seas to unknown soils,
With various wonders feasts his sight:
What stranger wonders does he write!
We read, and in description view



Creatures which Adam never knew:
For, when we risk no contradiction,
It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.
Those things that startle me or you,
I grant are strange; yet may be true.

10

*Who doubts that elephants are found
For science and for sense renowned?
Borri records their strength of parts,
Extent of thought, and skill in arts;
How they perform the law's decrees,
And save the state the hangman's fees;
And how by travel understand
The language of another land.
Let those, who question this report,
To Pliny's ancient page resort;*

20

How learn'd was that sagacious breed!
Who now (like them) the Greek can read!
As one of these, in days of yore,
Rummaged a shop of learning o'er;
Not, like our modern dealers, minding
Only the margin's breadth and binding;
A book his curious eye detains,
Where, with exactest care and pains,
Were every beast and bird portrayed,
That e'er the search of man surveyed,

30

*Their natures and their powers were writ,
With all the pride of human wit.
The page he with attention spread,
And thus remarked on what he read:
'Man with strong reason is endowed;
A beast scarce instinct is allowed.
But let this author's worth be tried,
'Tis plain that neither was his guide.
Can he discern the different natures,*



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And weigh the power of other creatures

40

Who by the partial work hath shown
He knows so little of his own?
How falsely is the spaniel drawn!
Did man from him first learn to fawn?
A dog proficient in the trade!
He the chief flatterer nature made!
Go, man, the ways of courts discern,
You'll find a spaniel still might learn.
How can the fox's theft and plunder
Provoke his censure or his wonder;

50

*From courtiers' tricks, and lawyers' arts,
The fox might well improve his parts.
The lion, wolf, and tiger's brood,
He curses, for their thirst of blood:
But is not man to man a prey?
Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay.'*
*The bookseller, who heard him speak,
And saw him turn a page of Greek,
Thought, what a genius have I found!
Then thus addressed with bow profound:*

60

'Learn'd sir, if you'd employ your pen
Against the senseless sons of men,
Or write the history of Siam, [2]
No man is better pay than I am;
Or, since you're learn'd in Greek, let's see
Something against the Trinity.'

When wrinkling with a sneer his trunk,
'Friend,' quoth the elephant, 'you're drunk;
E'en keep your money and be wise:
Leave man on man to criticise;

70

*For that you ne'er can want a pen
Among the senseless sons of men.
They unprovoked will court the fray:
Envy's a sharper spur than pay.
No author ever spared a brother;
Wits are game-cocks to one another.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XI.

THE PEACOCK, THE TURKEY, AND THE GOOSE.

In beauty faults conspicuous grow;
The smallest speck is seen on snow.

As near a barn, by hunger led,
A peacock with the poultry fed;
All viewed him with an envious eye,
And mocked his gaudy pageantry.
He, conscious of superior merit,
Contemns their base reviling spirit;
His state and dignity assumes,
And to the sun displays his plumes;

10

*Which, like the heaven's o'er-arching skies,
Are spangled with a thousand eyes.
The circling rays, and varied light,
At once confound their dazzled sight:
On every tongue detraction burns,
And malice prompts their spleen by turns.*

*'Mark, with what insolence and pride
The creature takes his haughty stride!
The turkey cries. 'Can spleen contain?
Sure never bird was half so vain!*

20

But were intrinsic merit seen,
We turkeys have the whiter skin.'

From tongue to tongue they caught abuse;
And next was heard the hissing goose:
'What hideous legs! what filthy claws!
I scorn to censure little flaws!
Then what a horrid squalling throat!
Even owls are frightened at the note.'



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'True; those are faults,' the peacock cries;
'My scream, my shanks you may despise:

30

*But such blind critics rail in vain:
What, overlook my radiant train!
Know, did my legs (your scorn and sport)
The turkey or the goose support,
And did ye scream with harsher sound,
Those faults in you had ne'er been found!
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemish strikes an envious mind.'*

*Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph of brightest charms and mien,*

40

Wake envy in each ugly face;
And buzzing scandal fills the place.

* * * * *

FABLE XII.

CUPID, HYMEN, AND PLUTUS.

As Cupid in Cythera's grove
Employed the lesser powers of love;
Some shape the bow, or fit the string;
Some give the taper shaft its wing,
Or turn the polished quiver's mould,
Or head the dart with tempered gold.

Amidst their toil and various care,
Thus Hymen, with assuming air,
Addressed the god: 'Thou purblind chit,
Of awkward and ill-judging wit,

10

*If matches are not better made,
At once I must forswear my trade.
You send me such ill-coupled folks,
That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.
They squabble for a pin, a feather,*



*And wonder how they came together.
The husband's sullen, dogged, shy;
The wife grows flippant in reply:
He loves command and due restriction,
And she as well likes contradiction:*

20

*She never slavishly submits;
She'll have her will, or have her fits.
He this way tugs, she t'other draws:
The man grows jealous, and with cause.
Nothing can save him but divorce;
And here the wife complies of course.'*
*'When,' says the boy, 'had I to do
With either your affairs or you?
I never idly spent my darts;
You trade in mercenary hearts.*

30

*For settlements the lawyer's fee'd;
Is my hand witness to the deed?
If they like cat and dog agree,
Go, rail at Plutus, not at me.'*
*Plutus appeared, and said, "Tis true,
In marriage gold is all their view:
They seek not beauty, wit, or sense;
And love is seldom the pretence.
All offer incense at my shrine,
And I alone the bargain sign.*

40

*How can Belinda blame her fate?
She only asked a great estate.
Doris was rich enough, 'tis true;
Her lord must give her title too:
And every man, or rich or poor,
A fortune asks, and asks no more.'*
*Av'rice, whatever shape it bears,
Must still be coupled with its cares.*

* * * * *

FABLE XIII.

THE TAME STAG.



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As a young stag the thicket pass'd,
The branches held his antlers fast;
A clown, who saw the captive hung,
Across the horns his halter flung.

Now safely hampered in the cord,
He bore the present to his lord.
His lord was pleased; as was the clown,
When he was tipp'd with half-a-crown.
The stag was brought before his wife;
The tender lady begged his life.

10

*'How sleek's the skin! how speck'd like ermine!
Sure never creature was so charming!'*

*At first within the yard confined,
He flies and hides from all mankind;
Now bolder grown, with fixed amaze,
And distant awe, presumes to gaze;
Munches the linen on the lines,
And on a hood or apron dines:
He steals my little master's bread,
Follows the servants to be fed:*

20

Nearer and nearer now he stands,
To feel the praise of patting hands;
Examines every fist for meat,
And though repulsed, disdains retreat:
Attacks again with levelled horns;
And man, that was his terror, scorns.

Such is the country maiden's fright,
When first a red-coat is in sight;
Behind the door she hides her face;
Next time at distance eyes the lace;

30

*She now can all his terrors stand,
Nor from his squeeze withdraws her hand.
She plays familiar in his arms,
And every soldier hath his charms.
From tent to tent she spreads her flame;
For custom conquers fear and shame.*

* * * * *



FABLE XIV.

THE MONKEY WHO HAD SEEN THE WORLD.

A Monkey, to reform the times,
Resolved to visit foreign climes:
For men in distant regions roam
To bring politer manners home,
So forth he fares, all toil defies:
Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treach'rous snare was laid;
Poor Pug was caught, to town conveyed,
There sold. How envied was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room!

10

*Proud as a lover of his chains,
He day by day her favour gains.
Whene'er the duty of the day
The toilet calls; with mimic play
He twirls her knot, he cracks her fan,
Like any other gentleman.
In visits too his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In every courtly art refined;*

20

Like Orpheus burnt with public zeal,
To civilise the monkey weal:
So watched occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press,
Astonished at his strut and dress.
Some praise his sleeve; and others gloat
Upon his rich embroidered coat;
His dapper periwig commending,
With the black tail behind depending;

30

His powdered back, above, below,



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*Like hoary frost, or fleecy snow;
But all with envy and desire,
His fluttering shoulder-knot admire.
'Hear and improve,' he pertly cries;
'I come to make a nation wise.
Weigh your own words; support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I passed my days,
Conversed with men, and learnt their ways.*

40

*Their dress, their courtly manners see;
Reform your state and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive? in flattery deal;
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.
Seem only to regard your friends,
But use them for your private ends.
Stint not to truth the flow of wit;
Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.
Bend all your force to spatter merit;
Scandal is conversation's spirit.*

50

*Boldly to everything attend,
And men your talents shall commend.
I knew the great. Observe me right;
So shall you grow like man polite.'
He spoke and bowed. With muttering jaws
The wondering circle grinned applause.
Now, warm with malice, envy, spite,
Their most obliging friends they bite;
And fond to copy human ways,
Practise new mischiefs all their days.*

60

*Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
With travel finishes the fool;
Studious of every coxcomb's airs,
He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and swears;
O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,
For vice is fitted to his parts.*

* * * * *



FABLE XV.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PHEASANTS.

The sage, awaked at early day,
Through the deep forest took his way;
Drawn by the music of the groves,
Along the winding gloom he roves:
From tree to tree, the warbling throats
Prolong the sweet alternate notes.
But where he pass'd, he terror threw,
The song broke short, the warblers flew;
The thrushes chattered with affright,
And nightingales abhorred his sight;

10

*All animals before him ran,
To shun the hateful sight of man.
'Whence is this dread of every creature?
Fly they our figure or our nature?'*

*As thus he walked in musing thought,
His ear imperfect accents caught;
With cautious step he nearer drew,
By the thick shade concealed from view.
High on the branch a pheasant stood,
Around her all her listening brood;*

20

Proud of the blessings of her nest,
She thus a mother's care expressed:
'No dangers here shall circumvent,
Within the woods enjoy content.
Sooner the hawk or vulture trust,
Than man; of animals the worst:
In him ingratitude you find,
A vice peculiar to the kind.
The sheep whose annual fleece is dyed,
To guard his health, and serve his pride,

30

Forced from his fold and native plain,



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*Is in the cruel shambles slain.
The swarms, who, with industrious skill,
His hives with wax and honey fill,
In vain whole summer days employed,
Their stores are sold, their race destroyed.
What tribute from the goose is paid!
Does not her wing all science aid!
Does it not lovers' hearts explain,
And drudge to raise the merchant's gain?*

40

What now rewards this general use?
He takes the quills, and eats the goose.
Man then avoid, detest his ways;
So safety shall prolong your days.
When services are thus acquitted,
Be sure we pheasants must be spitted.'

* * * * *

FABLE XVI.

THE PIN AND THE NEEDLE.

A pin, who long had served a beauty,
Proficient in the toilet's duty,
Had formed her sleeve, confined her hair,
Or given her knot a smarter air,
Now nearest to her heart was placed,
Now in her mantua's tail disgraced:
But could she partial fortune blame,
Who saw her lovers served the same?

At length from all her honours cast;
Through various turns of life she pass'd;

10

*Now glittered on a tailor's arm;
Now kept a beggar's infant warm;
Now, ranged within a miser's coat,
Contributes to his yearly groat;
Now, raised again from low approach,
She visits in the doctor's coach;*



*Here, there, by various fortune toss'd,
At last in Gresham Hall[3] was lost.
Charmed with the wonders of the show,
On every side, above, below,*

20

*She now of this or that enquires,
What least was understood admires.
'Tis plain, each thing so struck her mind.
Her head's of virtuoso kind.
'And pray what's this, and this, dear sir?'
'A needle,' says the interpreter.
She knew the name. And thus the fool
Addressed her as a tailor's tool:
'A needle with that filthy stone,
Quite idle, all with rust o'ergrown!*

30

*You better might employ your parts,
And aid the sempstress in her arts.
But tell me how the friendship grew
Between that paltry flint and you?'
'Friend,' says the needle, 'cease to blame;
I follow real worth and fame.
Know'st thou the loadstone's power and art,
That virtue virtues can impart?
Of all his talents I partake,
Who then can such a friend forsake?*

40

*'Tis I directs the pilot's hand
To shun the rocks and treacherous sand:
By me the distant world is known,
And either India is our own.
Had I with milliners been bred,
What had I been? the guide of thread,
And drudged as vulgar needles do,
Of no more consequence than you.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XVII.



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THE SHEPHERD'S DOG AND THE WOLF.

A wolf, with hunger fierce and bold,
Ravaged the plains, and thinned the fold:
Deep in the wood secure he lay,
The thefts of night regaled the day.
In vain the shepherd's wakeful care
Had spread the toils, and watched the snare:
In vain the dog pursued his pace,
The fleeter robber mocked the chase.
As Lightfoot ranged the forest round,
By chance his foe's retreat he found.

10

*'Let us awhile the war suspend,
And reason as from friend to friend.'
'A truce?' replies the wolf. 'Tis done.
The dog the parley thus begun:
'How can that strong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceless kind?
Those jaws should prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood;
Great souls with generous pity melt,
Which coward tyrants never felt.*

20

How harmless is our fleecy care!
Be brave, and let thy mercy spare.'
'Friend,' says the wolf, 'the matter weigh;
Nature designed us beasts of prey;
As such when hunger finds a treat,
'Tis necessary wolves should eat.
If mindful of the bleating weal,
Thy bosom burn with real zeal;
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech;
To him repeat the moving speech;

30

*A wolf eats sheep but now and then,
Ten thousands are devoured by men.
An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse.'*

* * * * *



FABLE XVIII.

THE PAINTER WHO PLEASED NOBODY AND EVERYBODY.

Lest men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.
The traveller leaping o'er those bounds,
The credit of his book confounds.
Who with his tongue hath armies routed,
Makes even his real courage doubted:
But flattery never seems absurd;
The flattered always take your word:
Impossibilities seem just;
They take the strongest praise on trust.

10

*Hyperboles, though ne'er so great,
Will still come short of self-conceit.
So very like a painter drew,
That every eye the picture knew;
He hit complexion, feature, air,
So just, the life itself was there.
No flattery with his colours laid,
To bloom restored the faded maid;
He gave each muscle all its strength,
The mouth, the chin, the nose's length.*

20

His honest pencil touched with truth,
And marked the date of age and youth.
He lost his friends, his practice failed;
Truth should not always be revealed;
In dusty piles his pictures lay,
For no one sent the second pay.
Two busts, fraught with every grace
A Venus' and Apollo's face,
He placed in view; resolved to please,
Whoever sat, he drew from these,

30

From these corrected every feature,

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And spirited each awkward creature.

*All things were set; the hour was come,
His pallet ready o'er his thumb,
My lord appeared; and seated right
In proper attitude and light,
The painter looked, he sketched the piece,
Then dipp'd his pencil, talked of Greece,
Of Titian's tints, of Guido's air;
'Those eyes, my lord, the spirit there*

40

*Might well a Raphael's hand require,
To give them all the native fire;
The features fraught with sense and wit,
You'll grant are very hard to hit;
But yet with patience you shall view
As much as paint and art can do.
Observe the work.' My lord replied:
'Till now I thought my mouth was wide;
Besides, my mouth is somewhat long;
Dear sir, for me, 'tis far too young.'*

50

*'Oh! pardon me,' the artist cried,
'In this, the painters must decide.
The piece even common eyes must strike,
I warrant it extremely like.'*

*My lord examined it anew;
No looking-glass seemed half so true.*

*A lady came, with borrowed grace
He from his Venus formed her face.
Her lover praised the painter's art;
So like the picture in his heart!*

60

*To every age some charm he lent;
Even beauties were almost content.
Through all the town his art they praised;
His custom grew, his price was raised.
Had he the real likeness shown,
Would any man the picture own?
But when thus happily he wrought,
Each found the likeness in his thought.*



FABLE XIX.

THE LION AND THE CUB.

How fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and base!
These cannot bear an equal nigh,
But from superior merit fly.
They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And lose their hours in ale and smoke.
There o'er some petty club preside;
So poor, so paltry is their pride!
Nay, even with fools whole nights will sit,
In hopes to be supreme in wit.

10

*If these can read, to these I write,
To set their worth in truest light.
A lion-cub, of sordid mind,
Avoided all the lion kind;
Fond of applause, he sought the feasts
Of vulgar and ignoble beasts;
With asses all his time he spent,
Their club's perpetual president.
He caught their manners, looks, and airs;
An ass in every thing, but ears!*

20

If e'er his highness meant a joke,
They grinned applause before he spoke;
But at each word what shouts of praise!
Good gods! how natural he brays!
Elate with flattery and conceit,
He seeks his royal sire's retreat;
Forward, and fond to show his parts,
His highness brays; the lion starts.

'Puppy, that cursed vociferation
Betrays thy life and conversation:

30



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Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,
Are trumpets of their own disgrace.'
 'Why so severe?' the cub replies;
 'Our senate always held me wise.'
 'How weak is pride!' returns the sire;
'All fools are vain, when fools admire!
But know what stupid asses prize,
Lions and noble beasts despise.'

* * * * *

FABLE XX.

THE OLD HEN AND THE COCK.

Restrain your child; you'll soon believe
The text which says, we sprung from Eve.
 As an old hen led forth her train,
And seemed to peck to shew the grain;
She raked the chaff, she scratched the ground,
And gleaned the spacious yard around.
A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well's narrow margin springs,
And prone she drops. The mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possess'd.

10

*A cock she met; her son she knew;
And in her heart affection grew.
'My son,' says she, 'I grant your years
Have reached beyond a mother's cares;
I see you vig'rous, strong, and bold;
I hear with joy your triumphs told.
Tis not from cocks thy fate I dread;
But let thy ever-wary tread
Avoid yon well; that fatal place
Is sure perdition to our race.*

20

Print this my counsel on thy breast;
To the just gods I leave the rest.'
 He thanked her care; yet day by day
His bosom burned to disobey;
And every time the well he saw,
Scorned in his heart the foolish law:



Near and more near each day he drew,
And longed to try the dangerous view.

'Why was this idle charge?' he cries;
'Let courage female fears despise.

30

*Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
And therefore this injunction gave?
Or does her harvest store the place,
A treasure for her younger race?
And would she thus my search prevent?
I stand resolved, and dare the event.'*

*Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,
And pries into the depth profound.
He stretched his neck; and from below
With stretching neck advanced a foe:*

40

With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,
The foe with ruffled plumes appears:
Threat answered threat, his fury grew,
Headlong to meet the war he flew,
But when the watery death he found,
He thus lamented as he drowned:

'I ne'er had been in this condition,
But for my mother's prohibition.'

* * * * *

FABLE XXI.

THE RAT-CATCHER AND CATS.



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The rats by night such mischief did,
Betty was every morning chid.
They undermined whole sides of bacon,
Her cheese was sapped, her tarts were taken.
Her pasties, fenced with thickest paste,
Were all demolished, and laid waste.
She cursed the cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.
An engineer, of noted skill,
Engaged to stop the growing ill.

10

*From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways;
Finds where they 'scape an ambuscade,
And whence the nightly sally's made.*

*An envious cat from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace.
She saw, that if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone;
So, secretly removes his baits,
And every stratagem defeats.*

20

Again he sets the poisoned toils,
And puss again the labour foils.
'What foe (to frustrate my designs)
My schemes thus nightly countermines?'
Incensed, he cries: 'this very hour
This wretch shall bleed beneath my power.'

So said. A pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor puss was caught.

'Smuggler,' says he, 'thou shalt be made
A victim to our loss of trade.'

30

*The captive cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom sues:
'A sister of the science spare;
One interest is our common care.'*

*'What insolence!' the man replied;
'Shall cats with us the game divide?
Were all your interloping band
Extinguished, of expelled the land,
We rat-catchers might raise our fees,
Sole guardians of a nation's cheese!'*



40

A cat, who saw the lifted knife,
 Thus spoke, and saved her sister's life:
 'In every age and clime we see,
 Two of a trade can ne'er agree.
 Each hates his neighbour for encroaching;
 Squire stigmatises squire for poaching;
 Beauties with beauties are in arms,
 And scandal pelts each other's charms;
 Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
 In hope to make the world their own.

50

*But let us limit our desires;
 Nor war like beauties, kings, and squires!
 For though we both one prey pursue,
 There's game enough for us and you.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXII.

THE GOAT WITHOUT A BEARD.

'Tis certain, that the modish passions
 Descend among the crowd, like fashions.
 Excuse me then, if pride, conceit,
 (The manners of the fair and great)
 I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,
 Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.
 I say that these are proud. What then?
 I never said they equal men.

A goat (as vain as goat can be)
 Affected singularity.

10

Whene'er a thymy bank he found,



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*He rolled upon the fragrant ground;
And then with fond attention stood,
Fixed o'er his image in the flood.
'I hate my frowsy beard,' he cries;
'My youth is lost in this disguise.
Did not the females know my vigour,
Well might they loathe this reverend figure.'
Resolved to smoothe his shaggy face,
He sought the barber of the place.*

20

*A flippant monkey, spruce and smart,
Hard by, professed the dapper art;
His pole with pewter basins hung,
Black rotten teeth in order strung,
Ranged cups that in the window stood,
Lined with red rags, to look like blood,
Did well his threefold trade explain,
Who shaved, drew teeth, and breathed a vein.
The goat he welcomes with an air,
And seats him in his wooden chair:*

30

*Mouth, nose, and cheek the lather hides:
Light, smooth, and swift the razor glides.
'I hope your custom, sir,' says pug.
'Sure never face was half so smug.'
The goat, impatient for applause,
Swift to the neighbouring hill withdraws:
The shaggy people grinned and stared.
'Heyday! what's here? without a beard!
Say, brother, whence the dire disgrace?
What envious hand hath robbed your face?'*

40

*When thus the fop with smiles of scorn:
'Are beards by civil nations worn?
Even Muscovites have mowed their chins.
Shall we, like formal Capuchins,
Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,
And bear about the hairy load?
Whene'er we through the village stray,
Are we not mocked along the way;
Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,*



By boys our beards disgraced and torn?
50

*'Were you no more with goats to dwell,
Brother, I grant you reason well,'
Replies a bearded chief. 'Beside,
If boys can mortify thy pride,
How wilt thou stand the ridicule
Of our whole flock? Affected fool!
Coxcombs, distinguished from the rest,
To all but coxcombs are a jest.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXIII.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER CATS.

Who friendship with a knave hath made,
Is judged a partner in the trade.
The matron who conducts abroad
A willing nymph, is thought a bawd;
And if a modest girl is seen
With one who cures a lover's spleen,
We guess her not extremely nice,
And only wish to know her price.
'Tis thus that on the choice of friends
Our good or evil name depends.

10

*A wrinkled hag, of wicked fame,
Beside a little smoky flame
Sate hovering, pinched with age and frost;
Her shrivelled hands, with veins embossed,
Upon her knees her weight sustains,
While palsy shook her crazy brains:
She mumbles forth her backward prayers,
An untamed scold of fourscore years.*



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*About her swarmed a numerous brood
Of cats, who, lank with hunger, mewed.*

20

Teased with their cries, her choler grew,
And thus she sputtered: 'Hence, ye crew.
Fool that I was, to entertain
Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train!
Had ye been never housed and nursed,
I, for a witch had ne'er been cursed.
To you I owe, that crowds of boys
Worry me with eternal noise;
Straws laid across, my pace retard,
The horse-shoe's nailed (each threshold's guard),

30

*The stunted broom the wenches hide,
For fear that I should up and ride;
They stick with pins my bleeding seat,
And bid me show my secret teat.'*
'To hear you prate would vex a saint;
Who hath most reason of complaint?'
Replies a cat. 'Let's come to proof.
Had we ne'er starved beneath your roof,
We had, like others of our race,
In credit lived as beasts of chase.

40

'Tis infamy to serve a hag;
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag;
And boys against our lives combine,
Because, 'tis said, you cats have nine.'

* * * * *

FABLE XXIV.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE SNAIL.

All upstarts insolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.
As, in the sunshine of the morn,
A butterfly (but newly born)



Sat proudly perking on a rose;
With pert conceit his bosom glows;
His wings (all-glorious to behold)
Bedropp'd with azure, jet, and gold,
Wide he displays; the spangled dew
Reflects his eyes, and various hue.

10

*His now-forgotten friend, a snail,
Beneath his house, with slimy trail
Crawls o'er the grass; whom when he spies,
In wrath he to the gard'ner cries:*

*'What means yon peasant's daily toil,
From choking weeds to rid the soil?
Why wake you to the morning's care,
Why with new arts correct the year,
Why glows the peach with crimson hue,
And why the plum's inviting blue;*

20

*Were they to feast his taste design'd,
That vermin of voracious kind?
Crush then the slow, the pilfering race;
So purge thy garden from disgrace.'*

*'What arrogance!' the snail replied;
'How insolent is upstart pride!
Hadst thou not thus with insult vain,
Provoked my patience to complain,
I had concealed thy meaner birth,
Nor traced thee to the scum of earth.*

30

*For scarce nine suns have waked the hours,
To swell the fruit, and paint the flowers,
Since I thy humbler life surveyed,
In base, in sordid guise arrayed;
A hideous insect, vile, unclean,
You dragged a slow and noisome train;
And from your spider-bowels drew
Foul film, and spun the dirty clew.
I own my humble life, good friend;
Snail was I born, and snail shall end.*

40

*And what's a butterfly? At best,
He's but a caterpillar, dress'd;
And all thy race (a numerous seed)
Shall prove of caterpillar breed.'*



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* * * * *

FABLE XXV.

THE SCOLD AND THE PARROT.

The husband thus reproved his wife:
'Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
Art thou the herald of disgrace,
Denouncing war to all thy race?
Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
Which spares no friend, nor sex, nor age?
That vixen tongue of yours, my dear,
Alarms our neighbours far and near.
Good gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
That murmuring flows, and flows for ever!

10

*Ne'er tired, perpetual discord sowing!
Like fame, it gathers strength by going.'*
*'Heyday!' the flippant tongue replies,
How solemn is the fool, how wise!
Is nature's choicest gift debarred?
Nay, frown not; for I will be heard.
Women of late are finely ridden,
A parrot's privilege forbidden!
You praise his talk, his squalling song;
But wives are always in the wrong.'*

20

Now reputations flew in pieces,
Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces.
She ran the parrot's language o'er,
Bawd, hussy, drunkard, slattern, whore;
On all the sex she vents her fury,
Tries and condemns without a jury.

At once the torrent of her words
Alarmed cat, monkey, dogs, and birds:
All join their forces to confound her;
Puss spits, the monkey chatters round her;

30

*The yelping cur her heels assaults;
The magpie blabs out all her faults;
Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,
With this rebuke out-screamed her rage:*



*'A parrot is for talking prized,
But prattling women are despised.
She who attacks another's honour,
Draws every living thing upon her.
Think, madam, when you stretch your lungs,
That all your neighbours too have tongues.*

40

*One slander must ten thousand get,
The world with interest pays the debt.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXVI.

THE CUR AND THE MASTIFF.

*A sneaking cur, the master's spy,
Rewarded for his daily lie,
With secret jealousies and fears
Set all together by the ears.
Poor puss to-day was in disgrace,
Another cat supplied her place;
The hound was beat, the mastiff chid,
The monkey was the room forbid;
Each to his dearest friend grew shy,
And none could tell the reason why.*

10

*A plan to rob the house was laid,
The thief with love seduced the maid;
Cajoled the cur, and stroked his head,
And bought his secrecy with bread.
He next the mastiff's honour tried,
Whose honest jaws the bribe defied.
He stretched his hand to proffer more;
The surly dog his fingers tore.*

*Swift ran the cur; with indignation
The master took his information.*



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20

'Hang him, the villain's cursed,' he cries;
And round his neck the halter ties.

The dog his humble suit preferred,
And begged in justice to be heard.

The master sat. On either hand
The cited dogs confronting stand;
The cur the bloody tale relates,
And, like a lawyer, aggravates.

'Judge not unheard,' the mastiff cried,
'But weigh the cause on either side.

30

*Think not that treachery can be just,
Take not informers' words on trust.*

*They ope their hand to every pay,
And you and me by turns betray.'*

*He spoke. And all the truth appeared,
The cur was hanged, the mastiff cleared.*

* * * * *

FABLE XXVII.

THE SICK MAN AND THE ANGEL.

'Is there no hope?' the sick man said.
The silent doctor shook his head,
And took his leave with signs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the man with gasping breath;
'I feel the chilling wound of death:
Since I must bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review.
I grant, my bargains well were made,
But all men over-reach in trade;

10

'Tis self-defence in each profession,
Sure self-defence is no transgression.
The little portion in my hands,



By good security on lands,
Is well increased. If unawares,
My justice to myself and heirs,
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good sufficient bail;
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduced a family to need,

20

*My will hath made the world amends;
My hope on charity depends.
When I am numbered with the dead,
And all my pious gifts are read,
By heaven and earth 'twill then be known
My charities were amply shown'*

*An angel came. 'Ah, friend!' he cried,
'No more in flattering hope confide.
Can thy good deeds in former times
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes?*

30

What widow or what orphan prays
To crown thy life with length of days?
A pious action's in thy power,
Embrace with joy the happy hour.
Now, while you draw the vital air,
Prove your intention is sincere.
This instant give a hundred pound;
Your neighbours want, and you abound.'
'But why such haste?' the sick man whines;
'Who knows as yet what Heaven designs?

40

*Perhaps I may recover still;
That sum and more are in my will?
'Fool,' says the vision, 'now 'tis plain,
Your life, your soul, your heaven was gain,
From every side, with all your might,
You scraped, and scraped beyond your right;
And after death would fain atone,
By giving what is not your own.'*

*'While there is life, there's hope,' he cried;
'Then why such haste?' so groaned and died.*

50



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FABLE XXVIII.

THE PERSIAN, THE SUN, AND THE CLOUD.

Is there a bard whom genius fires,
Whose every thought the god inspires?
When Envy reads the nervous lines,
She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines;
Her hissing snakes with venom swell;
She calls her venal train from hell:
The servile fiends her nod obey,
And all Curl's^[4] authors are in pay,
Fame calls up calumny and spite.
Thus shadow owes its birth to light.

10

*As prostrate to the god of day,
With heart devout, a Persian lay,
His invocation thus begun:
'Parent of light, all-seeing Sun,
Prolific beam, whose rays dispense
The various gifts of providence,
Accept our praise, our daily prayer,
Smile on our fields, and bless the year.'*

*A cloud, who mocked his grateful tongue,
The day with sudden darkness hung;*

20

With pride and envy swelled, aloud
A voice thus thundered from the cloud:
'Weak is this gaudy god of thine,
Whom I at will forbid to shine.
Shall I nor vows, nor incense know?
Where praise is due, the praise bestow.'

With fervent zeal the Persian moved,
Thus the proud calumny reproved:

'It was that god, who claims my prayer,
Who gave thee birth, and raised thee there;

30

*When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,
Thy substance is but plainer shown.
A passing gale, a puff of wind
Dispels thy thickest troops combined.'*



*The gale arose; the vapour toss'd
(The sport of winds) in air was lost;
The glorious orb the day refines.
Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines.*

* * * * *

FABLE XXIX.

THE FOX AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

A fox, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, sick, and faint, expiring lay;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age disarmed his mumbling jaw.
His numerous race around him stand
To learn their dying sire's command:
He raised his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone:
'Ah, sons! from evil ways depart:
My crimes lie heavy on my heart.

10

*See, see, the murdered geese appear!
Why are those bleeding turkeys here?
Why all around this cackling train,
Who haunt my ears for chicken slain?
The hungry foxes round them stared,
And for the promised feast prepared.
'Where, sir, is all this dainty cheer?
Nor turkey, goose, nor hen is here.
These are the phantoms of your brain,
And your sons lick their lips in vain.'*

20

'O gluttons!' says the drooping sire,
'Restrain inordinate desire.
Your liqu'rish taste you shall deplore,



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When peace of conscience is no more.
Does not the hound betray our pace,
And gins and guns destroy our race?
Thieves dread the searching eye of power,
And never feel the quiet hour.
Old age (which few of us shall know)
Now puts a period to my woe.

30

*Would you true happiness attain,
Let honesty your passions rein;
So live in credit and esteem,
And the good name you lost, redeem.'*
*'The counsel's good,' a fox replies,
'Could we perform what you advise.
Think what our ancestors have done;
A line of thieves from son to son:
To us descends the long disgrace,
And infamy hath marked our race.*

40

Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,
Honest in thought, in word, and deed;
Whatever henroost is decreased,
We shall be thought to share the feast.
The change shall never be believed,
A lost good name is ne'er retrieved.'
*'Nay, then,' replies the feeble fox,
'(But hark! I hear a hen that clocks)
Go, but be moderate in your food;
A chicken too might do me good.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXX.

THE SETTING-DOG AND THE PARTRIDGE.

The ranging dog the stubble tries,
And searches every breeze that flies;
The scent grows warm; with cautious fear
He creeps, and points the covey near;



The men, in silence, far behind,
Conscious of game, the net unbind.

A partridge, with experience wise,
The fraudulent preparation spies:
She mocks their toils, alarms her brood;
The covey springs, and seeks the wood;

10

*But ere her certain wing she tries,
Thus to the creeping spaniel cries:
'Thou fawning slave to man's deceit,
Thou pimp of luxury, sneaking cheat,
Of thy whole species thou disgrace,
Dogs shall disown thee of their race!
For if I judge their native parts,
They're born with open, honest hearts;
And, ere they serve man's wicked ends,
Were generous foes, or real friends.'*

20

When thus the dog, with scornful smile:
'Secure of wing, thou dar'st revile.
Clowns are to polished manners blind,
How ignorant is the rustic mind!
My worth, sagacious courtiers see,
And to preferment rise, like me.
The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
Hath oft enhanced a nation's debts:
Friend sets his friend, without regard;
And ministers his skill reward:

30

*Thus trained by man, I learnt his ways,
And growing favour feasts my days.'
'I might have guessed,' the partridge said,
'The place where you were trained and fed;
Servants are apt, and in a trice
Ape to a hair their master's vice.
You came from court, you say. Adieu,'
She said, and to the covey flew.*

* * * * *



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FABLE XXXI.

THE UNIVERSAL APPARITION.

A rake, by every passion ruled,
With every vice his youth had cooled;
Disease his tainted blood assails;
His spirits droop, his vigour fails;
With secret ills at home he pines,
And, like infirm old age, declines.

As, twinged with pain, he pensive sits,
And raves, and prays, and swears by fits,
A ghastly phantom, lean and wan,
Before him rose, and thus began:

10

*'My name, perhaps, hath reached your ear;
Attend, and be advised by Care.
Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor power,
Can give the heart a cheerful hour,
When health is lost. Be timely wise:
With health all taste of pleasure flies.'*

*Thus said, the phantom disappears.
The wary counsel waked his fears:
He now from all excess abstains,
With physic purifies his veins;*

20

And, to procure a sober life,
Resolves to venture on a wife.

But now again the sprite ascends,
Where'er he walks his ear attends;
Insinuates that beauty's frail,
That perseverance must prevail;
With jealousies his brain inflames,
And whispers all her lovers' names.
In other hours she represents
His household charge, his annual rents,

30

*Increasing debts, perplexing duns,
And nothing for his younger sons.*

*Straight all his thought to gain he turns,
And with the thirst of lucre burns.
But when possessed of fortune's store,
The spectre haunts him more and more;
Sets want and misery in view,*



*Bold thieves, and all the murd'ring crew,
Alarms him with eternal frights,
Infests his dream, or wakes his nights.*

40

How shall he chase this hideous guest?
Power may perhaps protect his rest.
To power he rose. Again the sprite
Besets him, morning, noon, and night!
Talks of ambition's tottering seat,
How envy persecutes the great,
Of rival hate, of treacherous friends,
And what disgrace his fall attends.

The Court he quits to fly from Care,
And seeks the peace of rural air:

50

*His groves, his fields, amused his hours;
He pruned his trees, he raised his flowers.
But Care again his steps pursues;
Warns him of blasts, of blighting dews,
Of plund'ring insects, snails, and rains,
And droughts that starved the laboured plains.
Abroad, at home, the spectre's there:
In vain we seek to fly from Care.
At length he thus the ghost address'd:
'Since thou must be my constant guest,*

60

Be kind, and follow me no more;
For Care by right should go before.'

* * * * *

FABLE XXXII.

THE TWO OWLS AND THE SPARROW.



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Two formal owls together sat,
Conferring thus in solemn chat:
'How is the modern taste decayed!
Where's the respect to wisdom paid?
Our worth the Grecian sages knew;
They gave our sires the honour due;
They weighed the dignity of fowls,
And pried into the depth of owls.
Athens, the seat of learned fame,
With general voice revered our name;

10

*On merit, title was conferred,
And all adored the Athenian bird.'*
'Brother, you reason well,' replies
The solemn mate, with half-shut eyes;
'Right. Athens was the seat of learning,
And truly wisdom is discerning.
Besides, on Pallas' helm we sit,
The type and ornament of wit:
But now, alas! we're quite neglected,
And a pert sparrow's more respected.'

20

A sparrow, who was lodged beside,
O'erhears them soothe each other's pride,
And thus he nimbly vents his heat:
'Who meets a fool must find conceit.
I grant, you were at Athens graced,
And on Minerva's helm were placed;
But every bird that wings the sky,
Except an owl, can tell you why.
From hence they taught their schools to know
How false we judge by outward show;

30

*That we should never look esteem,
Since fools as wise as you might seem.
Would ye contempt and scorn avoid,
Let your vain-glory be destroyed:
Humble your arrogance of thought,
Pursue the ways by Nature taught;
So shall you find delicious fare,
And grateful farmers praise your care:
So shall sleek mice your chase reward,*



And no keen cat find more regard.'
40

* * * * *

FABLE XXXIII.

THE COURTIER AND PROTEUS.

Whene'er a courtier's out of place
The country shelters his disgrace;
Where, doomed to exercise and health,
His house and gardens own his wealth,
He builds new schemes in hopes to gain
The plunder of another reign;
Like Philip's son, would fain be doing,
And sighs for other realms to ruin.

As one of these (without his wand)
Pensive, along the winding strand

10

*Employed the solitary hour,
In projects to regain his power;
The waves in spreading circles ran,
Proteus arose, and thus began:*

*'Came you from Court? For in your mien
A self-important air is seen.*

*He frankly owned his friends had tricked him
And how he fell his party's victim.*

*'Know,' says the god, 'by matchless skill
I change to every shape at will;*

20

*But yet I'm told, at Court you see
Those who presume to rival me.'*

*Thus said. A snake with hideous trail,
Proteus extends his scaly mail.*

*'Know,' says the man, 'though proud in place,
All courtiers are of reptile race.*



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Like you, they take that dreadful form,
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm;
With malice hiss, with envy gloat,
And for convenience change their coat;

30

*With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.'*

*Sudden the god a lion stands;
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare,
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.*

*'Had I ne'er lived at Court,' he cries,
'Such transformation might surprise;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each able courtier acts the same.*

40

*Wolves, lions, lynxes, while in place,
Their friends and fellows are their chase.
They play the bear's and fox's part;
Now rob by force, now steal with art.
They sometimes in the senate bray;
Or, changed again to beasts of prey,
Down from the lion to the ape,
Practise the frauds of every shape.'*

*So said, upon the god he flies,
In cords the struggling captive ties.*

50

*'Now, Proteus, now, (to truth compelled)
Speak, and confess thy art excelled.
Use strength, surprise, or what you will,
The courtier finds evasions still:
Not to be bound by any ties,
And never forced to leave his lies.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXXIV.

THE MASTIFFS.



Those who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A mastiff, of true English blood,
Loved fighting better than his food.
When dogs were snarling for a bone,
He longed to make the war his own,
And often found (when two contend)
To interpose obtained his end;
He gloried in his limping pace;
The scars of honour seamed his face;

10

*In every limb a gash appears,
And frequent fights retrenched his ears.*

*As, on a time, he heard from far
Two dogs engaged in noisy war,
Away he scours and lays about him,
Resolved no fray should be without him.*

*Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
And to the bold intruder cries:*

*'A cudgel shall correct your manners,
Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners?*

20

While on my dog you vent your spite,
Sirrah! 'tis me you dare not bite.'
To see the battle thus perplexed,
With equal rage a butcher vexed,
Hoarse-screaming from the circled crowd,
To the cursed mastiff cries aloud:

*'Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone
The combats of my dog have known.
He ne'er, like bullies coward-hearted,
Attacks in public, to be parted.*

30

*Think not, rash fool, to share his fame:
Be his the honour, or the shame.'*

*Thus said, they swore, and raved like thunder;
Then dragged their fastened dogs asunder;
While clubs and kicks from every side*



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Rebounded from the mastiff's hide.

*All reeking now with sweat and blood,
Awhile the parted warriors stood,
Then poured upon the meddling foe;
Who, worried, howled and sprawled below.*

40

He rose; and limping from the fray,
By both sides mangled, sneaked away.

* * * * *

FABLE XXXV.

THE BARLEY-MOW AND THE DUNGHILL.

How many saucy airs we meet
From Temple Bar to Aldgate Street!
Proud rogues, who shared the South-Sea prey,
And sprung like mushrooms in a day!
They think it mean, to condescend
To know a brother or a friend;
They blush to hear their mother's name,
And by their pride expose their shame.

As cross his yard, at early day,
A careful farmer took his way,

10

*He stopped, and leaning on his fork,
Observed the flail's incessant work.
In thought he measured all his store,
His geese, his hogs, he numbered o'er;
In fancy weighed the fleeces shorn,
And multiplied the next year's corn.*

*A Barley-mow, which stood beside,
Thus to its musing master cried:*

*'Say, good sir, is it fit or right
To treat me with neglect and slight?*

20

Me, who contribute to your cheer,
And raise your mirth with ale and beer?
Why thus insulted, thus disgraced,



And that vile dunghill near me placed?
Are those poor sweepings of a groom,
That filthy sight, that nauseous fume,
Meet objects here? Command it hence:
A thing so mean must give offence'

The humble dunghill thus replied:
'Thy master hears, and mocks thy pride:

30

*Insult not thus the meek and low;
In me thy benefactor know;
My warm assistance gave thee birth,
Or thou hadst perished low in earth;
But upstarts, to support their station,
Cancel at once all obligation.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XXXVI.

PYTHAGORAS AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

Pythag'ras rose at early dawn,
By soaring meditation drawn,
To breathe the fragrance of the day,
Through flowery fields he took his way.
In musing contemplation warm,
His steps misled him to a farm,
Where, on the ladder's topmost round,
A peasant stood; the hammer's sound
Shook the weak barn. 'Say, friend, what care
Calls for thy honest labour there?'

10

*The clown, with surly voice replies,
'Vengeance aloud for justice cries.
This kite, by daily rapine fed,
My hens' annoy, my turkeys' dread,
At length his forfeit life has paid;
See on the wall his wings displayed,
Here nailed, a terror to his kind,
My fowls shall future safety find;
My yard the thriving poultry feed,
And my barn's refuse fat the breed.'*



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20

'Friend,' says the sage, 'the doom is wise;
 For public good the murderer dies.
 But if these tyrants of the air
 Demand a sentence so severe,
 Think how the glutton man devours;
 What bloody feasts regale his hours!
 O impudence of power and might,
 Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,
 When thou, perhaps, carniv'rous sinner,
 Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner!'

30

*'Hold,' cried the clown, with passion heated,
 'Shall kites and men alike be treated?
 When Heaven the world with creatures stored,
 Man was ordained their sovereign lord.'*
*'Thus tyrants boast,' the sage replied,
 'Whose murders spring from power and pride.
 Own then this man-like kite is slain
 Thy greater luxury to sustain;
 For "Petty rogues submit to fate,
 That great ones may enjoy their state."'[5]*

40

FABLE XXXVII.

THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE RAVEN.

'Why are those tears? why droops your head?
 Is then your other husband dead?
 Or does a worse disgrace betide?
 Hath no one since his death applied?'
 'Alas! you know the cause too well:
 The salt is spilt, to me it fell.
 Then, to contribute to my loss,
 My knife and fork were laid across;
 On Friday too! the day I dread!
 Would I were safe at home in bed!

10



*Last night (I vow to heaven 'tis true)
Bounce from the fire a coffin flew.
Next post some fatal news shall tell,
God send my Cornish friends be well!
'Unhappy widow, cease thy tears,
Nor feel affliction in thy fears,
Let not thy stomach be suspended;
Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended;
And when the butler clears the table,
For thy desert, I'll read my fable.'*

20

*Betwixt her swagging panniers' load
A farmer's wife to market rode,
And, jogging on, with thoughtful care
Summed up the profits of her ware;
When, starting from her silver dream,
Thus far and wide was heard her scream:
'That raven on yon left-hand oak
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak)
Bodes me no good.' No more she said,
When poor blind Ball, with stumbling tread,*

30

*Fell prone; o'erturned the pannier lay,
And her mashed eggs bestrewed the way.
She, sprawling in the yellow road,
Railed, swore and cursed: 'Thou croaking toad,
A murrain take thy whoreson throat!
I knew misfortune in the note.'
'Dame,' quoth the raven, 'spare your oaths,
Unclench your fist, and wipe your clothes.
But why on me those curses thrown?
Goody, the fault was all your own;*

40

*For had you laid this brittle ware,
On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,
Though all the ravens of the hundred,
With croaking had your tongue out-thundered,
Sure-footed Dun had kept his legs,
And you, good woman, saved your eggs.'*



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FABLE XXXVIII.

THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

In other men we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye,
Each little speck and blemish find,
To our own stronger errors blind.

A turkey, tired of common food,
Forsook the barn, and sought the wood;
Behind her ran her infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.

'Draw near, my birds,' the mother cries,
'This hill delicious fare supplies;

10

*Behold, the busy negro race,
See, millions blacken all the place!
Fear not. Like me with freedom eat;
An ant is most delightful meat.
How bless'd, how envied were our life,
Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife!
But man, cursed man, on turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days:
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the savoury chine.*

20

From the low peasant to the lord,
The turkey smokes on every board.
Sure men for gluttony are cursed,
Of the seven deadly sins the worst.'

An ant, who climbed beyond his reach,
Thus answered from the neighbouring beech:

'Ere you remark another's sin, 27
Bid thy own conscience look within;
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor for a breakfast nations kill.'

30

* * * * *

FABLE XXXIX.

THE FATHER AND JUPITER.



The man to Jove his suit preferred;
He begged a wife. His prayer was heard,
Jove wondered at his bold addressing:
For how precarious is the blessing!
A wife he takes. And now for heirs
Again he worries heaven with prayers.
Jove nods assent. Two hopeful boys
And a fine girl reward his joys.
Now, more solicitous he grew,
And set their future lives in view;

10

*He saw that all respect and duty
Were paid to wealth, to power, and beauty.
'Once more,' he cries, 'accept my prayer;
Make my loved progeny thy care.
Let my first hope, my favourite boy,
All fortune's richest gifts enjoy.
My next with strong ambition fire:
May favour teach him to aspire;
Till he the step of power ascend,
And courtiers to their idol bend.*

20

With every grace, with every charm,
My daughter's perfect features arm.
If heaven approve, a father's bless'd.'
Jove smiles, and grants his full request.

The first, a miser at the heart,
Studious of every griping art,
Heaps hoards on hoards with anxious pain;
And all his life devotes to gain.
He feels no joy, his cares increase,
He neither wakes nor sleeps in peace;

30

*In fancied want (a wretch complete)
He starves, and yet he dares not eat.
The next to sudden honours grew:
The thriving art of Courts he knew:
He reached the height of power and place;*



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Then fell, the victim of disgrace.

*Beauty with early bloom supplies
His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.
The vain coquette each suit disdains,
And glories in her lover's pains.*

40

With age she fades, each lover flies;
Contemned, forlorn, she pines and dies.

When Jove the father's grief surveyed,
And heard him Heaven and Fate upbraid,
Thus spoke the god: 'By outward show,
Men judge of happiness and woe:
Shall ignorance of good and ill
Dare to direct the eternal will?
Seek virtue; and, of that possess'd,
To Providence resign the rest'

50

* * * * *

FABLE XL.

THE TWO MONKEYS.

The learned, full of inward pride,
The Fops of outward show deride:
The Fop, with learning at defiance,
Scoffs at the pedant, and the science:
The Don, a formal, solemn strutter,
Despises Monsieur's airs and flutter;
While Monsieur mocks the formal fool,
Who looks, and speaks, and walks by rule.
Britain, a medley of the twain,
As pert as France, as grave as Spain;

10

*In fancy wiser than the rest,
Laughs at them both, of both the jest.
Is not the poet's chiming close
Censured by all the sons of prose?
While bards of quick imagination
Despise the sleepy prose narration.
Men laugh at apes, they men contemn;*



*For what are we, but apes to them?
Two monkeys went to Southwark fair,
No critics had a sourer air:*

20

*They forced their way through draggled folks,
Who gaped to catch jack-pudding's jokes;
Then took their tickets for the show,
And got by chance the foremost row.
To see their grave, observing face,
Provoked a laugh throughout the place.*

*'Brother,' says Pug, and turned his head,
'The rabble's monstrously ill bred.'*

*Now through the booth loud hisses ran;
Nor ended till the show began.*

30

*The tumbler whirls the flap-flap round,
With somersets he shakes the ground;
The cord beneath the dancer springs;
Aloft in air the vaulter swings;
Distorted now, now prone depends,
Now through his twisted arms ascends:
The crowd, in wonder and delight,
With clapping hands applaud the sight.*

*With smiles, quoth Pug, 'If pranks like these
The giant apes of reason please,*

40

*How would they wonder at our arts!
They must adore us for our parts.
High on the twig I've seen you cling;
Play, twist and turn in airy ring:
How can those clumsy things, like me,
Fly with a bound from tree to tree?
But yet, by this applause, we find
These emulators of our kind
Discern our worth, our parts regard,
Who our mean mimics thus reward.'*

50

'Brother,' the grinning mate replies,



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*'In this I grant that man is wise.
While good example they pursue,
We must allow some praise is due;
But when they strain beyond their guide,
I laugh to scorn the mimic pride,
For how fantastic is the sight,
To meet men always bolt upright,
Because we sometimes walk on two!
I hate the imitating crew.'*

60

* * * * *

FABLE XLI.

THE OWL AND THE FARMER.

An owl of grave deport and mien,
Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,
Within a barn had chose his station,
As fit for prey and contemplation.
Upon a beam aloft he sits,
And nods, and seems to think by fits.
So have I seen a man of news,
Or *Post-boy*, or *Gazette* peruse;
Smoke, nod, and talk with voice profound,
And fix the fate of Europe round.

10

*Sheaves piled on sheaves, hid all the floor;
At dawn of morn, to view his store
The farmer came. The hooting guest
His self-importance thus express'd:
'Reason in man is mere pretence:
How weak, how shallow is his sense!
To treat with scorn the bird of night,
Declares his folly, or his spite.
Then too, how partial is his praise!
The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays*

20

*To his ill-judging ears are fine;
And nightingales are all divine.*



But the more knowing feathered race
See wisdom stamped upon my face.
Whene'er to visit light I deign,
What flocks of fowl compose my train!
Like slaves they crowd my flight behind,
And own me of superior kind.'

The farmer laughed, and thus replied:
'Thou dull important lump of pride,

30

*Dar'st thou with that harsh grating tongue,
Depreciate birds of warbling song?
Indulge thy spleen. Know, men and fowl
Regard thee, as thou art an owl.
Besides, proud blockhead, be not vain,
Of what thou call'st thy slaves and train.
Few follow wisdom or her rules;
Fools in derision follow fools.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XLII.

THE JUGGLERS.

A juggler long through all the town
Had raised his fortune and renown;
You'd think (so far his art transcends)
The devil at his fingers' ends.

Vice heard his fame, she read his bill;
Convinced of his inferior skill,
She sought his booth, and from the crowd
Defied the man of art aloud:

'Is this, then, he so famed for sleight?
Can this slow bungler cheat your sight!

10

*Dares he with me dispute the prize?
I leave it to impartial eyes.'*

*Provoked, the juggler cried, 'tis done.
In science I submit to none.'*

*Thus said, the cups and balls he played;
By turns, this here, that there, conveyed.*



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*The cards, obedient to his words,
Are by a fillip turned to birds.
His little boxes change the grain:
Trick after trick deludes the train.*

20

He shakes his bag, he shows all fair;
His fingers spreads, and nothing there;
Then bids it rain with showers of gold,
And now his ivory eggs are told.
But when from thence the hen he draws,
Amazed spectators hum applause.

Vice now stepped forth, and took the place
With all the forms of his grimace.

'This magic looking-glass,' she cries,
(There, hand it round) 'will charm your eyes.'

30

*Each eager eye the sight desired,
And every man himself admired.*

*Next to a senator addressing:
'See this bank-note; observe the blessing,
Breathe on the bill.' Heigh, pass! 'Tis gone.
Upon his lips a padlock shone.*

*A second puff the magic broke,
The padlock vanished, and he spoke.*

*Twelve bottles ranged upon the board,
All full, with heady liquor stored,*

40

By clean conveyance disappear,
And now two bloody swords are there.

A purse she to a thief exposed,
At once his ready fingers closed;
He opes his fist, the treasure's fled;
He sees a halter in its stead.

She bids ambition hold a wand;
He grasps a hatchet in his hand.

A box of charity she shows,
'Blow here;' and a churchwarden blows,

50

*'Tis vanished with conveyance neat,
And on the table smokes a treat.*

She shakes the dice, the boards she knocks,



And from all pockets fills her box.

*She next a meagre rake address'd:
'This picture see; her shape, her breast!
What youth, and what inviting eyes!
Hold her, and have her.' With surprise,
His hand exposed a box of pills,
And a loud laugh proclaimed his ills.*

60

A counter, in a miser's hand,
Grew twenty guineas at command.
She bids his heir the sum retain,
And 'tis a counter now again.
A guinea with her touch you see
Take every shape, but charity;
And not one thing you saw, or drew,
But changed from what was first in view.

The juggler now in grief of heart,
With this submission owned her art:

70

*'Can I such matchless sleight withstand?
How practice hath improved your hand!
But now and then I cheat the throng;
You every day, and all day long.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XLIII.

THE COUNCIL OF HORSES.

Upon a time a neighing steed,
Who grazed among a numerous breed,
With mutiny had fired the train,
And spread dissension through the plain.
On matters that concerned the state
The council met in grand debate.
A colt, whose eye-balls flamed with ire,
Elate with strength and youthful fire,

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In haste stepped forth before the rest,
And thus the listening throng addressed:

10

*'Good gods! how abject is our race,
Condemned to slavery and disgrace!
Shall we our servitude retain,
Because our sires have borne the chain?
Consider, friends, your strength and might;
'Tis conquest to assert your right.
How cumbrous is the gilded coach!
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we designed for daily toil,
To drag the ploughshare through, the soil,*

20

*To sweat in harness through the road,
To groan beneath the carrier's load?
How feeble are the two-legged kind!
What force is in our nerves combined!
Shall then our nobler jaws submit
To foam and champ the galling bit?
Shall haughty man my back bestride?
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side?
Forbid it, heavens! Reject the rein;
Your shame, your infamy disdain.*

30

*Let him the lion first control,
And still the tiger's famished growl.
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make him tremble at our name.'*
*A general nod approved the cause,
And all the circle neighed applause.
When, lo! with grave and solemn pace,
A steed advanced before the race,
With age and long experience wise;
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,*

40

*And, to the murmurs of the train,
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain:
'When I had health and strength, like you,
The toils of servitude I knew;*



Now grateful man rewards my pains,
And gives me all these wide domains.
At will I crop the year's increase
My latter life is rest and peace.
I grant, to man we lend our pains,
And aid him to correct the plains.

50

*But doth not he divide the care,
Through all the labours of the year?
How many thousand structures rise,
To fence us from inclement skies!
For us he bears the sultry day,
And stores up all our winter's hay.
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain;
We share the toil, and share the grain.
Since every creature was decreed
To aid each other's mutual need,*

60

Appease your discontented mind,
And act the part by heaven assigned.'
The tumult ceased. The colt submitted,
And, like his ancestors, was bitted.

* * * * *

FABLE XLIV.

THE HOUND AND THE HUNTSMAN.

Impertinence at first is borne
With heedless slight, or smiles of scorn;
Teased into wrath, what patience bears
The noisy fool who perseveres?
The morning wakes, the huntsman sounds,
At once rush forth the joyful hounds.
They seek the wood with eager pace,
Through bush, through brier, explore the chase.
Now scattered wide, they try the plain,
And snuff the dewy turf in vain.



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10

*What care, what industry, what pains!
What universal silence reigns.*

*Ringwood, a dog of little fame,
Young, pert, and ignorant of game,
At once displays his babbling throat;
The pack, regardless of the note,
Pursue the scent; with louder strain
He still persists to vex the train.*

*The huntsman to the clamour flies;
The smacking lash he smartly plies.*

20

*His ribs all welked, with howling tone
The puppy thus expressed his moan:
'I know the music of my tongue
Long since the pack with envy stung.
What will not spite? These bitter smarts
I owe to my superior parts.'*

*'When puppies prate,' the huntsman cried,
'They show both ignorance and pride:
Fools may our scorn, not envy raise,
For envy is a kind of praise.*

30

*Had not thy forward noisy tongue
Proclaimed thee always in the wrong,
Thou might'st have mingled with the rest,
And ne'er thy foolish nose confess'd.
But fools, to talking ever prone,
Are sure to make their follies known.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XLV.

THE POET AND THE ROSE.

*I hate the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame.
Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,
Imagine that they raise their own.
Thus scribblers, covetous of praise,
Think slander can transplant the bays.*



Beauties and bards have equal pride,
With both all rivals are decried.
Who praises Lesbia's eyes and feature,
Must call her sister, awkward creature;

10

*For the kind flattery's sure to charm,
When we some other nymph disarm.*

*As in the cool of early day
A poet sought the sweets of May,
The garden's fragrant breath ascends,
And every stalk with odour bends.
A rose he plucked, he gazed, admired,
Thus singing as the muse inspired:
'Go, rose, my Chloe's bosom grace;
How happy should I prove,*

20

*Might I supply that envied place
With never fading love!
There, phoenix-like, beneath her eye,
Involved in fragrance, burn and die!
Know, hapless flower, that thou shalt find
More fragrant roses there;
I see thy withering head reclined
With envy and despair!
One common fate we both must prove;
You die with envy, I with love.'*

30

*'Spare your comparisons,' replied
An angry rose, who grew beside.
'Of all mankind, you should not flout us;
What can a poet do without us!
In every love-song roses bloom;
We lend you colour and perfume.
Does it to Chloe's charms conduce,
To found her praise on our abuse?
Must we, to flatter her, be made
To wither, envy, pine and fade?'*

40

* * * * *

FABLE XLVI.



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THE CUR, THE HORSE, AND THE SHEPHERD'S DOG.

The lad of all-sufficient merit,
With modesty ne'er damps his spirit;
Presuming on his own deserts,
On all alike his tongue exerts;
His noisy jokes at random throws,
And pertly spatters friends and foes;
In wit and war the bully race
Contribute to their own disgrace.
Too late the forward youth shall find
That jokes are sometimes paid in kind;

10

*Or if they canker in the breast,
He makes a foe who makes a jest.*

*A village-cur, of snappish race,
The pertest puppy of the place,
Imagined that his treble throat
Was blest with music's sweetest note:
In the mid road he basking lay,
The yelping nuisance of the way;
For not a creature passed along,
But had a sample of his song.*

20

Soon as the trotting steed he hears,
He starts, he cocks his dapper ears;
Away he scours, assaults his hoof;
Now near him snarls, now barks aloof;
With shrill impertinence attends;
Nor leaves him till the village ends.

It chanced, upon his evil day,
A pad came pacing down the way:
The cur, with never-ceasing tongue,
Upon the passing traveller sprung.

30

*The horse, from scorn provoked to ire,
Flung backward; rolling in the mire,
The puppy howled, and bleeding lay;
The pad in peace pursued the way.*

*A shepherd's dog, who saw the deed,
Detesting the vexatious breed,
Bespoke him thus: 'When coxcombs prate,
They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate;*



*Thy teasing tongue had judgment tied,
Thou hadst not, like a puppy, died.'*

40

* * * * *

FABLE XLVII.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

Death, on a solemn night of state,
In all his pomp of terror sate:
The attendants of his gloomy reign,
Diseases dire, a ghastly train!
Crowd the vast court. With hollow tone,
A voice thus thundered from the throne:
 'This night our minister we name,
Let every servant speak his claim;
Merit shall bear this ebon wand;'
All, at the word, stretch'd forth their hand.

10

*Fever, with burning heat possess'd,
Advanced, and for the wand address'd:
'I to the weekly bills appeal,
Let those express my fervent zeal;
On every slight occasion near,
With violence I persevere.'*

*Next Gout appears with limping pace,
Pleads how he shifts from place to place,
From head to foot how swift he flies, 19
And every joint and sinew plies;*

20

Still working when he seems suppress'd,
A most tenacious stubborn guest.

A haggard spectre from the crew
Crawls forth, and thus asserts his due:
'Tis I who taint the sweetest joy,
And in the shape of love destroy:



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My shanks, sunk eyes, and noseless face,
Prove my pretension to the place.'

Stone urged his ever-growing force.
And, next, Consumption's meagre corse,

30

*With feeble voice, that scarce was heard,
Broke with short coughs, his suit preferred:
'Let none object my ling'ring way,
I gain, like Fabius, by delay;
Fatigue and weaken every foe
By long attack, secure, though slow.'*

*Plague represents his rapid power,
Who thinned a nation in an hour.*

*All spoke their claim, and hoped the wand.
Now expectation hushed the band,*

40

When thus the monarch from the throne:

'Merit was ever modest known,
What, no physician speak his right!
None here! but fees their toils requite.
Let then Intemperance take the wand,
Who fills with gold their zealous hand.
You, Fever, Gout, and all the rest,
(Whom wary men, as foes, detest,
Forego your claim; no more pretend:
Intemperance is esteemed a friend;

50

*He shares their mirth, their social joys,
And, as a courted guest, destroys.
The charge on him must justly fall,
Who finds employment for you all.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XLVIII.

THE GARDENER AND THE HOG.

A gard'ner, of peculiar taste,
On a young hog his favour placed;
Who fed not with the common herd;



His tray was to the hall preferred.
He wallowed underneath the board,
Or in his master's chamber snored;
Who fondly stroked him every day,
And taught him all the puppy's play;
Where'er he went, the grunting friend
Ne'er failed his pleasure to attend.

10

*As on a time, the loving pair
Walked forth to tend the garden's care,
The master thus address'd the swine:
'My house, my garden, all is thine.
On turnips feast whene'er you please,
And riot in my beans and peas;
If the potato's taste delights,
Or the red carrot's sweet invites,
Indulge thy morn and evening hours,
But let due care regard my flowers:*

20

My tulips are my garden's pride,
What vast expense those beds supplied!
The hog by chance one morning roamed,
Where with new ale the vessels foamed.
He munches now the steaming grains,
Now with full swill the liquor drains.
Intoxicating fumes arise; 27
He reels, he rolls his winking eyes;
Then stagg'ring through the garden scours,
And treads down painted ranks of flowers.

30

*With delving snout he turns the soil,
And cools his palate with the spoil.
The master came, the ruin spied,
'Villain, suspend thy rage,' he cried.
'Hast thou, thou most ungrateful sot,
My charge, my only charge forgot?
What, all my flowers!' No more he said,*



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But gazed, and sighed, and hung his head.

The hog with stutt'ring speech returns:

'Explain, sir, why your anger burns.

40

*See there, untouched, your tulips strown,
For I devoured the roots alone.'*

*At this the gard'ner's passion grows;
From oaths and threats he fell to blows.
The stubborn brute the blow sustains;
Assaults his leg, and tears the veins.*

*Ah! foolish swain, too late you find
That sties were for such friends designed!*

*Homeward he limps with painful pace,
Reflecting thus on past disgrace:*

50

*Who cherishes a brutal mate
Shall mourn the folly soon or late.*

* * * * *

FABLE XLIX.

THE MAN AND THE FLEA.

*Whether on earth, in air, or main,
Sure everything alive is vain!
Does not the hawk all fowls survey,
As destined only for his prey?
And do not tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for slaves to kings?*

*When the crab views the pearly strands,
Or Tagus, bright with golden sands;
Or crawls beside the coral grove,
And hears the ocean roll above;*

10

*'Nature is too profuse,' says he,
'Who gave all these to pleasure me!'
When bordering pinks and roses bloom,
And every garden breathes perfume;
When peaches glow with sunny dyes,
Like Laura's cheek, when blushes rise;
When with huge figs the branches bend,*



*When clusters from the vine depend;
The snail looks round on flower and tree,
And cries, 'All these were made for me!'*

20

*'What dignity's in human nature!
Says man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he cast his eye,
And viewed the sea and arched sky;
The sun was sunk beneath the main,
The moon and all the starry train
Hung the vast vault of heaven. The man
His contemplation thus began:*

*'When I behold this glorious show,
And the wide watery world below,*

30

*The scaly people of the main,
The beasts that range the wood or plain,
The winged inhabitants of air,
The day, the night, the various year,
And know all these by heaven design'd
As gifts to pleasure human kind;
I cannot raise my worth too high;
Of what vast consequence am I!'*

*'Not of the importance you suppose,'
Replies a flea upon his nose.*

40

*'Be humble, learn thyself to scan;
Know, pride was never made for man.
'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
What, heaven and earth for thee designed!
For thee, made only for our need,
That more important fleas might feed.'*

* * * * *

FABLE L.

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS.



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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 friendships; 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.

10

*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;*

20

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;

30

*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:



40

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 she, '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:

50

*Said he was slow, confessed his fears;
For hounds cat 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.*

60

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.'

* * * * *

PART II.

PUBLISHED AFTER GAY'S DEATH, BY THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY.

FABLE I.



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THE DOG AND THE FOX.

TO A LAWYER.

I know you lawyers can with ease
Twist words and meanings as you please;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favour every client;
That 'tis the fee directs the sense,
To make out either side's pretence.
When you peruse the clearest case,
You see it with a double face:
For scepticism's your profession;
You hold there's doubt in all expression.

10

*Hence is the bar with fees supplied,
Hence eloquence takes either side.
Your hand would have but paltry gleanings
Could every man express his meaning.
Who dares presume to pen a deed.
Unless you previously are fee'd?
'Tis drawn; and, to augment the cost,
In dull prolixity engrossed.
And now we're well secured by law,
Till the next brother find a flaw.*

20

Read o'er a will. Was't ever known,
But you could make the will your own;
For when you read, 'tis with intent
To find out meanings never meant.
Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
I bar fallacious innuendo.

Sagacious Porta's[6] skill could trace
Some beast or bird in every face.
The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
Proved this an owl, and that an ape.

30

*When, in the sketches thus designed,
Resemblance brings some friend to mind,
You show the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print:
So monstrous like the portrait's found,
All know it, and the laugh goes round.
Like him I draw from general nature;*



Is't I or you then fix the satire?

*So, sir, I beg you spare your pains
In making comments on my strains.*

40

All private slander I detest,
I judge not of my neighbour's breast:
Party and prejudice I hate,
And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my fable censure vice,
Because a knave is over-nice?
And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the decalogue be read?
If I lash vice in general fiction,
Is't I apply, or self-conviction?

50

*Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
If men in morals are the same?
I no man call an ape or ass:
Tis his own conscience holds the glass;
Thus void of all offence I write;
Who claims the fable, knows his right.*

*A shepherd's dog unskilled in sports,
Picked up acquaintance of all sorts:
Among the rest, a fox he knew;
By frequent chat their friendship grew.*

60

Says Reynard—' 'Tis a cruel case,
That man should stigmatise our race,
No doubt, among us rogues you find,
As among dogs, and human kind;
And yet (unknown to me and you)
There may be honest men and true.
Thus slander tries, whate'er it can,
To put us on the foot with man,
Let my own actions recommend;



Page 145

No prejudice can blind a friend:

70

*You know me free from all disguise;
My honour as my life I prize.'*

*By talk like this, from all mistrust
The dog was cured, and thought him just.*

*As on a time the fox held forth
On conscience, honesty, and worth,
Sudden he stopp'd; he cocked his ear;
And dropp'd his brushy tail with fear.*

*'Bless us! the hunters are abroad—
What's all that clatter on the road?'*

80

*'Hold,' says the dog, 'we're safe from harm;
'Twas nothing but a false alarm.*

*At yonder town, 'tis market day;
Some farmer's wife is on the way;
'Tis so, (I know her pyebald mare)
Dame Dobbins, with her poultry ware.'*

*Reynard grew huff. Says he, 'This sneer
From you I little thought to hear.*

*Your meaning in your looks I see;
Pray, what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me?*

90

*Did I e'er make her poultry thinner?
Prove that I owe the Dame a dinner.'*

*'Friend,' quoth the cur, 'I meant no harm;
Then, why so captious? why so warm?*

*My words in common acceptation,
Could never give this provocation.*

*No lamb (for ought I ever knew)
May be more innocent than you.'*

*At this, galled Reynard winced and swore
Such language ne'er was given before:*

100

*'What's lamb to me? the saucy hint—
Show me, base knave, which way you squint,
If t'other night your master lost
Three lambs, am I to pay the cost?
Your vile reflections would imply*



That I'm the thief. You dog, you lie.'
'Thou knave, thou fool,' the dog replied,
'The name is just, take either side;
Thy guilt these applications speak;
Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak.'

110

*So saying, on the fox he flies,
The self-convicted felon dies.*

* * * * *

FABLE II.

THE VULTURE, THE SPARROW, AND OTHER BIRDS.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

Ere I begin, I must premise
Our ministers are good and wise;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray what care they, or what care I?
If I am free with courts; be't known,
I ne'er presume to mean our own.
If general morals seem to joke
On ministers, and such like folk,
A captious fool may take offence;
What then? he knows his own pretence.

10

*I meddle with no state affairs,
But spare my jest to save my ears.
Our present schemes are too profound,
For Machiavel himself to sound:
To censure them I've no pretension;
I own they're past my comprehension.*

*You say your brother wants a place,
('Tis many a younger brother's case,)
And that he very soon intends
To ply the Court, and tease his friends.*

20

If there his merits chance to find



Page 146

A patriot of an open mind,
Whose constant actions prove him just
To both a king's and people's trust;
May he with gratitude attend,
And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for business fit,
His learning, probity, and wit;
But those alone will never do,
Unless his patron have them too.

30

*I've heard of times (pray God defend us,
We're not so good but He can mend us)
When wicked ministers have trod
On kings and people, law and God;
With arrogance they girt the throne,
And knew no interest but their own.
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but its own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em.*

40

Then if their patron burn with lust,
The first in favour's pimp the first.
His doors are never closed to spies,
Who cheer his heart with double lies;
They flatter him, his foes defame,
So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.
If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,
Projectors swell his greedy train;
Vile brokers ply his private ear
With jobs of plunder for the year;

50

*All consciences must bend and ply;
You must vote on, and not know why:
Through thick and thin you must go on;
One scruple, and your place is gone.
Since plagues like these have cursed a land,
And favourites cannot always stand;
Good courtiers should for change be ready,
And not have principles too steady:*



*For should a knave engross the power,
(God shield the realm, from that sad hour,)*

60

He must have rogues, or slavish fools:
For what's a knave without his tools?

Wherever those a people drain,
And strut with infamy and gain,
I envy not their guilt and state,
And scorn to share the public hate.
Let their own servile creatures rise
By screening fraud, and venting lies;
Give me, kind heaven, a private station,[7]
A mind serene for contemplation:

70

*Title and profit I resign;
The post of honour shall be mine.
My fable read, their merits view,
Then herd who will with such a crew.
In days of yore (my cautious rhymes
Always except the present times)
A greedy vulture skilled in game,
Inured to guilt, unawed by shame,
Approached the throne in evil hour,
And step by step intrudes to power;*

80

When at the royal eagle's ear,
He longs to ease the monarch's care.
The monarch grants. With pride elate,
Behold him minister of state!
Around him throng the feathered rout;
Friends must be served, and some must out,
Each thinks his own the best pretension;
This asks a place, and that a pension.

The nightingale was set aside,
A forward daw his room supplied.

90

'This bird,'



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*says he, 'for business fit,
Hath both sagacity and wit.
With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,
He's docile, and at nothing sticks.
Then, with his neighbours one so free,
At all times will connive at me.'
The hawk had due distinction shown,
For parts and talents like his own.
Thousands of hireling cocks attends him,
As blustering bullies, to defend him.*

100

*At once the ravens were discarded,
And magpies with their posts rewarded.
'Those fowls of omen I detest,
That pry into another's nest,
State-lies must lose all good intent;
For they foresee and croak the event.
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.'
'When rogues like these,' a sparrow cries,
'To honours and employments rise,*

110

*I court no favour, ask no place;
For such preferment is disgrace.
Within my thatched retreat I find
(What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind.'*

* * * * *

FABLE III.

THE BABOON AND THE POULTRY.

TO A LEVEE-HUNTER.

*We frequently misplace esteem,
By judging men by what they seem,
To birth, wealth, power, we should allow
Precedence, and our lowest bow.
In that is due distinction shown,
Esteem is virtue's right alone.
With partial eye we're apt to see
The man of noble pedigree.
We're prepossess'd my lord inherits*



In some degree his grandsire's merits;
10

*For those we find upon record:
But find him nothing but my lord.
When we with superficial view,
Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
We know that wealth well understood,
Hath frequent power of doing good:
Then fancy that the thing is done,
As if the power and will were one.
Thus oft the cheated crowd adore
The thriving knaves that keep them poor.*
20

The cringing train of power survey:
What creatures are so low as they!
With what obsequiousness they bend!
To what vile actions condescend!
Their rise is on their meanness built,
And flattery is their smallest guilt.
What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
In every age, in every nation,
Have sycophants to power addressed!
No matter who the power possessed.
30

*Let ministers be what they will,
You find their levees always fill.
Even those who have perplexed a state,
Whose actions claim contempt and hate,
Had wretches to applaud their schemes,
Though more absurd than madmen's dreams.
When barbarous Moloch was invoked,
The blood of infants only smoked!
But here (unless all history lies)
Whole realms have been a sacrifice.*
40

Look through all Courts—'Tis power we find,
The general idol of mankind,
There worshipped under every shape;
Alike the lion, fox, and ape
Are followed by time-serving slaves,

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Rich prostitutes, and needy knaves.
Who, then, shall glory in his post?
How frail his pride, how vain his boast!
The followers of his prosperous hour
Are as unstable as his power.

50

*Power by the breath of flattery nursed,
The more it swells, is nearer burst.
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
And in a dirty tear descends.
Once on a time, an ancient maid,
By wishes and by time decayed,
To cure the pangs of restless thought,
In birds and beasts amusement sought:
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employed;
With these alone she talked and toyed.*

60

A huge baboon her fancy took,
(Almost a man in size and look,)
He fingered everything he found,
And mimicked all the servants round.
Then, too, his parts and ready wit
Showed him for every business fit.
With all these talents, 'twas but just
That pug should hold a place of trust:
So to her fav'rite was assigned
The charge of all her feathered kind.

70

*'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.
Behold him now with haughty stride,
Assume a ministerial pride.
The morning rose. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks surround his hut,
To worship his important strut.
The minister appears. The crowd
Now here, now there, obsequious bowed.*

80

This praised his parts, and that his face,



T'other his dignity in place.
From bill to bill the flattery ran:
He hears and bears it like a man:
For, when we flatter self-conceit,
We but his sentiments repeat.
If we're too scrupulously just,
What profit's in a place of trust?
The common practice of the great,
Is to secure a snug retreat.

90

*So pug began to turn his brain
(Like other folks in place) on gain.
An apple-woman's stall was near,
Well stocked with fruits through all the year;
Here every day he crammed his guts,
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;
For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
His payments should in corn be made.
The stock of grain was quickly spent,
And no account which way it went.*

100

Then, too, the poultry's starved condition
Caused speculations of suspicion.
The facts were proved beyond dispute;
Pug must refund his hoards of fruit:
And, though then minister in chief,
Was branded as a public thief.
Disgraced, despised, confined to chains,
He nothing but his pride retains.
A goose passed by; he knew the face,
Seen every levee while in place.

110

*'What, no respect! no reverence shown?
How saucy are these creatures grown!
Not two days since,' says he, 'you bowed
The lowest of my fawning crowd.'
'Proud fool,' replies the goose, 'tis true,
Thy corn a fluttering levee drew!
For that I joined the hungry train,
And sold thee flattery for thy grain.
But then, as now, conceited ape,
We saw thee in thy proper shape.'*

120



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* * * * *

FABLE IV.

THE ANT IN OFFICE.

TO A FRIEND.

You tell me, that you apprehend
My verse may touchy folks offend.
In prudence too you think my rhymes
Should never squint at courtiers' crimes:
For though nor this, nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent?

You ask me if I ever knew
Court chaplains thus the lawn pursue.
I meddle not with gown or lawn;
Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn.

10

*They know great ears are over-nice,
And never shock their patron's vice.
But I this hackney path despise;
'Tis my ambition not to rise.*

*If I must prostitute the Muse,
The base conditions I refuse.*

*I neither flatter nor defame,
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.
If I corruption's hand expose,
I make corrupted men my foes.*

20

What then? I hate the paltry tribe;
Be virtue mine; be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade;
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I shame bribery out of use,
I know 'twould cramp most politicians,
Were they tied down to these conditions.
'Twould stint their power, their riches bound,
And make their parts seem less profound.

30

*Were they denied their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools?
Were this the case, let's take a view,*



*What dreadful mischiefs would ensue;
Though it might aggrandise the state,
Could private luxury dine on plate?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But ministers find less regard.
Informers, sycophants, and spies,
Would not augment the year's supplies.*

40

Perhaps, too, take away this prop,
An annual job or two might drop.
Besides, if pensions were denied,
Could avarice support its pride?
It might even ministers confound,
And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care not though 'tis understood
I only mean my country's good:
And (let who will my freedom blame)
I wish all courtiers did the same.

50

*Nay, though some folks the less might get,
I wish the nation out of debt.
I put no private man's ambition
With public good in competition:
Rather than have our law defaced,
I'd vote a minister disgraced.*

*I strike at vice, be't where it will;
And what if great folks take it ill?
I hope corruption, bribery, pension,
One may with detestation mention:*

60

Think you the law (let who will take it)
Can *scandalum magnatum* make it?
I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
Nor of another's conscience judge:
At him, or him, I take no aim,
Yet dare against all vice declaim.
Shall I not censure breach of trust,



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Because knaves know themselves unjust?
That steward, whose account is clear,
Demands his honour may appear:

70

*His actions never shun the light,
He is, and would be proved upright.*

*But then you think my fable bears
Allusion, too, to state affairs.*

*I grant it does: and who's so great,
That has the privilege to cheat?*

If, then, in any future reign

(For ministers may thirst for gain;)

Corrupted hands defraud the nation,

I bar no reader's application.

80

An ant there was, whose forward prate

Controlled all matters in debate;

Whether he knew the thing or no,

His tongue eternally would go.

For he had impudence at will,

And boasted universal skill.

Ambition was his point in view;

Thus, by degrees, to power he grew.

Behold him now his drift attain:

He's made chief treasurer of the grain.

90

But as their ancient laws are just,

And punish breach of public trust,

'Tis ordered (lest wrong application

Should starve that wise industrious nation)

That all accounts be stated clear,

Their stock, and what defrayed the year:

That auditors should these inspect, 97

And public rapine thus be checked.

For this the solemn day was set,

The auditors in council met.

100

The granary-keeper must explain,

And balance his account of grain.

He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)



Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.

An honest pismire, warm with zeal,
In justice to the public weal,
Thus spoke: 'The nation's hoard is low,
From whence doth this profusion flow?
I know our annual funds' amount.
Why such expense, and where's the account?'

110

*With wonted arrogance and pride,
The ant in office thus replied:
'Consider, sirs, were secrets told,
How could the best-schemed projects hold?
Should we state-mysteries disclose,
'Twould lay us open to our foes.
My duty and my well-known zeal
Bid me our present schemes conceal.
But on my honour, all the expense
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.*

120

They passed the account as fair and just,
And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the granary drained,
He thus his innocence maintained:
'Think how our present matters stand,
What dangers threat from every hand;
What hosts of turkeys stroll for food,
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.
Consider, when invasion's near,
Intelligence must cost us dear;

130

*And, in this ticklish situation,
A secret told betrays the nation.
But, on my honour, all the expense
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.'*
*Again, without examination,
They thanked his sage administration.
The year revolves.*



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*The treasure spent,
Again in secret service went.
His honour too again was pledged,
To satisfy the charge alleged.*

140

When thus, with panic shame possessed,
An auditor his friends addressed:
'What are we? Ministerial tools.
We little knaves are greater fools.
At last this secret is explored;
'Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For every grain we touched, at least
A thousand his own heaps increased.
Then for his kin, and favourite spies,
A hundred hardly could suffice.

150

*Thus, for a paltry sneaking bribe,
We cheat ourselves, and all the tribe;
For all the magazine contains,
Grows from our annual toil and pains.'*
*They vote the account shall be inspected;
The cunning plunderer is detected;
The fraud is sentenced; and his hoard,
As due, to public use restored.*

* * * * *

FABLE V.

THE BEAR IN A BOAT.

TO A COXCOMB.

That man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know;
Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope;
He tries his strength before the race,
And never seeks his own disgrace;
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
Or never launches from the shore;
Before he builds, computes the cost;
And in no proud pursuit is lost:

10



*He learns the bounds of human sense,
And safely walks within the fence.
Thus, conscious of his own defect,
Are pride and self-importance check'd.*

*If then, self-knowledge to pursue,
Direct our life in every view,
Of all the fools that pride can boast,
A coxcomb claims distinction most.*

*Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind:
They're not to sex or age confined,*

20

*Or rich, or poor, or great, or small;
And vanity besets them all.
By ignorance is pride increased:
Those most assume who know the least;
Their own false balance gives them weight,
But every other finds them light.*

*Not that all coxcombs' follies strike,
And draw our ridicule alike;
To different merits each pretends.
This in love-vanity transcends;*

30

*That smitten with his face and shape,
By dress distinguishes the ape;
T'other with learning crams his shelf,
Knows books, and all things but himself.*

*All these are fools of low condition,
Compared with coxcombs of ambition.
For those, puffed up with flattery, dare
Assume a nation's various care.
They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,
Their sycophants seem hardly just;*

40

*For these, in part alone, attest
The flattery their own thoughts suggest.
In this wide sphere a coxcomb's shown
In other realms beside his own:
The self-deemed Machiavel at large*



Page 152

By turns controls in every charge.
Does commerce suffer in her rights?
'Tis he directs the naval flights.
What sailor dares dispute his skill?
He'll be an admiral when he will.

50

*Now meddling in the soldier's trade,
Troops must be hired, and levies made.
He gives ambassadors their cue,
His cobbled treaties to renew;
And annual taxes must suffice
The current blunders to disguise
When his crude schemes in air are lost,
And millions scarce defray the cost,
His arrogance (nought undismayed)
Trusting in self-sufficient aid,*

60

On other rocks misguides the realm,
And thinks a pilot at the helm.
He ne'er suspects his want of skill,
But blunders on from ill to ill;
And, when he fails of all intent,
Blames only unforeseen event.
Lest you mistake the application,
The fable calls me to relation.

A bear of shag and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough;

70

*For dextrously, and safe from harm,
Year after year he robbed the swarm.
Thus thriving on industrious toil,
He gloried in his pilfered spoil.*

*This trick so swelled him with conceit,
He thought no enterprise too great.
Alike in sciences and arts,
He boasted universal parts;
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontrolled:*

80

And thus he made his party good,



And grew dictator of the wood.

The beasts with admiration stare,
And think him a prodigious bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot:
For why, he found there might be picking,
Even in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claimed too the butcher's larger fees.

90

*And now his over-weening pride
In every province will preside.
No talk too difficult was found:
His blundering nose misleads the hound.
In stratagem and subtle arts,
He overrules the fox's parts.*

*It chanced, as, on a certain day,
Along the bank he took his way,
A boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,
At anchor floated near the shore.*

100

He stopp'd, and turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain:
'What blundering puppies are mankind,
In every science always blind!
I mock the pedantry of schools.
What are their compasses and rules?
From me that helm shall conduct learn.
And man his ignorance discern.'

So saying, with audacious pride,
He gains the boat, and climbs the side.

110

*The beasts astonished, lined the strand,
The anchor's weighed, he drives from land:
The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrimmed admits the tide,
Borne down, adrift, at random toss'd,
His oar breaks short, the rudder's*



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lost.

*The bear, presuming in his skill,
Is here and there officious still;
Till striking on the dangerous sands,
Aground the shattered vessel stands.*

120

To see the bungler thus distress'd,
The very fishes sneer and jest.
Even gudgeons join in ridicule,
To mortify the meddling fool.
The clamorous watermen appear;
Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear:
Seized, thrashed, and chained, he's dragged to land;
Derision shouts along the strand.

* * * * *

FABLE VI.

THE SQUIRE AND HIS CUR.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

The man of pure and simple heart
Through life disdains a double part.
He never needs the screen of lies
His inward bosom to disguise.
In vain malicious tongues assail;
Let envy snarl, let slander rail,
From virtue's shield (secure from wound)
Their blunted, venom'd shafts rebound.
So shines his light before mankind,
His actions prove his honest mind.

10

*If in his country's cause he rise,
Debating senates to advise,
Unbribed, unawed, he dares impart
The honest dictates of his heart.
No ministerial frown he fears,
But in his virtue perseveres.
But would you play the politician,
Whose heart's averse to intuition,
Your lips at all times, nay, your reason*



Must be controlled by place and season.

20

What statesman could his power support
Were lying tongues forbid the court?
Did princely ears to truth attend,
What minister could gain his end?
How could he raise his tools to place,
And how his honest foes disgrace?
That politician tops his part,
Who readily can lie with art:
The man's proficient in his trade;
His power is strong, his fortune's made.

30

*By that the interest of the throne
Is made subservient to his own:
By that have kings of old, deluded,
All their own friends for his excluded.
By that, his selfish schemes pursuing,
He thrives upon the public ruin.
Antiochus,[8] with hardy pace,
Provoked the dangers of the chase;
And, lost from all his menial train,
Traversed the wood and pathless plain.*

40

A cottage lodged the royal guest!
The Parthian clown brought forth his best.
The king, unknown, his feast enjoyed,
And various chat the hours employed.
From wine what sudden friendship springs!
Frankly they talked of courts and kings.
'We country-folks,' the clown replies,
'Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
The king, (as all our neighbours say,)
Might he (God bless him) have his way,

50

*Is sound at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he could.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor subjects would be rid.
Were he in power, we need not doubt him:
But that transferred to those about him,*



Page 154

*On them he throws the regal cares:
And what mind they? Their own affairs.
If such rapacious hands he trust,
The best of men may seem unjust.*

60

From kings to cobblers 'tis the same:
Bad servants wound their master's fame.
In this our neighbours all agree:
Would the king knew as much as we.'
Here he stopp'd short. Repose they sought,
The peasant slept, the monarch thought.
The courtiers learned, at early dawn,
Where their lost sovereign was withdrawn.
The guards' approach our host alarms,
With gaudy coats the cottage swarms.

70

*The crown and purple robes they bring,
And prostrate fall before the king.
The clown was called, the royal guest
By due reward his thanks express'd.
The king then, turning to the crowd,
Who fawningly before him bow'd,
Thus spoke: 'Since, bent on private gain,
Your counsels first misled my reign,
Taught and informed by you alone,
No truth the royal ear hath known,*

80

Till here conversing. Hence, ye crew,
For now I know myself and you.'
Whene'er the royal ear's engross'd,
State-lies but little genius cost.
The favourite then securely robs,
And gleans a nation by his jobs.
Franker and bolder grown in ill,
He daily poisons dares instil;
And, as his present views suggest,
Inflames or soothes the royal breast.

90

*Thus wicked ministers oppress,
When oft the monarch means redress.
Would kings their private subjects hear,*



*A minister must talk with fear.
If honesty opposed his views,
He dared not innocence excuse.
'Twould keep him in such narrow bound,
He could not right and wrong confound.
Happy were kings, could they disclose
Their real friends and real foes!*

100

Were both themselves and subjects known,
A monarch's will might be his own.
Had he the use of ears and eyes,
Knaves would no more be counted wise.
But then a minister might lose
(Hard case!) his own ambitious views.
When such as these have vexed a state,
Pursued by universal hate,
Their false support at once hath failed,
And persevering truth prevailed.

110

*Exposed their train of fraud is seen;
Truth will at last remove the screen.
A country squire, by whim directed,
The true stanch dogs of chase neglected.
Beneath his board no hound was fed,
His hand ne'er stroked the spaniel's head.
A snappish cur, alone caress'd,
By lies had banished all the rest.
Yap had his ear; and defamation
Gave him full scope of conversation.*

120

His sycophants must be preferr'd,
Room must be made for all his herd:
Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,
Old faithful servants all must out.
The cur on every creature flew,
(As other great men's puppies do,)
Unless due court to him were shown,
And both their face and business known,
No honest tongue an audience found:



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He worried all the tenants round;

130

*For why, he lived in constant fear,
Lest truth, by chance, should interfere.*

If any stranger dare intrude,

The noisy cur his heels pursued.

Now fierce with rage, now struck with dread,

At once he snarled, bit, and fled.

Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,

And thus in secret growls his fear:

'Who knows but truth, in this disguise,

May frustrate my best-guarded lies?

140

Should she (thus masked) admittance find,

That very hour my ruin's signed.'

Now, in his howl's continued sound,

Their words were lost, their voice was drown'd.

Ever in awe of honest tongues,

Thus every day he strained his lungs.

It happened, in ill-omened hour,

That Yap, unmindful of his power,

Forsook his post, to love inclined;

A favourite bitch was in the wind.

150

By her seduced, in amorous play,

They frisked the joyous hours away.

Thus, by untimely love pursuing,

Like Antony, he sought his ruin.

For now the squire, unvexed with noise,

An honest neighbour's chat enjoys.

'Be free,' says he, 'your mind impart;

I love a friendly open heart.

Methinks my tenants shun my gate;

Why such a stranger grown of late?

160

Pray tell me what offence they find:

'Tis plain they're not so well inclined.'

'Turn off your cur,' the farmer cries,

'Who feeds your ear with daily lies.

His snarling insolence offends; 165



'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
Were but that saucy puppy check'd,
You'd find again the same respect.
Hear only him, he'll swear it too,
That all our hatred is to you.

170

*But learn from us your true estate;
'Tis that cursed cur alone we hate.'*
*The squire heard truth. Now Yap rushed in;
The wide hall echoes with his din:
Yet truth prevailed; and with disgrace,
The dog was cudgelled out of place.*

* * * * *

FABLE VII.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND JUPITER.

TO MYSELF.

Have you a friend (look round and spy)
So fond, so prepossessed as I?
Your faults, so obvious to mankind,
My partial eyes could never find.
When by the breath of fortune blown,
Your airy castles were o'erthrown;
Have I been over-prone to blame,
Or mortified your hours with shame?
Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit?

10

*'Tis not so strange, that Fortune's frown
Still perseveres to keep you down.
Look round, and see what others do.
Would you be rich and honest too?
Have you (like those she raised to place)
Been opportunely mean and base?
Have you (as times required) resigned
Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?
If these are scruples, give her o'er;
Write, practise morals, and be poor.*

20

The gifts of fortune truly rate;
Then tell me what would mend your state.



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If happiness on wealth were built,
Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt;
As grows the miser's hoarded store,
His fears, his wants, increase the more.
Think, Gay, (what ne'er may be the case,)
Should fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happiness augment?
What can she give beyond content?

30

*Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,
With a vast annual income clear!
In all the affluence you possess,
You might not feel one care the less.
Might you not then (like others) find
With change of fortune, change of mind?
Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,
You might start out a glaring fool;
Your luxury might break all bounds;
Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds,*

40

Might swell your debts: then, lust of play
No regal income can defray.
Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
And doom your future life to jail.
Or were you dignified with power,
Would that avert one pensive hour?
You might give avarice its swing,
Defraud a nation, blind a king:
Then, from the hirelings in your cause,
Though daily fed with false applause,

50

*Could it a real joy impart?
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.
Is happiness your point in view?
(I mean the intrinsic and the true)
She nor in camps or courts resides,
Nor in the humble cottage hides;
Yet found alike in every sphere;
Who finds content, will find her there.
O'erspent with toil, beneath the shade,*



A peasant rested on his spade.

60

'Good gods!' he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year.
Soon as the morning streaks the skies,
Industrious labour bids me rise;
With sweat I earn my homely fare,
And every day renews my care.'
Jove heard the discontented strain,
And thus rebuked the murmuring swain:
'Speak out your wants then, honest friend:
Unjust complaints the gods offend.

70

*If you repine at partial fate,
Instruct me what could mend your state.
Mankind in every station see.
What wish you? Tell me what you'd be.'*
*So said, upborne upon a cloud,
The clown surveyed the anxious crowd.
'Yon face of care,' says Jove, 'behold,
His bulky bags are filled with gold.
See with what joy he counts it o'er!
That sum to-day hath swelled his store.'*

80

'Were I that man,' the peasant cried,
'What blessing could I ask beside?'
'Hold,' says the god; 'first learn to know
True happiness from outward show.
This optic glass of intuition——
Here, take it, view his true condition.'
He looked, and saw the miser's breast,
A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest;
Want ever stares him in the face,
And fear anticipates disgrace:

90

*With conscious guilt he saw him start;
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart;
And never, or in thought or dream,
His breast admits one happy gleam.
'May Jove,' he cries, 'reject*



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*my prayer,
And guard my life from guilt and care.
My soul abhors that wretch's fate.
O keep me in my humble state!
But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,
Yon minister, so gay and proud,
100*

*On him what happiness attends,
Who thus rewards his grateful friends!
'First take the glass,' the god replies:
'Man views the world with partial eyes.'
'Good gods!' exclaims the startled wight,
'Defend me from this hideous sight!
Corruption, with corrosive smart,
Lies cankering on his guilty heart:
I see him, with polluted hand,
Spread the contagion o'er the land,
110*

*Now avarice with insatiate jaws,
Now rapine with her harpy claws
His bosom tears. His conscious breast
Groans, with a load of crimes oppress'd.
See him, mad and drunk with power,
Stand tottering on ambition's tower.
Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,
His boasts insult the nether crowd;
Now, seized with giddiness and fear,
He trembles lest his fall is near.
120*

*'Was ever wretch like this?' he cries;
'Such misery in such disguise!
The change, O Jove, I disavow;
Still be my lot the spade and plough.'
He next, confirmed by speculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation;
For he the statesman seemed in part,
And bore similitude of heart.
Nor did the soldier's trade inflame
His hopes with thirst of spoil and fame,
130*

*The miseries of war he mourned;
Whole nations into deserts turned.
By these have laws and rights been braved;*



*By these were free-born men enslaved:
When battles and invasion cease,
Why swarm they in a land of peace?
'Such change,' says he, 'may I decline;
The scythe and civil arms be mine!'
Thus, weighing life in each condition,
The clown withdrew his rash petition.*
140

When thus the god: 'How mortals err!
If you true happiness prefer,
'Tis to no rank of life confined,
But dwells in every honest mind.
Be justice then your sole pursuit:
Plant virtue, and content's the fruit.'
So Jove, to gratify the clown,
Where first he found him set him down.

* * * * *

FABLE VIII.

THE MAN, THE CAT, THE DOG, AND THE FLY.

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

Hail, happy land, whose fertile grounds
The liquid fence of Neptune bounds;
By bounteous Nature set apart,
The seat of industry and art!
O Britain! chosen port of trade,
May luxury ne'er thy sons invade;
May never minister (intent
His private treasures to augment)
Corrupt thy state. If jealous foes
Thy rights of commerce dare oppose,
10

*Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
Who is't prescribes the ocean law?
Whenever neighbouring states contend,
'Tis thine to be the general friend.
What is't, who rules in other lands?*

Page 158

*On trade alone thy glory stands.
That benefit is unconfined,
Diffusing good among mankind:
That first gave lustre to thy reigns,
And scattered plenty o'er thy plains:*

20

*'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,
And draws all Europe's envious eyes.
Be commerce then thy sole design;
Keep that, and all the world is thine.
When naval traffic ploughs the main,
Who shares not in the merchant's gain?
'Tis that supports the regal state,
And makes the farmer's heart elate:
The numerous flocks, that clothe the land,
Can scarce supply the loom's demand;*

30

*Prolific culture glads the fields,
And the bare heath a harvest yields.
Nature expects mankind should share
The duties of the public care.
Who's born for sloth?[9] To some we find
The ploughshare's annual toil assign'd.
Some at the sounding anvil glow;
Some the swift-sliding shuttle throw;
Some, studious of the wind and tide,
From pole to pole our commerce guide:*

40

*Some (taught by industry) impart
With hands and feet the works of art;
While some, of genius more refined,
With head and tongue assist mankind:
Each, aiming at one common end,
Proves to the whole a needful friend.
Thus, born each other's useful aid,
By turns are obligations paid.
The monarch, when his table's spread,
Is to the clown obliged for bread;*

50

*And when in all his glory dress'd,
Owes to the loom his royal vest.*



*Do not the mason's toil and care
Protect him from the inclement air?
Does not the cutler's art supply
The ornament that guards his thigh?
All these, in duty to the throne,
Their common obligations own.
'Tis he (his own and people's cause)
Protects their properties and laws.*

60

Thus they their honest toil employ,
And with content their fruits enjoy.
In every rank, or great or small,
'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals by want oppressed,
To man their services addressed;
While each pursued their selfish good,
They hungered for precarious food.
Their hours with anxious cares were vex'd;
One day they fed, and starved the next.

70

*They saw that plenty, sure and rife,
Was found alone in social life;
That mutual industry professed,
The various wants of man redressed.*

*The cat, half-famished, lean and weak,
Demands the privilege to speak.*

*'Well, puss,' says man, 'and what can you
To benefit the public do?'*

*The cat replies: 'These teeth, these claws,
With vigilance shall serve the cause.*

80

The mouse destroyed by my pursuit,
No longer shall your feasts pollute;
Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,
With wasteful teeth your stores invade.'



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'I grant,' says man, 'to general use
Your parts and talents may conduce;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threshers whirl the flail in vain:
Thus shall the cat, a foe to spoil,
Protect the farmer's honest toil,'

90

*Then, turning to the dog, he cried,
'Well, sir; be next your merits tried.'
'Sir,' says the dog, 'by self-applause
We seem to own a friendless cause.
Ask those who know me, if distrust
E'er found me treacherous or unjust?
Did I e'er faith or friendship break?
Ask all those creatures; let them speak.
My vigilance and trusty zeal
Perhaps might serve the public weal.*

100

Might not your flocks in safety feed,
Were I to guard the fleecy breed?
Did I the nightly watches keep,
Could thieves invade you while you sleep?'
The man replies: "'Tis just and right;
Rewards such service should requite.
So rare, in property, we find
Trust uncorrupt among mankind,
That, taken, in a public view,
The first distinction is your due.

110

*Such merits all reward transcend:
Be then my comrade and my friend.'
Addressing now the fly: 'From you
What public service can accrue?'
'From me!' the flutt'ring insect said;
'I thought you knew me better bred.
Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
That I to industry submit?
Let mean mechanics, to be fed
By business earn ignoble bread.*

120



Lost in excess of daily joys,
No thought, no care my life annoys,
At noon (the lady's matin hour)
I sip the tea's delicious flower.
On cakes luxuriously I dine,
And drink the fragrance of the vine.
Studious of elegance and ease,
Myself alone I seek to please.'
The man his pert conceit derides,
And thus the useless coxcomb chides:

130

*'Hence, from that peach, that downy seat,
No idle fool deserves to eat.
Could you have sapped the blushing rind,
And on that pulp ambrosial dined,
Had not some hand with skill and toil,
To raise the tree, prepared the soil?
Consider, sot, what would ensue,
Were all such worthless things as you.
You'd soon be forced (by hunger stung)
To make your dirty meals on dung;*

140

On which such despicable need,
Unpitied, is reduced to feed;
Besides, vain selfish insect, learn
(If you can right and wrong discern)
That he who, with industrious zeal,
Contributes to the public weal,
By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly understood.'

So saying, with a sudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low.

150

*Crushed in his luxury and pride,
The spunger on the public died.*

* * * * *

FABLE IX.

THE JACKALL, LEOPARD, AND OTHER BEASTS



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TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I grant corruption sways mankind;
That interest too perverts the mind;
That bribes have blinded common sense,
Foiled reason, truth, and eloquence:
I grant you too, our present crimes
Can equal those of former times.
Against plain facts shall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age?
I know, that in a modern fist,
Bribes in full energy subsist.

10

*Since then these arguments prevail,
And itching palms are still so frail,
Hence politicians, you suggest,
Should drive the nail that goes the best;
That it shows parts and penetration,
To ply men with the right temptation.
To this I humbly must dissent;
Premising no reflection's meant.
Does justice or the client's sense
Teach lawyers either side's defence?*

20

The fee gives eloquence its spirit;
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
Obtain the prostitute's caress?
The guinea (as in other trades)
From every hand alike persuades.
Man, Scripture says, is prone to evil,
But does that vindicate the devil?
Besides, the more mankind are prone,
The less the devil's parts are shown.

30

*Corruption's not of modern date;
It hath been tried in every state.
Great knaves of old their power have fenced,
By places, pensions, bribes, dispensed;
By these they gloried in success,
And impudently dared oppress;
By these despotically they swayed,
And slaves extolled the hand that paid;*



*Nor parts, nor genius were employed,
By these alone were realms destroyed.*

40

Now see these wretches in disgrace,
Stripp'd of their treasures, power, and place;
View them abandoned and forlorn,
Exposed to just reproach and scorn.

What now is all your pride, your boast?

Where are your slaves, your flattering host?

What tongues now feed you with applause?

Where are the champions of your cause?

Now even that very fawning train

Which shared the gleanings of your gain,

50

Press foremost who shall first accuse

Your selfish jobs, your paltry views,

Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,

And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their power!

How thoughtless of their adverse hour!

What friends were made? A hireling herd,

For temporary votes preferr'd.

Was it, these sycophants to get,

Your bounty swelled a nation's debt?

60

You're bit. For these, like Swiss attend;

No longer pay, no longer friend.

The lion is, beyond dispute,

Allowed the most majestic brute;

His valour and his generous mind

Prove him superior of his kind.

Yet to jackals (as 'tis averred)

Some lions have their power transferred;

As if the parts of pimps and spies

To govern forests could suffice.

70

Once, studious of his private good,

A proud jackal oppressed the wood;



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*To cram his own insatiate jaws, 73
Invaded property and laws;
The forest groans with discontent,
Fresh wrongs the general hate foment,
The spreading murmurs reached his ear;
His secret hours were vexed with fear.
Night after night he weighs the case,
And feels the terrors of disgrace.*

80

*'By friends,' says he, 'I'll guard my seat,
By those malicious tongues defeat:
I'll strengthen power by new allies,
And all my clamorous foes despise.'
To make the generous beasts his friends,
He cringes, fawns, and condescends;
But those repulsed his abject court,
And scorned oppression to support.
Friends must be had. He can't subsist.
Bribes shall new proselytes inlist.*

90

*But these nought weighed in honest paws;
For bribes confess a wicked cause:
Yet think not every paw withstands
What had prevailed in human hands.
A tempting turnip's silver skin
Drew a base hog through thick and thin:
Bought with a stag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary wolf was stanch:
The convert fox grew warm and hearty,
A pullet gained him to the party;*

100

*The golden pippin in his fist,
A chattering monkey joined the list.
But soon exposed to public hate,
The favourite's fall redressed the state.
The leopard, vindicating right,
Had brought his secret frauds to light,
As rats, before the mansion falls,
Desert late hospitable walls,
In shoals the servile creatures run,
To bow before the rising sun.*



110

*The hog with warmth expressed his zeal,
And was for hanging those that steal;
But hoped, though low, the public hoard
Might half a turnip still afford.
Since saving measures were profess'd,
A lamb's head was the wolf's request.
The fox submitted if to touch
A gosling would be deemed too much.
The monkey thought his grin and chatter,
Might ask a nut or some such matter.*

120

*'Ye hirelings, hence,' the leopard cries;
'Your venal conscience I despise.
He who the public good intends,
By bribes needs never purchase friends.
Who acts this just, this open part,
Is propp'd by every honest heart.
Corruption now too late hath showed,
That bribes are always ill-bestowed,
By you your bubbled master's taught,
Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought.'*

130

* * * * *

FABLE X.

THE DEGENERATE BEES.

TO THE REVEREND DR SWIFT, DEAN OF ST PATRICK'S.

Though Courts the practice disallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow.
In politics I know 'tis wrong:
A friendship may be kept too long;
And what they call the prudent part,
Is to wear interest next the heart,
As the times take a different face,
Old friendships should to new give place.

I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is sharing those,



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10

*That every knave in every station,
Of high and low denomination,
For what you speak, and what you write,
Dread you at once, and bear you spite.
Such freedoms in your works are shown
They can't enjoy what's not their own;
All dunces too, in church and state,
In frothy nonsense show their hate;
With all the petty scribbling crew,
(And those pert sots are not a few,)*

20

*'Gainst you and Pope their envy spurt,
The booksellers alone are hurt.
Good gods! by what a powerful race
(For blockheads may have power and place)
Are scandals raised and libels writ!
To prove your honesty and wit!
Think with yourself: Those worthy men,
You know, have suffered by your pen.
From them you've nothing but your due.
From thence, 'tis plain, your friends are few.*

30

*Except myself, I know of none,
Besides the wise and good alone.
To set the case in fairer light,
My fable shall the rest recite;
Which (though unlike our present state)
I for the moral's sake relate.*

*A bee of cunning, not of parts,
Luxurious, negligent of arts,
Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,
Greedy of power, but more of gain,*

40

*Corruption sowed throughout the hive,
By petty rogues the great ones thrive.
As power and wealth his views supplied,
'Twas seen in over-bearing pride.
With him loud impudence had merit;
The bee of conscience wanted spirit;
And those who followed honour's rules,*



Were laughed to scorn for squeamish fools,
Wealth claimed distinction, favour, grace;
And poverty alone was base.

50

*He treated industry with slight,
Unless he found his profit by't.
Eights, laws, and liberties gave way,
To bring his selfish schemes in play.
The swarm forgot the common toil,
To share the gleanings of his spoil.
'While vulgar souls of narrow parts,
Waste life in low mechanic arts,
Let us,' says he, 'to genius born,
The drudgery of our fathers scorn.*

60

The wasp and drone, you must agree,
Live with more elegance than we.
Like gentlemen they sport and play;
No business interrupts the day;
Their hours to luxury they give,
And nobly on their neighbours live.'
A stubborn bee, among the swarm,
With honest indignation warm,
Thus from his cell with zeal replied:
'I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.

70

*The laws our native rights protect;
Offending thee, I those respect.
Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
And none against the torrent strive?
Exert the honour of your race;
He builds his rise on your disgrace.
'Tis industry our state maintains:
'Twas honest toils and honest gains
That raised our sires to power and fame.
Be virtuous; save yourselves from shame.*



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80

Know, that in selfish ends pursuing,
You scramble for the public ruin.'

He spoke; and from his cell dismissed,
Was insolently scoffed and hissed.
With him a friend or two resigned,
Disdaining the degenerate kind.

'These drones,' says he, 'these insects vile,
(I treat them in their proper style,
May for a time oppress the state,
They own our virtue by their hate;

90

*By that our merits they reveal,
And recommend our public zeal;
Disgraced by this corrupted crew,
We're honoured by the virtuous few.'*

* * * * *

FABLE XI.

THE PACK-HORSE AND THE CARRIER.

TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

Begin, my lord, in early youth,
To suffer, nay, encourage truth:
And blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatterer's style reject;
With that, by menial tongues supplied,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

The tree's distinguished by the fruit,
Be virtue then your sole pursuit;
Set your great ancestors in view,
Like them deserve the title too;

10

*Like them ignoble actions scorn:
Let virtue prove you greatly born.*

*Though with less plate their sideboard shone,
Their conscience always was their own;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawned,*



*Nor was their honour yearly pawned;
Their hands, by no corruption stained,
The ministerial bribe disdained;
They served the crown with loyal zeal;
Yet, jealous of the public weal,*

20

*They stood the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart their country's cause;
By neither place or pension bought,
They spoke and voted as they thought.
Thus did your sires adorn their seat;
And such alone are truly great.*

*If you the paths of learning slight,
You're but a dunce in stronger light;
In foremost rank the coward placed,
Is more conspicuously disgraced.*

30

*If you to serve a paltry end,
To knavish jobs can condescend,
We pay you the contempt that's due;
In that you have precedence too.
Whence had you this illustrious name?
From virtue and unblemished fame.
By birth the name alone descends;
Your honour on yourself depends:
Think not your coronet can hide
Assuming ignorance and pride.*

40

*Learning by study must be won,
'Twas ne'er entailed from son to son.
Superior worth your rank requires;
For that mankind reveres your sires;
If you degenerate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.*

*A carrier, every night and morn,
Would see his horses eat their corn:
This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true;
But then his horses had their due.*

50

*Were we so cautious in all cases,
Small gain would rise from greater places.*



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*The manger now had all its measure;
He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure;
When all at once confusion rung;
They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung:
A pack-horse turned his head aside,
Foaming, his eye-balls swelled with pride.
'Good gods!' says he, 'how hard's my lot!
Is then my high descent forgot?*

60

*Reduced to drudgery and disgrace,
(A life unworthy of my race,)
Must I too bear the vile attacks
Of rugged scrubs, and vulgar hacks?
See scurvy Roan, that brute ill-bred,
Dares from the manger thrust my head!
Shall I, who boast a noble line,
On offals of these creatures dine?
Kicked by old Ball! so mean a foe!
My honour suffers by the blow.*

70

*Newmarket speaks my grandsire's fame,
All jockies still revere his name:
There yearly are his triumphs told,
There all his massy plates enrolled.
Whene'er led forth upon the plain,
You saw him with a livery train;
Returning too with laurels crowned,
You heard the drums and trumpets sound.
Let it then, sir, be understood,
Respect's my due; for I have blood.'*

80

*'Vain-glorious fool!' the carrier cried,
'Respect was never paid to pride.
Know, 'twas thy giddy wilful heart
Reduced thee to this slavish part.
Did not thy headstrong youth disdain
To learn the conduct of the rein?
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
In vicious frolics fancy spirit.
What is't to me by whom begot?
Thou restive, pert, conceited sot.*



90

*Your sires I reverence; 'tis their due:
But, worthless fool, what's that to you?
Ask all the carriers on the road,
They'll say thy keeping's ill bestowed.
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
That neither mends thy strength or pace.
What profits me thy boast of blood?
An ass hath more intrinsic good.
By outward show let's not be cheated;
An ass should like an ass be treated.'*

100

* * * * *

FABLE XII.

PAN AND FORTUNE.

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

Soon as your father's death was known,
(As if the estate had been their own)
The gamblers outwardly express'd
The decent joy within your breast.
So lavish in your praise they grew,
As spoke their certain hopes in you.
One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.
'No house,' says he, 'is more complete;
The garden's elegant and great.

10

*How fine the park around it lies!
The timber's of a noble size!
Then count his jewels and his plate.
Besides, 'tis no entailed estate.
If cash run low, his lands in fee
Are, or for sale, or mortgage free.'*
Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem to anticipate their gain.



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*Would you, when thieves were known abroad,
Bring forth your treasures in the road?*

20

Would not the fool abet the stealth,
Who rashly thus exposed his wealth?
Yet this you do, whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.
Could fools to keep their own contrive,
On what, on whom could gamesters thrive?
Is it in charity you game,
To save your worthy gang from shame?
Unless you furnished daily bread,
Which way could idleness be fed?

30

*Could these professors of deceit
Within the law no longer cheat,
They must run bolder risks for prey,
And strip the traveller on the way.
Thus in your annual rents they share,
And 'scape the noose from year to year.
Consider, ere you make the bet,
That sum might cross your tailor's debt.
When you the pilfering rattle shake,
Is not your honour too at stake?*

40

Must you not by mean lies evade
To-morrow's duns from every trade?
By promises so often paid,
Is yet your tailor's bill defrayed?
Must you not pitifully fawn,
To have your butcher's writ withdrawn?
This must be done. In debts of play
Your honour suffers no delay:
And not this year's and next year's rent
The sons of rapine can content.

50

*Look round. The wrecks of play behold,
Estates dismembered, mortgaged, sold!
Their owners, not to jails confined,
Show equal poverty of mind.
Some, who the spoil of knaves were made,*



*Too late attempt to learn their trade.
Some, for the folly of one hour,
Become the dirty tools of power,
And, with the mercenary list,
Upon court-charity subsist.*

60

You'll find at last this maxim true,
Fools are the game which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole century's shade)
Must be one wasteful ruin made.
No mercy's shewn to age or kind;
The general massacre is signed.
The park too shares the dreadful fate,
For duns grow louder at the gate,
Stern clowns, obedient to the squire,
(What will not barbarous hands for hire?)

70

*With brawny arms repeat the stroke.
Fallen are the elm and reverend oak.
Through the long wood loud axes sound,
And echo groans with every wound.*

*To see the desolation spread,
Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head:
His bosom now with fury burns:
Beneath his hoof the dice he spurns.
Cards, too, in peevish passion torn,
The sport of whirling winds are borne.*

80

'To snails inveterate hate I bear,
Who spoil the verdure of the year;
The caterpillar I detest,
The blooming spring's voracious pest;
The locust too, whose ravenous band
Spreads sudden famine o'er the land.
But what are these? The dice's throw
At once hath laid a forest low.

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The cards are dealt, the bet is made,
And the wide park hath lost its shade.

90

*Thus is my kingdom's pride defaced,
And all its ancient glories waste.
All this,' he cries, 'is Fortune's doing:
'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.
By Fortune, that false, fickle jade,
More havoc in one hour is made,
Than all the hungry insect race,
Combined, can in an age deface.'*

*Fortune, by chance, who near him pass'd,
O'erheard the vile aspersion cast.*

100

'Why, Pan,' says she, 'what's all this rant?
'Tis every country-bubble's cant;
Am I the patroness of vice?
Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
Did I the shuffling art reveal, 105
To mark the cards, or range the deal?
In all the employments men pursue,
I mind the least what gamesters do.
There may (if computation's just)
One now and then my conduct trust:

110

*I blame the fool, for what can I,
When ninety-nine my power defy?
These trust alone their fingers' ends,
And not one stake on me depends.
Whene'er the gaming board is set,
Two classes of mankind are met:
But if we count the greedy race,
The knaves fill up the greater space.
'Tis a gross error, held in schools,
That Fortune always favours fools.*

120

In play it never bears dispute;
That doctrine these felled oaks confute.
Then why to me such rancour show?
'Tis folly, Pan, that is thy foe.



By me his late estate he won,
But he by folly was undone.'

* * * * *

FABLE XIII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, AND TIME.

Of all the burdens man must bear,
Time seems most galling and severe:
Beneath this grievous load oppressed,
We daily meet some friend distressed.

'What can one do? I rose at nine.
'Tis full six hours before we dine:
Six hours! no earthly thing to do!
Would I had dozed in bed till two.'

A pamphlet is before him spread,
And almost half a page is read;

10

*Tired with the study of the day,
The fluttering sheets are tossed away.
He opes his snuff-box, hums an air,
Then yawns, and stretches in his chair.*

*'Not twenty, by the minute hand!
Good gods:' says he, 'my watch must stand!
How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
I thought I'd read an hour or more,
The morning, of all hours, I hate.
One can't contrive to rise too late.'*

20

To make the minutes faster run,
Then too his tiresome self to shun,
To the next coffee-house he speeds,
Takes up the news, some scraps he reads.
Sauntering, from chair to chair he trails;
Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.
He spies a partner of his woe;
By chat afflictions lighter grow;
Each other's grievances they share,

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And thus their dreadful hours compare.
30

*Says Tom, 'Since all men must confess,
That time lies heavy more or less;
Why should it be so hard to get
Till two, a party at piquet?
Play might relieve the lagging morn:
By cards long wintry nights are borne:
Does not quadrille amuse the fair,
Night after night, throughout the year?
Vapours and spleen forgot, at play
They cheat uncounted hours away.'*

40
*'My case,' says Will, 'then must be hard
By want of skill from play debarred.
Courtiers kill time by various ways;
Dependence wears out half their days.
How happy these, whose time ne'er stands!
Attendance takes it off their hands.
Were it not for this cursed shower
The park had whiled away an hour.
At Court, without or place or view,
I daily lose an hour or two;*

50
*It fully answers my design,
When I have picked up friends to dine,
The tavern makes our burden light;
Wine puts our time and care to flight.
At six (hard case!) they call to pay.
Where can one go? I hate the play.
From six till ten! Unless in sleep,
One cannot spend the hours so cheap.
The comedy's no sooner done,
But some assembly is begun;*

60
*Loit'ring from room to room I stray;
Converse, but nothing hear or say:
Quite tired, from fair to fair I roam.
So soon: I dread the thoughts of home.
From thence, to quicken slow-paced night,*



Again my tavern-friends invite:
Here too our early mornings pass,
Till drowsy sleep retards the glass.'

Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's case their own.

70

*Consider, friends, no hour rolls on,
But something of your grief is gone.
Were you to schemes of business bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread.
Your hours, your days, would fly too fast;
You'd then regret the minute past,
Time's fugitive and light as wind!
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind!
That load from off your spirits shake;
You'll own and grieve for your mistake;*

80

A while your thoughtless spleen suspend,
Then read, and (if you can) attend.
As Plutus, to divert his care,
Walked forth one morn to take the air,
Cupid o'ertook his strutting pace,
Each stared upon the stranger's face,
Till recollection set them right;
For each knew t'other but by sight.
After some complimentary talk,
Time met them, bowed, and joined their walk.

90

*Their chat on various subjects ran,
But most, what each had done for man.
Plutus assumes a haughty air,
Just like our purse-proud fellows here.
'Let kings,' says he, 'let cobblers tell,
Whose gifts among mankind excel.
Consider Courts: what draws their train?*



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*Think you 'tis loyalty or gain?
That statesman hath the strongest hold,
Whose tool of politics is gold.*

100

By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,
The knave in power hath senates led.
By that alone he swayed debates,
Enriched himself and beggared states.
Forego your boast. You must conclude,
That's most esteemed that's most pursued.
Think too, in what a woful plight
That wretch must live whose pocket's light.
Are not his hours by want depress'd?
Penurious care corrodes his breast.

110

*Without respect, or love, or friends,
His solitary day descends.'*
*'You might,' says Cupid, 'doubt my parts,
My knowledge too in human hearts,
Should I the power of gold dispute,
Which great examples might confute.
I know, when nothing else prevails,
Persuasive money seldom fails;
That beauty too (like other wares)
Its price, as well as conscience, bears.*

120

Then marriage (as of late profess'd)
Is but a money-job at best.
Consent, compliance may be sold:
But love's beyond the price of gold.
Smugglers there are, who by retail,
Expose what they call love, to sale,
Such bargains are an arrant cheat:
You purchase flattery and deceit.
Those who true love have ever tried,
(The common cares of life supplied,)

130

*No wants endure, no wishes make,
But every real joy partake,
All comfort on themselves depends;
They want nor power, nor wealth, nor friends.*



*Love then hath every bliss in store:
'Tis friendship, and 'tis something more.
Each other every wish they give,
Not to know love, is not to live.'*

*'Or love, or money,' Time replied,
'Were men the question to decide,*

140

*Would bear the prize: on both intent,
My boon's neglected or misspent.
'Tis I who measure vital space,
And deal out years to human race.
Though little prized, and seldom sought,
Without me love and gold are nought.
How does the miser time employ?
Did I e'er see him life enjoy?
By me forsook, the hoards he won,
Are scattered by his lavish son.*

150

*By me all useful arts are gained;
Wealth, learning, wisdom is attained.
Who then would think (since such, my power)
That e'er I knew an idle hour?
So subtle and so swift I fly,
Love's not more fugitive than I.
Who hath not heard coquettes complain
Of days, months, years, misspent in vain?
For time misused they pine and waste,
And love's sweet pleasures never taste.*

160

*Those who direct their time aright,
If love or wealth their hopes excite,
In each pursuit fit hours employed,
And both by Time have been enjoyed.
How heedless then are mortals grown!
How little is their interest known?
In every view they ought to mind me;
For when once lost they never find me.'*

*He spoke. The gods no more contest,
And his superior gift confess'd;*

170

*That time when (truly understood)
Is the most precious earthly good.*



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* * * * *

FABLE XIV.

THE OWL, THE SWAN, THE COCK, THE SPIDER, THE
ASS, AND THE FARMER.

TO A MOTHER.

Conversing with your sprightly boys,
Your eyes have spoke the mother's joys.
With what delight I've heard you quote
Their sayings in imperfect note!

I grant, in body and in mind,
Nature appears profusely kind.
Trust not to that. Act you your part;
Imprint just morals on their heart,
Impartially their talents scan:
Just education forms the man.

10

*Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
Each lot of life's already thrown;
That this shall plead, the next shall fight,
The last assert the church's right.
I censure not the fond intent;
But how precarious is the event!
By talents misapplied and cross'd,
Consider, all your sons are lost.*

*One day (the tale's by Martial penned)
A father thus addressed his friend:*

20

'To train my boy, and call forth sense,
You know I've stuck at no expense;
I've tried him in the several arts,
(The lad no doubt hath latent parts,)
Yet trying all, he nothing knows;
But, crab-like, rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone;
'Tis your advice shall fix my son.'

'Sir,' says the friend, 'I've weighed the matter;
Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter:

30

*Make him (nor think his genius checked)
A herald or an architect.'*



*Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard the advice, and took his own.
The boy wants wit; he's sent to school,
Where learning but improves the fool:
The college next must give him parts,
And cram him with the liberal arts.
Whether he blunders at the bar,
Or owes his infamy to war;*

40

*Or if by licence or degree
The sexton shares the doctor's fee:
Or from the pulpit by the hour
He weekly floods of nonsense pour;
We find (the intent of nature foiled)
A tailor or a butcher spoiled.
Thus ministers have royal boons
Conferred on blockheads and buffoons:
In spite of nature, merit, wit,
Their friends for every post were fit.*

50

*But now let every Muse confess
That merit finds its due success.
The examples of our days regard;
Where's virtue seen without reward?
Distinguished and in place you find
Desert and worth of every kind.
Survey the reverend bench, and see,
Religion, learning, piety:
The patron, ere he recommends,
Sees his own image in his friends.*

60

*Is honesty disgraced and poor?
What is't to us what was before?
We all of times corrupt have heard,
When paltry minions were preferred;
When all great offices by dozens,
Were filled by brothers, sons, and cousins.*

Page 170

What matter ignorance and pride?
The man was happily allied.
Provided that his clerk was good,
What though he nothing understood?

70

*In church and state, the sorry race
Grew more conspicuous fools in place.
Such heads, as then a treaty made,
Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.*

*Consider, patrons, that such elves,
Expose your folly with themselves.
'Tis yours, as 'tis the parent's care,
To fix each genius in its sphere.
Your partial hand can wealth dispense,
But never give a blockhead sense.*

80

An owl of magisterial air,
Of solemn voice, of brow austere,
Assumed the pride of human race,
And bore his wisdom in his face;
Not to depreciate learned eyes,
I've seen a pedant look as wise.

Within a barn, from noise retired,
He scorned the world, himself admired;
And, like an ancient sage, concealed
The follies public life revealed.

90

*Philosophers of old, he read,
Their country's youth to science bred,
Their manners formed for every station,
And destined each his occupation.
When Xenophon, by numbers braved,
Retreated, and a people saved,
That laurel was not all his own;
The plant by Socrates was sown;
To Aristotle's greater name
The Macedonian^[10] owed his fame.*

100

The Athenian bird, with pride replete,
Their talents equalled in conceit;



And, copying the Socratic rule,
Set up for master of a school.
Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,
Trite sentences, hard terms of art,
To vulgar ears seemed so profound,
They fancied learning in the sound.

The school had fame: the crowded place
With pupils swarmed of every race.

110

*With these the swan's maternal care
Had sent her scarce-fledged cygnet heir:
The hen (though fond and loath to part)
Here lodged the darling of her heart:
The spider, of mechanic kind,
Aspired to science more refined:
The ass learnt metaphors and tropes,
But most on music fixed his hopes.*

*The pupils now advanced in age,
Were called to tread life's busy stage.*

120

And to the master 'twas submitted,
That each might to his part be fitted.

'The swan,' says he, 'in arms shall shine:
The soldier's glorious toil be thine.
The cock shall mighty wealth attain:
Go, seek it on the stormy main.
The Court shall be the spider's sphere:
Power, fortune, shall reward him there.
In music's art the ass's fame
Shall emulate Corelli's^[1] name.

130

*Each took the part that he advised,
And all were equally despised;
A farmer, at his folly moved,
The dull preceptor thus reproved:
'Blockhead,' says he, 'by what you've done,
One would have thought 'em each your son:*



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*For parents, to their offspring blind,
Consult, nor parts, nor turn of mind;
But even in infancy decree
What this, what t'other son should be.*

140

Had you with judgment weighed the case,
Their genius thus had fixed their place:
The swan had learnt the sailor's art;
The cock had played the soldier's part;
The spider in the weaver's trade
With credit had a fortune made;
But for the fool, in every class
The blockhead had appeared an ass.'

* * * * *

FABLE XV.

THE COOK-MAID, THE TURNSPIT, AND THE OX.
TO A POOR MAN.

Consider man in every sphere,
Then tell me is your lot severe?
'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,
That makes you wretched. God is just.
I grant, that hunger must be fed,
That toil too earns thy daily bread.
What then? Thy wants are seen and known,
But every mortal feels his own.
We're born a restless, needy crew:
Show me the happier man than you.

10

*Adam, though blest above his kind,
For want of social woman pined,
Eve's wants the subtle serpent saw,
Her fickle taste transgressed the law:
Thus fell our sires; and their disgrace
The curse entailed on human race.
When Philip's son, by glory led,
Had o'er the globe his empire spread;*



*When altars to his name were dressed,
That he was man, his tears confessed.*

20

The hopes of avarice are check'd:
The proud man always wants respect.
What various wants on power attend!
Ambition never gains its end.
Who hath not heard the rich complain
Of surfeits and corporeal pain?
He, barred from every use of wealth,
Envies the ploughman's strength and health.
Another in a beauteous wife
Finds all the miseries of life:

30

*Domestic jars and jealous fear
Embitter all his days with care.
This wants an heir, the line is lost:
Why was that vain entail engross'd?
Canst thou discern another's mind?
Why is't you envy? Envy's blind.
Tell Envy, when she would annoy,
That thousands want what you enjoy.
'The dinner must be dished at one.
Where's this vexatious turnspit gone?*

40

Unless the skulking cur is caught,
The sirloin's spoiled, and I'm in fault.'
Thus said: (for sure you'll think it fit
That I the cook-maid's oaths omit)
With all the fury of a cook,
Her cooler kitchen Nan forsook.
The broomstick o'er her head she waves;
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves.
The sneaking cur before her flies:
She whistles, calls; fair speech she tries.

50

*These nought avail. Her choler burns;
The fist and cudgel threat by turns;
With hasty stride she presses near;
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.
'Was ever cur so cursed!' he cried,
'What star did at my birth preside?
Am I for life by compact bound*



Page 172

*To tread the wheel's eternal round?
Inglorious task! Of all our race
No slave is half so mean and base.*

60

Had fate a kinder lot assigned,
And formed me of the lap-dog kind,
I then, in higher life employed,
Had indolence and ease enjoyed;
And, like a gentleman, caress'd,
Had been the lady's favourite guest.
Or were I sprung from spaniel line,
Was his sagacious nostril mine,
By me, their never-erring guide,
From wood and plain their feasts supplied

70

*Knights, squires, attendant on my pace,
Had shared the pleasures of the chase.
Endued with native strength and fire,
Why called I not the lion sire?
A lion! such mean views I scorn.
Why was I not of woman born?
Who dares with reason's power contend?
On man we brutal slaves depend:
To him all creatures tribute pays,
And luxury employs his days.'*

80

An ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
And thus rebuked the lazy drone:
'Dare you at partial fate repine?
How kind's your lot compared with mine!
Decreed to toil, the barbarous knife
Hath severed me from social life;
Urged by the stimulating goad,
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load:
'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,
Break the stiff soil, and house the grain;

90

*Yet I without a murmur bear
The various labours of the year.
But then consider, that one day,
(Perhaps the hour's not far away,)*



*You, by the duties of your post,
 Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast:
 And for reward shall share the feast;
 I mean, shall pick my bones at least.'*
*"Till now," the astonished cur replies,
 'I looked on all with envious eyes.*

100

How false we judge by what appears!
 All creatures feel their several cares.
 If thus yon mighty beast complains,
 Perhaps man knows superior pains.
 Let envy then no more torment:
 Think on the ox, and learn content.'
 Thus said: close following at her heel,
 With cheerful heart he mounts the wheel.

FABLE XVI.

THE RAVENS, THE SEXTON, AND THE EARTH-WORM.

TO LAURA.

Laura, methinks you're over nice.
 True, flattery is a shocking vice;
 Yet sure, whene'er the praise is just,
 One may commend without disgust.
 Am I a privilege denied,
 Indulged by every tongue beside?
 How singular are all your ways!
 A woman, and averse to praise!
 If 'tis offence such truths to tell,
 Why do your merits thus excel?

10

*Since then I dare not speak my mind,
 A truth conspicuous to mankind;
 Though in full lustre every grace
 Distinguish your celestial face:
 Though beauties of inferior ray
 (Like stars before the orb of day)
 Turn pale and fade: I check my lays,
 Admiring what I dare not praise.
 If you the tribute due disdain,
 The Muse's mortifying strain*

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20

Shall like a woman in mere spite,
Set beauty in a moral light.
Though such revenge might shock the ear
Of many a celebrated fair;
I mean that superficial race
Whose thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face;
What's that to you? I but displease
Such ever-girlish ears as these.
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
That lasts the same through every stage.

30

*Though you by time must suffer more
Than ever woman lost before;
To age is such indifference shown,
As if your face were not your own.
Were you by Antoninus[1] taught?
Or is it native strength of thought,
That thus, without concern or fright,
You view yourself by reason's light?
Those eyes of so divine a ray,
What are they? Mouldering, mortal clay.*

40

Those features, cast in heavenly mould,
Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old;
Like common grass, the fairest flower
Must feel the hoary season's power.
How weak, how vain is human pride!
Dares man upon himself confide?
The wretch who glories in his gain,
Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.
Why lose we life in anxious cares,
To lay in hoards for future years?

50

*Can those (when tortured by disease)
Cheer our sick heart, or purchase ease?
Can those prolong one gasp of breath,
Or calm the troubled hour of death?
What's beauty? Call ye that your own?
A flower that fades as soon as blown.*



What's man in all his boast of sway?

Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place

Through every branch of human race,

60

The monarch of long regal line

Was raised from dust as frail as mine.

Can he pour health into his veins,

Or cool the fever's restless pains?

Can he (worn down in Nature's course)

New-brace his feeble nerves with force?

Can he (how vain is mortal power!)

Stretch life beyond the destined hour?

Consider, man; weigh well thy frame;

The king, the beggar is the same.

70

Dust forms us all. Each breathes his day,

Then sinks into his native clay.

Beneath a venerable yew,

That in the lonely church-yard grew,

Two ravens sat. In solemn croak

Thus one his hungry friend bespoke:

'Methinks I scent some rich repast;

The savour strengthens with the blast;

Snuff then, the promised feast inhale;

I taste the carcase in the gale;

80

Near yonder trees, the farmer's steed,

From toil and daily drudgery freed,

Hath groaned his last. A dainty treat!

To birds of taste delicious meat.'

A sexton, busy at his trade,

To hear their chat suspends his spade.

Death struck him with no further thought,

Than merely as the fees he brought.

'Was ever two such blundering fowls,



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In brains and manners less than owls!
90

*Blockheads,' says he, 'learn more respect;
Know ye on whom ye thus reflect?
In this same grave (who does me right,
Must own the work is strong and tight)
The squire that yon fair hall possessed,
Tonight shall lay his bones at rest.
Whence could the gross mistake proceed?
The squire was somewhat fat indeed.
What then? The meanest bird of prey
Such want of sense could ne'er betray;*

100

For sure some difference must be found
(Suppose the smelling organ sound)
In carcasses (say what we can)
Or where's the dignity of man?'
With due respect to human race,
The ravens undertook the case.
In such similitude of scent,
Man ne'er could think reflections meant.
As epicures extol a treat,
And seem their savoury words to eat,

110

*They praised dead horse, luxurious food,
The venison of the prescient brood.
The sexton's indignation moved,
The mean comparison reproved;
The undiscerning palate blamed,
Which two-legged carrion thus defamed.
Reproachful speech from either side
The want of argument supplied:
They rail, revile: as often ends
The contest of disputing friends.*

120

'Hold,' says the fowl; 'since human pride
With confutation ne'er complied,
Let's state the case, and then refer
The knotty point: for taste may err.'
As thus he spoke, from out the mould



An earth-worm, huge of size, unrolled
His monstrous length. They straight agree
To choose him as their referee.
So to the experience of his jaws,
Each states the merits of his cause.

130

*He paused, and with a solemn tone,
Thus made his sage opinion known:
'On carcases of every kind
This maw hath elegantly dined;
Provoked by luxury or need,
On beast, on fowl, on man, I feed;
Such small distinctions in the savour,
By turns I choose the fancied flavour,
Yet I must own (that human beast)
A glutton is the rankest feast.*

140

Man, cease this boast; for human pride
Hath various tracts to range beside.
The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whose dictate fixed the law,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Are levelled. Death confounds them all.
Then think not that we reptiles share
Such cates, such elegance of fair:
The only true and real good
Of man was never vermin's food.

150

*'Tis seated in the immortal mind;
Virtue distinguishes mankind,
And that (as yet ne'er harboured here)
Mounts with his soul we know not where.
So, good man sexton, since the case
Appears with such a dubious face,
To neither I the cause determine,
For different tastes please different vermin.'*

END OF GAY'S FABLES.



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SONGS.

SWEET WILLIAM'S FAREWELL TO BLACK-EYED SUSAN.

1

All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-eye'd 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.

2

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

3

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 lip those kisses sweet.

4

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.

5

Believe not what the landmen 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.

6

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.

7

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.

8

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

* * * * *

A BALLAD,

FROM THE WHAT-D'YE-CALL-IT.

1

'Twas when the seas were roaring
With hollow blasts of wind;
A damsel lay deploing,
All on a rock reclined.
Wide o'er the foaming billows
She casts a wistful look;
Her head was crown'd with willows,
That trembled o'er the brook.



2

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?



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3

The merchant, robb'd 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.

4

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.

5

All melancholy lying,
Thus wail'd 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 bow'd her head, and died.

END OF GAY'S SONGS.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: Second son of George II.; born in 1721; he was five years old at the date of the publication of the 'Fables,' which were written for his instruction. He is 'Culloden' Cumberland.]

[Footnote 2: 'Siam,' a country famous for elephants.]



[Footnote 3: 'Gresham Hall,' originally the house of Sir Thomas Gresham in Winchester. It was converted by his will into a college, no remains of which now exist.]

[Footnote 4: 'Curl,' a famous publisher to Grub Street.]

[Footnote 5: Garth's Dispensary.]

[Footnote 6: 'Porta:' a native of Naples, famous for skill in the occult sciences. He wrote a book on Physiognomy, seeking to trace in the human face resemblances to animals, and to infer similar correspondences in mind.]

[Footnote 7: '——When impious men bear sway,
The post of honour is a private station.'-ADDISON.]

[Footnote 8: 'Antiochus': See Plutarch.]

[Footnote 9: Barrow.]

[Footnote 10: 'The Macedonian:' Alexander the Great.]

[Footnote 11: 'Corelli:' Arcangelo, the greatest fiddler, till Paganini, that has appeared. He was born in the territory of Bologna, in 1653, and died in 1713.]

[Footnote 12: 'Antoninus:' Marcus, one of the few emperors who have been also philosophers.]

THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM SOMERVILLE.

* * * * *

There is a chapter in an old history of Iceland which has often moved merriment. The title of it is, "Concerning Snakes in Iceland," and the contents are, "Snakes in Iceland there are none." We suspect, when our "Life of William Somerville" is ended, not a few will find in it a parallel for that comprehensive chapter, although we strenuously maintain that the fault of an insipid and uninteresting life is not always to be charged on the biographer.

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In “Sartor Resartus” our readers remember an epitaph, somewhat coarse, although disguised in good dog-Latin, upon a country squire, and his sayings and doings in this world. We have not a copy of that work at hand, and cannot quote the epitaph, nor would we, though we could, since even the dog-Latin is too plain and perspicuous for many readers. We recommend those, however, who choose to turn it up; and they will find in it (with the exception of the writing of “the Chase”) the full history of William Somerville, of whom we know little, but that he was born, that he hunted, ate, drank, and died.

He was born in 1682; but in what month, or on what day, we are not informed. His estate was in Warwickshire, its name Edston, and he had inherited it from a long line of ancestors. His family prided itself upon being the first family in the county. He himself boasts of having been born on the banks of Avon, which has thus at least produced two poets, of somewhat different calibre indeed—the one a deer-stealer, and the other a fox-hunter—Shakspeare and Somerville. Somerville was educated at Winchester School, and was afterwards elected fellow of New College. From his studies—of his success in which we know nothing—he returned to his native county, and there, says Johnson, “was distinguished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justice of the peace;”—we may add, as a jovial companion and a daring fox-hunter. His estate brought him in about L1500 a-year, but his extravagance brought him into pecuniary distresses, which weighed upon his mind, plunged him into intemperate habits, and hurried him away in his 60th year. Shenstone, who knew him well, thus mourns aver his departure in one of his letters:—“Our old friend Somerville is dead; I did not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion. *Sublatum quoerimus*, I can now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age and to distressed circumstances. The last of these considerations wrings my very soul to think on; for a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one production) generally pleased the world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches that are low in every sense; to be forced to drink himself into pains of the body in order to get rid of the pains of the mind, is a misery.”

Somerville died July 19, 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henley-on-Arden. His estate went to Lord Somerville in Scotland, but his mother, who lived to a great age, had a jointure of L600. He describes himself, in verses addressed to Allan Ramsay, as

“A squire, well-born and six feet high.”

He seems, from the affection and sympathy discovered for him by Shenstone, to have possessed the virtues as well as the vices of the squirearchy of that age; their frankness, sociality, and heart, as well as their improvidence and tendency to excess; and may altogether be called a sublimated Squire Western.

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As to his poetry, much of it is beneath criticism. His “Fables,” “Tales,” “Hobbinol, or Rural Games,” &c., have all in them poetical lines, but cannot, as a whole, be called poetry. He wrote some verses, entitled “Address to Addison,” on the latter purchasing an estate in Warwickshire (he gave his Countess L4000 in exchange for it). In this there are two lines which Dr Johnson highly commends, saying “They are written with the most exquisite delicacy of praise; they exhibit one of those happy strokes that are seldom attained.”—Here is this bepraised couplet:—

“When panting virtue her last efforts made,
You brought your Clio to the virgin’s aid.”

Clio, of course, refers to Addison’s signatures in the “Spectator,” consisting of the four letters composing the name of the Muse of History, used in alternation. We cannot coincide in Johnson’s encomium. The allusion is, we think, at once indecent and obscure; and what, after all, does it say, but that Addison’s papers aided the struggling cause of virtue?

In the same verses we find a fulsome and ridiculous preference of Addison to Shakspeare!

“In heaven he sings, on earth your Muse supplies
The important loss, and heals our weeping eyes;
Correctly great, she melts each flinty heart,
With EQUAL GENIUS, but SUPERIOR ART.”

Surely the force of falsehood and flattery can go no further.

It is a pleasure to turn from these small and shallow things to the “Chase,” which, if not a great poem, is founded on a most poetical subject, and which, here and there, sparkles into fine fancy. Dr Johnson truly remarks, that Somerville “set a good example to men of his own class, by devoting a part of his time to elegant knowledge, and has shewn, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters.” But besides this purpose to be the poet—and hitherto he has been almost the sole poet of the squirearchy, as considered apart from the aristocracy—Somerville has the merit of being inspired by a genuine love for the subject. He writes directly from the testimony of his own eyes, and the impulses of his own heart. He has obviously had the mould of his poem suggested by Thomson’s “Seasons,” but it is the mould only; the thoughts and feelings which are poured into it are his own. He loves the giddy ride over stock and stone, hedge and petty precipice; the invigoration which the keen breath of autumn or winter, like that of a sturdy veteran, gives the animal spirits; the animated aspect of the “assembled jockeyship of half a province;” the wild music of hounds, and horns, and hollas, vieing with each other in mirth and loudness; the breathless interest of the start; the emulous pant of the

coursers; the excitement of the moment when the fox appears; the sweeping tumult of the pursuit; the dreamlike rapidity with which five-barred gates are cleared, the yellow

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or naked woods are passed, and the stubble-ridges “swallowed up in the fierceness and rage” of the rushing steeds; the indifference of those engaged in the headlong sport to the danger or even the death of their companions; the lengthening and deepening howl of the hounds as they near their prey; the fierce silence of the dying victim; and the fiercer shout of victory which announces to the echoes that the brush is won, and the glorious (or inglorious) day’s work is over;—all this Somerville loves, and has painted with considerable power. In the course of the poem, he sings also of the mysteries of the dog-kennel—pursues the blood-hound on his track of death—describes a stag-hunt in Windsor Forest—paints the fearful phenomena of canine madness—hunts the hare in a joyous spirit—and goes down after the otter into its watery recesses, and watches its divings and devious motions as with the eyes of a sea-eagle. And, besides, (here also imitating Thomson,) he is led away from the comparatively tame “Chase” of England to the more dangerous and more inspiring sports of other lands, where “the huntsmen are up in Arabia,” in pursuit of the wolf, where the bear is bayed amidst forests dark as itself, where the leopard is snared by its own image in a mirror, where the lion falls roaring into the prepared pit, and where the “Chase” is pursued on a large scale by assembled princes amidst the jungles of India.

We doubt not, however, that, were a genuine poet of this age taking up the “Chase” as a subject for song, and availing himself of the accounts of recent travellers, themselves often true poets, such as Lloyd, Livingstone, Cumming Bruce, and Charles Boner, (see the admirable “Chamois Hunting in Bavaria” of the latter,) he would produce a strain incomparably higher than Somerville’s. Wilson, at least, as we know from his “Christopher in his Sporting Jacket,” and many other articles in *Maga*, was qualified, in part by nature and in part by extensive experience, to have written such a poem. Indeed, one sentence of his is superior to anything in the “Chase.” Speaking of the charge of the cruelty of chasing such an insignificant animal as a fox, he says, “What though it be but a smallish, reddish-brown, sharp-nosed animal, with pricked-up ears, and passionately fond of poultry, that they pursue? After the first tallyho, reynard is rarely seen till he is run in upon—once, perhaps, in the whole run, skirting a wood, or crossing a common. It is an *idea that is pursued* on a whirlwind of horses, to a storm of canine music, worthy both of the largest lion that ever leaped among a band of Moors sleeping at midnight by an extinguished fire on the African sands.” We do not answer for the humanity of this description, but it certainly seems to us to exhaust the subject of the chase, alike in its philosophy and its poetry.[1]

SOMERVILLE’S CHASE.

* * * * *

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BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed.—Address to his Royal Highness the Prince.—The origin of hunting.—The rude and unpolished manner of the first hunters.—Beasts at first hunted for food and sacrifice.—The grant made by God to man of the beasts, &c.—The regular manner of hunting first brought into this island by the Normans.—The best hounds and best horses bred here.—The advantage of this exercise to us, as islanders.—Address to gentlemen of estates.—Situation of the kennel and its several courts.—The diversion and employment of hounds in the kennel.—The different sorts of hounds for each different chase.—Description of a perfect hound.—Of sizing and sorting of hounds.—The middle-sized hound recommended.—Of the large, deep-mouthed hound for hunting the stag and otter.—Of the lime-hound; their use on the borders of England and Scotland.—A physical account of scents.—Of good and bad scenting days.—A short admonition to my brethren of the couples.

The Chase I sing, hounds, and their various breed,
And no less various use. O thou Great Prince![2]
Whom Cambria's towering hills proclaim their lord,
Deign thou to hear my bold, instructive song.
While grateful citizens with pompous show,
Rear the triumphal arch, rich with the exploits
Of thy illustrious house; while virgins pave
Thy way with flowers, and, as the royal youth
Passing they view, admire, and sigh in vain;
While crowded theatres, too fondly proud
10

*Of their exotic minstrels, and shrill pipes,
The price of manhood, hail thee with a song,
And airs soft-warbling; my hoarse-sounding horn
Invites thee to the Chase, the sport of kings;
Image of war, without its guilt. The Muse
Aloft on wing shall soar, conduct with care
Thy foaming courser o'er the steepy rock,
Or on the river bank receive thee safe,
Light-bounding o'er the wave, from shore to shore.
Be thou our great protector, gracious youth!*
20

And if in future times, some envious prince,
Careless of right and guileful, should invade
Thy Britain's commerce, or should strive in vain
To wrest the balance from thy equal hand;



Thy hunter-train, in cheerful green arrayed,
(A band undaunted, and inured to toils,)
Shall compass thee around, die at thy feet,
Or hew thy passage through the embattled foe,
And clear thy way to fame; inspired by thee
The nobler chase of glory shall pursue

30

Through fire, and smoke, and blood, and fields of death.

*Nature, in her productions slow, aspires
By just degrees to reach perfection's height:
So mimic Art works leisurely, till Time
Improve the piece, or wise Experience give
The proper finishing. When Nimrod bold,
That mighty hunter, first made war on*



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beasts,

*And stained the woodland green with purple dye,
New and unpolished was the huntsman's art;
No stated rule, his wanton will his guide.*

40

With clubs and stones, rude implements of war,
He armed his savage bands, a multitude
Untrained; of twining osiers formed, they pitch
Their artless toils, then range the desert hills,
And scour the plains below; the trembling herd
Start at the unusual sound, and clamorous shout
Unheard before; surprised alas! to find
Man now their foe, whom erst they deemed their lord,
But mild and gentle, and by whom as yet
Secure they grazed. Death stretches o'er the plain

50

*Wide-wasting, and grim slaughter red with blood:
Urged on by hunger keen, they wound, they kill,
Their rage licentious knows no bound; at last
Incumbered with their spoils, joyful they bear
Upon their shoulders broad, the bleeding prey.
Part on their altars smokes a sacrifice
To that all-gracious Power, whose bounteous hand
Supports his wide creation; what remains
On living coals they broil, inelegant
Of taste, nor skilled as yet in nicer arts*

60

Of pampered luxury. Devotion pure,
And strong necessity, thus first began
The chase of beasts: though bloody was the deed,
Yet without guilt. For the green herb alone
Unequal to sustain man's labouring race,
Now every moving thing that lived on earth
Was granted him for food. So just is Heaven,
To give us in proportion to our wants.

Or chance or industry in after-times
Some few improvements made, but short as yet

70

*Of due perfection. In this isle remote
Our painted ancestors were slow to learn,
To arms devote, of the politer arts
Nor skilled nor studious; till from Neustria's[3] coasts
Victorious William, to more decent rules*



*Subdued our Saxon fathers, taught to speak
The proper dialect, with horn and voice
To cheer the busy hound, whose well-known cry
His listening peers approve with joint acclaim.
From him successive huntsmen learned to join*

80

*In bloody social leagues, the multitude
Dispersed, to size, to sort their various tribes,
To rear, feed, hunt, and discipline the pack.
Hail, happy Britain! highly-favoured isle,
And Heaven's peculiar care! To thee 'tis given
To train the sprightly steed, more fleet than those
Begot by winds, or the celestial breed
That bore the great Pelides through the press
Of heroes armed, and broke their crowded ranks;
Which proudly neighing, with the sun begins*

90

*Cheerful his course; and ere his beams decline,
Has measured half thy surface unfatigued.
In thee alone, fair land of liberty!
Is bred the perfect hound, in scent and speed
As yet unrivalled, while in other climes*



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*Their virtue fails, a weak degenerate race.
In vain malignant steams, and winter fogs
Load the dull air, and hover round our coasts,
The huntsman ever gay, robust, and bold,
Defies the noxious vapour, and confides*

100

*In this delightful exercise, to raise
His drooping head and cheer his heart with joy.
Ye vigorous youths, by smiling Fortune blest
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,
Heaped copious by your wise forefathers' care,
Hear and attend! while I the means reveal
To 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,*

110

*But breathing death. What though the gripe severe
Of brazen-fisted Time, and slow disease
Creeping through every vein, and nerve unstrung,
Afflict my shattered frame, undaunted still,
Fixed as a mountain ash, that braves the bolts
Of angry Jove; though blasted, yet unfallen;
Still can my soul in Fancy's mirror view
Deeds glorious once, recal the joyous scene
In all its splendours decked, o'er the full bowl
Recount my triumphs past, urge others on*

120

*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 opening 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,*

130

*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. For not alone
The vegetable world, but men and brutes
Own his reviving influence, and joy
At his approach. Fountain of light! if chance[4]
Some envious cloud veil thy refulgent brow,
In vain the Muses aid; untouched, unstrung,*

140

*Lies my mute harp, and thy desponding bard
Sits darkly musing o'er the unfinished lay.*

*Let no Corinthian pillars prop the dome,
A vain expense, on charitable deeds
Better disposed, to clothe the tattered wretch,
Who shrinks beneath the blast, to feed the poor
Pinched with afflictive want. For use, not state,
Gracefully plain, let each apartment rise.
O'er all let cleanliness preside, no scraps
Bestrew the pavement, and no half-picked bones,*

150

*To kindle fierce debate, or to disgust
That nicer sense, on which the sportsman's hope,
And all his future triumphs must depend.
Soon as the growling pack with eager joy*



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*Have lapped their smoking viands, morn or eve,
From the full cistern lead the ductile streams,
To wash thy court well-paved, nor spare thy pains,
For much to health will cleanliness avail.
Seek'st thou for hounds to climb the rocky steep,
And brush the entangled covert, whose nice scent*

160

*O'er greasy fallows, and frequented roads
Can pick the dubious way? Banish far off
Each noisome stench, let no offensive smell
Invade thy wide inclosure, but admit
The nitrous air, and purifying breeze.*

*Water and shade no less demand thy care:
In a large square the adjacent field inclose,
There plant in equal ranks the spreading elm,
Or fragrant lime; most happy thy design,
If at the bottom of thy spacious court,*

170

*A large canal fed by the crystal brook,
From its transparent bosom shall reflect
Downward thy structure and inverted grove.
Here when the sun's too potent gleams annoy
The crowded kennel, and the drooping pack,
Restless and faint, loll their unmoistened tongues,
And drop their feeble tails; to cooler shades
Lead forth the panting tribe; soon shalt thou find
The cordial breeze their fainting hearts revive:
Tumultuous soon they plunge into the stream,*

180

*There lave their reeking sides, with greedy joy
Gulp down the flying wave; this way and that
From shore to shore they swim, while clamour loud
And wild uproar torments the troubled flood:
Then on the sunny bank they roll and stretch
Their dripping limbs, or else in wanton rings
Coursing around, pursuing and pursued,
The merry multitude disporting play.*

*But here with watchful and observant eye
Attend their frolics, which too often end*

190

In bloody broils and death. High o'er thy head



*Wave thy resounding whip, and with a voice
Fierce-menacing o'errule the stern debate,
And quench their kindling rage; for oft in sport
Begun, combat ensues, growling they snarl,
Then on their haunches reared, rampant they seize
Each other's throats, with teeth and claws in gore
Besmeared, they wound, they tear, till on the ground,
Panting, half dead the conquered champion lies:
Then sudden all the base ignoble crowd*

200

*Loud-clamouring seize the helpless worried wretch,
And thirsting for his blood, drag different ways
His mangled carcase on the ensanguined plain.
O breasts of pity void! to oppress the weak,
To point your vengeance at the friendless head,
And with one mutual cry insult the fallen!
Emblem too just of man's degenerate race.*

*Others apart by native instinct led,
Knowing instructor! 'mong the ranker grass
Cull each salubrious plant, with bitter juice*

210

*Concoctive stored, and potent to allay
Each vicious ferment. Thus the hand*

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divine

*Of Providence, beneficent and kind
To all His creatures, for the brutes prescribes
A ready remedy, and is Himself
Their great physician. Now grown stiff with age,
And many a painful chase, the wise old hound
Regardless of the frolic pack, attends
His master's side, or slumbers at his ease
Beneath the bending shade; there many a ring*

220

*Runs o'er in dreams; now on the doubtful foil
Puzzles perplexed, or doubles intricate
Cautious unfolds, then winged with all his speed,
Bounds o'er the lawn to seize his panting prey:
And in imperfect whimpers speaks his joy.
A different hound for every different chase
Select with judgment; nor the timorous hare
O'ermatched destroy, but leave that vile offence
To the mean, murderous, coursing crew; intent
On blood and spoil. O blast their hopes, just Heaven!*

230

*And all their painful drudgeries repay
With disappointment and severe remorse.
But husband thou thy pleasures, and give scope
To all her subtle play: by nature led
A thousand shifts she tries; to unravel these
The industrious beagle twists his waving tail,
Through all her labyrinths pursues, and rings
Her doleful knell. See there with countenance blithe,
And with a courtly grin, the fawning hound
Salutes thee cowering, his wide-opening nose*

240

*Upward he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes
Melt in soft blandishments, and humble joy;
His glossy skin, or yellow-pied, or blue,
In lights or shades by Nature's pencil drawn,
Reflects the various tints; his ears and legs
Flecked here and there, in gay enamelled pride
Rival the speckled pard; his rush-grown tail
O'er his broad back bends in an ample arch;
On shoulders clean, upright and firm he stands,
His round cat foot, straight hams, and wide-spread thighs,*

250



*And his low-dropping chest, confess his speed,
His strength, his wind, or on the steepy hill,
Or far-extended plain; in every part
So well proportioned, that the nicer skill
Of Phidias himself can't blame thy choice.
Of such compose thy pack. But here a mean
Observe, nor the large hound prefer, of size
Gigantic; he in the thick-woven covert
Painfully tugs, or in the thorny brake
Torn and embarrassed bleeds: but if too small,*
260

The pigmy brood in every furrow swims;
Moiled in the clogging clay, panting they lag
Behind inglorious; or else shivering creep
Benumbed and faint beneath the sheltering thorn.
For hounds of middle size, active and strong,
Will better answer all thy various ends,
And crown thy pleasing labours with success.
As some brave captain, curious and exact,
By his fixed standard forms in equal ranks
His gay battalion, as one man they move



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270

*Step after step, their size the same, their arms
Far gleaming, dart the same united blaze:
Reviewing generals his merit own;
How regular! how just! and all his cares
Are well repaid, if mighty George approve.
So model thou thy pack, if honour touch
Thy generous soul, and the world's just applause.
But above all take heed, nor mix thy hounds
Of different kinds; discordant sounds shall grate
Thy ears offended, and a lagging line*

280

*Of babbling curs disgrace thy broken pack.
But if the amphibious otter be thy chase,
Or stately stag, that o'er the woodland reigns;
Or if the harmonious thunder of the field
Delight thy ravished ears; the deep-flewed hound
Breed up with care, strong, heavy, slow, but sure,
Whose ears down-hanging from his thick round head
Shall sweep the morning dew, whose clanging voice
Awake the mountain echo in her cell,
And shake the forests: the bold talbot[6] kind*

290

*Of these the prime, as white as Alpine snows;
And great their use of old. Upon the banks
Of Tweed, slow winding through the vale, the seat
Of war and rapine once, ere Britons knew
The sweets of peace, or Anna's dread commands
To lasting leagues the haughty rivals awed,
There dwelt a pilfering race; well-trained and skilled
In all the mysteries of theft, the spoil*

*Their only substance, feuds and war their sport:
Not more expert in every fraudulent art*

300

*The arch felon was of old, who by the tail
Drew back his lowing prize: in vain his wiles,
In vain the shelter of the covering rock,
In vain the sooty cloud, and ruddy flames
That issued from his mouth; for soon he paid
His forfeit life: a debt how justly due*



*To wronged Alcides, and avenging Heaven!
Veiled in the shades of night they ford the stream,*

Then prowling far and near, whate'er they seize
Becomes their prey; nor flocks nor herds are safe,
310

*Nor stalls protect the steer, nor strong barred doors
Secure the favourite horse. Soon as the morn
Reveals his wrongs, with ghastly visage wan
The plundered owner stands, and from his lips
A thousand thronging curses burst their way:
He calls his stout allies, and in a line
His faithful hound he leads, then with a voice
That utters loud his rage, attentive cheers:
Soon the sagacious brute, his curling tail*

Flourished in air, low-bending plies around
320

*His busy nose, the steaming vapour snuff
Inquisitive, nor leaves one turf untried,
Till conscious of the recent stains, his heart
Beats quick; his snuffling nose, his active tail
Attest his joy; then with deep opening mouth
That makes the welkin tremble, he proclaims
The audacious felon; foot by foot he marks*



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*His winding way, while all the listening crowd
Applaud his reasonings. O'er the watery ford,
Dry sandy heaths, and stony barren hill,*

330

O'er beaten paths, with men and beasts distained,
Unerring he pursues; till at the cot
Arrived, and seizing by his guilty throat
The caitiff' vile, redeems the captive prey:
So exquisitely delicate his sense!

Should some more curious sportsman here inquire,
Whence this sagacity, this wondrous power
Of tracing step by step, or man or brute?

What guide invisible points out their way,
O'er the dank marsh, bleak hill, and sandy plain?

340

*The courteous Muse shall the dark cause reveal.
The blood that from the heart incessant rolls
In many a crimson tide, then here and there
In smaller rills disparted, as it flows
Propelled, the serous particles evade
Through the open pores, and with the ambient air
Entangling mix. As fuming vapours rise,
And hang upon the gently purling brook,
There by the incumbent atmosphere compressed,
The panting chase grows warmer as he flies,*

350

And through the net-work of the skin perspires;
Leaves a long-streaming trail behind, which by
The cooler air condensed, remains, unless
By some rude storm dispersed, or rarefied
By the meridian sun's intenser heat.
To every shrub the warm effluvia cling,
Hang on the grass, impregnate earth and skies.
With nostrils opening wide, o'er hill, o'er dale,
The vigorous hounds pursue, with every breath
Inhale the grateful steam, quick pleasures sting

360

*Their tingling nerves, while they their thanks repay,
And in triumphant melody confess
The titillating joy. Thus on the air*



*Depend the hunter's hopes. When ruddy streaks
At eve forebode a blustering stormy day,
Or lowering clouds blacken the mountain's brow,
When nipping frosts, and the keen biting blasts
Of the dry parching east, menace the trees
With tender blossoms teeming, kindly spare
Thy sleeping pack, in their warm beds of straw*

370

Low-sinking at their ease; listless they shrink
Into some dark recess, nor hear thy voice
Though oft invoked; or haply if thy call
Rouse up the slumbering tribe, with heavy eyes
Glazed, lifeless, dull, downward they drop their tails
Inverted; high on their bent backs erect
Their pointed bristles stare, or 'mong the tufts
Of ranker weeds, each stomach-healing plant
Curious they crop, sick, spiritless, forlorn.
These inauspicious days, on other cares

380

*Employ thy precious hours; the improving friend
With open arms embrace, and from his lips
Glean science, seasoned with good-natured wit.
But if the inclement skies and angry Jove
Forbid the pleasing intercourse, thy books*

Page 187

*Invite thy ready hand, each sacred page
Rich with the wise remarks of heroes old.
Converse familiar with the illustrious dead;
With great examples of old Greece or Rome
Enlarge thy free-born heart, and bless kind Heaven,*

390

That Britain yet enjoys dear Liberty,
That balm of life, that sweetest blessing, cheap
Though purchased with our blood. Well-bred, polite,
Credit thy calling. See! how mean, how low,
The bookless sauntering youth, proud of the scut
That dignifies his cap, his flourished belt,
And rusty couples jingling by his side.
Be thou of other mould; and know that such
Transporting pleasures were by Heaven ordained
Wisdom's relief, and Virtue's great reward.

400

* * * * *

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

Of the power of instinct in brutes.—Two remarkable instances in the hunting of the roebuck, and in the hare going to seat in the morning.—Of the variety of seats or forms of the hare, according to the change of the season, weather, or wind.—Description of the hare-hunting in all its parts, interspersed with rules to be observed by those who follow that chase.—Transition to the Asiatic way of hunting, particularly the magnificent manner of the Great Mogul, and other Tartarian princes, taken from Monsieur Bernier, and the history of Gengiskan the Great.—Concludes with a short reproof of tyrants and oppressors of mankind.

Nor will it less delight the attentive sage
To observe that instinct, which unerring guides
The brutal race, which mimics reason's lore
And oft transcends: heaven-taught, the roe-buck swift
Loiters at ease before the driving pack
And mocks their vain pursuit, nor far he flies
But checks his ardour, till the steaming scent



That freshens on the blade, provokes their rage.
Urged to their speed, his weak deluded foes

Soon flag fatigued; strained to excess each nerve,
10

*Each slackened sinew fails; they pant, they foam;
Then o'er the lawn he bounds, o'er the high hills
Stretches secure, and leaves the scattered crowd
To puzzle in the distant vale below.*

*'Tis instinct that directs the jealous hare
To choose her soft abode: with step reversed
She forms the doubling maze; then, ere the morn
Peeps through the clouds, leaps to her close recess.
As wand'ring shepherds on the Arabian plains*

No settled residence observe, but shift
20

*Their moving camp, now, on some cooler hill
With cedars crowned, court the refreshing breeze;
And then, below, where trickling streams distil
From some penurious source, their thirst allay,
And feed their fainting flocks: so the wise hares
Oft quit their seats, lest some more curious eye
Should mark their haunts, and by dark treacherous wiles
Plot their destruction; or perchance in hopes*



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Of plenteous forage, near the ranker mead,
Or matted blade, wary, and close they sit.

30

*When spring shines forth, season of love and joy,
In the moist marsh, 'mong beds of rushes hid,
They cool their boiling blood: when Summer suns
Bake the cleft earth, to thick wide-waving fields
Of corn full-grown, they lead their helpless young:
But when autumnal torrents, and fierce rains
Deluge the vale, in the dry crumbling bank
Their forms they delve, and cautiously avoid*

The dripping covert: yet when Winter's cold
Their limbs benumbs, thither with speed returned

40

*In the long grass they skulk, or shrinking creep
Among the withered leaves, thus changing still,
As fancy prompts them, or as food invites.
But every season carefully observed,
The inconstant winds, the fickle element,
The wise experienced huntsman soon may find
His subtle, various game, nor waste in vain
His tedious hours, till his impatient hounds
With disappointment vexed, each springing lark
Babbling pursue, far scattered o'er the fields.*

50

Now golden Autumn from her open lap
Her fragrant bounties showers; the fields are shorn;
Inwardly smiling, the proud farmer views
The rising pyramids that grace his yard,
And counts his large increase; his barns are stored,
And groaning staddles bend beneath their load.
All now is free as air, and the gay pack
In the rough bristly stubbles range unblamed;
No widow's tears o'erflow, no secret curse
Swells in the farmer's breast, which his pale lips

60

*Trembling conceal, by his fierce landlord awed:
But courteous now he levels every fence,
Joins in the common cry, and halloos loud,
Charmed with the rattling thunder of the field.
Oh bear me, some kind Power invisible!
To that extended lawn, where the gay court*



*View the swift racers, stretching to the goal;
Games more renowned, and a far nobler train,
Than proud Elean fields could boast of old.
Oh! were a Theban lyre not wanting here,*

70

And Pindar's voice, to do their merit right!
Or to those spacious plains, where the strained eye
In the wide prospect lost, beholds at last
Sarum's proud spire, that o'er the hills ascends,
And pierces through the clouds. Or to thy downs,
Fair Cotswold, where the well-breathed beagle climbs,
With matchless speed, thy green aspiring brow,

And leaves the lagging multitude behind.

Hail, gentle Dawn! mild blushing goddess, hail!
Rejoiced I see thy purple mantle spread

80

*O'er half the skies, gems pave thy radiant way,
And orient pearls from every shrub depend.
Farewell, Cleora; here deep sunk in down
Slumber secure, with happy dreams amused,
Till grateful steams shall tempt thee*



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to receive

*Thy early meal, or thy officious maids,
The toilet placed, shall urge thee to perform
The important work. Me other joys invite,
The horn sonorous calls, the pack awaked
Their matins chant, nor brook my long delay.*

90

My courser hears their voice; see there with ears
And tail erect, neighing he paws the ground;
Fierce rapture kindles in his reddening eyes,
And boils in every vein. As captive boys
Cowed by the ruling rod, and haughty frowns
Of pedagogues severe, from their hard tasks,
If once dismissed, no limits can contain
The tumult raised within their little breasts,
But give a loose to all their frolic play:

So from their kennel rush the joyous pack;

100

*A thousand wanton gaieties express
Their inward ecstasy, their pleasing sport
Once more indulged, and liberty restored.
The rising sun that o'er the horizon peeps,
As many colours from their glossy skins
Beaming reflects, as paint the various bow
When April showers descend. Delightful scene!
Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs,
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh-blooming health, and universal joy.*

110

Huntsman, lead on! behind the clustering pack
Submit attend, hear with respect thy whip
Loud-clanging, and thy harsher voice obey:

Spare not the straggling cur, that wildly roves;
But let thy brisk assistant on his back
Imprint thy just resentments; let each lash
Bite to the quick, till howling he return
And whining creep amid the trembling crowd.

Here on this verdant spot, where nature kind,
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes;

120

Where flowers autumnal spring, and the rank mead



*Affords the wandering hares a rich repast,
Throw off thy ready pack. See, where they spread
And range around, and dash the glittering dew.
If some stanch hound, with his authentic voice,
Avow the recent trail, the jostling 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!

130

*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
The 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*

140

*Almost deceived my sight, had not her eyes
With life full-beaming her vain wiles betrayed.
At distance draw thy pack, let all be*



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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 mews she flies! Here, huntsman, bring
(But without hurry) all thy jolly hounds,

And calmly lay them in. How low they stoop,
150

*And seem to plough the ground! then all at once
With greedy nostrils snuff the fuming steam
That glads their fluttering 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 chase, give all your souls to joy!*

See how their coursers, than the mountain roe
160

*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,
170

*And with the panting winds lag far behind.
Huntsman! her gait observe, if in wide rings
She wheel her mazy way, in the same round
Persisting still, she'll foil the beaten track.
But if she fly, and with the favouring wind
Urge her bold course; less intricate thy task:
Push on thy pack. Like some poor exiled wretch
The frightened chase leaves her late dear abodes,*



*O'er plains remote she stretches far away,
Ah! never to return! for greedy Death*

180

Hovering exults, secure to seize his prey.

Hark! from yon covert, where those towering oaks
Above the humble copse aspiring rise,
What glorious triumphs burst in every gale
Upon our ravished ears! The hunters shout,
The clanging horns swell their sweet-winding notes,
The pack wide-opening load the trembling air
With various melody; from tree to tree

The propagated cry redoubling bounds,
And winged zephyrs waft the floating joy

190

*Through all the regions near: afflictive birch
No more the school-boy dreads, his prison broke,
Scampering he flies, nor heeds his master's call;
The weary traveller forgets his road,
And climbs the adjacent hill; the ploughman leaves
The unfinished furrow; nor his bleating flocks
Are now the shepherd's joy; men, boys, and girls
Desert the unpeopled village; and wild crowds
Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet*



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frenzy seized.

Look, how she pants! and o'er yon opening glade
200

Slips glancing by; while, at the further end,
The puzzling pack unravel wile by wile,
Maze within maze. The covert's utmost bound
Slily she skirts; behind them cautious creeps,
And in that very track, so lately stained
By all the steaming crowd, seems to pursue
The foe she flies. Let cavillers deny
That brutes have reason; sure 'tis something more,
'Tis Heaven directs, and stratagems inspires,
Beyond the short extent of human thought.

210

*But hold—I see her from the covert break;
Sad on yon little eminence she sits;
Intent she listens with one ear erect,
Pond'ring, and doubtful what new course to take,
And how to escape the fierce blood-thirsty crew,
That still urge on, and still in volleys loud,
Insult her woes, and mock her sore distress.
As now in louder peals, the loaded winds
Bring on the gathering storm, her fears prevail;
And o'er the plain, and o'er the mountain's ridge,*

220

Away she flies; nor ships with wind and tide,
And all their canvas wings, scud half so fast.
Once more, ye jovial train, your courage try,
And each clean courser's speed. We scour along,
In pleasing hurry and confusion tossed;
Oblivion to be wished. The patient pack
Hang on the scent unwearied, up they climb,
And ardent we pursue; our labouring steeds
We press, we gore; till once the summit gained,
Painfully panting, there we breathe a while;

230

*Then like a foaming torrent, pouring down
Precipitant, we smoke along the vale.
Happy the man, who with unrivalled speed
Can pass his fellows, and with pleasure view
The struggling pack; how in the rapid course
Alternate they preside, and jostling push
To guide the dubious scent; how giddy youth*



*Oft babbling errs, by wiser age reprov'd;
How, niggard of his strength, the wise old hound
Hangs in the rear, till some important point*

240

*Rouse all his diligence, or till the chase
Sinking he finds; then to the head he springs,
With thirst of glory fired, and wins the prize.
Huntsman, take heed; they stop in full career.
Yon crowding flocks, that at a distance graze,
Have haply soiled the turf. See! that old hound,
How busily he works, but dares not trust
His doubtful sense; draw yet a wider ring.
Hark! now again the chorus fills; as bells
Silenced a while at once their peal renew,*

250

*And high in air the tuneful thunder rolls.
See, how they toss, with animated rage
Recovering all they lost!—That eager haste
Some doubling wile foreshews.—Ah! yet once more
They're checked—hold back with speed—on either hand
They nourish round—even yet persist—'Tis right,
Away they spring; the rustling stubbles*



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bend

*Beneath the driving storm. Now the poor chase
Begins to flag, to her last shifts reduced.
From brake to brake she flies, and visits all*

260

*Her well-known haunts, where once she ranged secure,
With love and plenty bless'd. See! there she goes,
She reels along, and by her gait betrays
Her inward weakness. See, how black she looks!
The sweat that clogs the obstructed pores, scarce leaves
A languid scent. And now in open view
See, see, she flies! each eager hound exerts
His utmost speed, and stretches every nerve.
How quick she turns! their gaping jaws eludes,
And yet a moment lives; till round inclosed*

270

*By all the greedy pack, with infant screams
She yields her breath, and there reluctant dies.
So when the furious Bacchanals assailed
Thracian Orpheus, poor ill-fated bard!
Loud was the cry; hills, woods, and Hebrus' banks,
Returned their clamorous rage; distressed he flies,
Shifting from place to place, but flies in vain;
For eager they pursue, till panting, faint,
By noisy multitudes o'erpowered, he sinks,
To the relentless crowd a bleeding prey.*

280

*The huntsman now, a deep incision made,
Shakes out with hands impure, and dashes down
Her reeking entrails, and yet quivering heart.
These claim the pack, the bloody perquisite
For all their toils. Stretched on the ground she lies,
A mangled corse; in her dim glaring eyes
Cold death exults, and stiffens every limb.
Awed by the threatening whip, the furious hounds
Around her bay; or at their master's foot,
Each happy favourite courts his kind applause,*

290

*With humble adulation cowering low.
All now is joy. With cheeks full-blown they wind
Her solemn dirge, while the loud-opening pack
The concert swell, and hills and dales return
The sadly-pleasing sounds. Thus the poor hare,*



*A puny, dastard animal, but versed
In subtle wiles, diverts the youthful train.
But if thy proud, aspiring soul disdains
So mean a prey, delighted with the pomp,
Magnificence and grandeur of the chase;*

300

Hear what the Muse from faithful records sings.
Why on the banks of Gemna, Indian stream,
Line within line, rise the pavilions proud,
Their silken streamers waving in the wind?
Why neighs the warrior horse? from tent to tent,
Why press in crowds the buzzing multitude?
Why shines the polished helm, and pointed lance,
This way and that far-beaming o'er the plain?
Nor Visapour nor Golconda rebel;
Nor the great Sophy, with his numerous host

310

*Lays waste the provinces; nor glory fires
To rob, and to destroy, beneath the name
And specious guise of war. A nobler cause
Calls Aurengzebe[7] to arms. No cities sacked,
No mother's tears, no helpless orphan's*



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cries,

*No violated leagues, with sharp remorse
Shall sting the conscious victor: but mankind
Shall hail him good and just. For 'tis on beasts
He draws his vengeful sword; on beasts of prey
Full-fed with human gore. See, see, he comes!*

320

Imperial Delhi opening wide her gates,
Pours out her thronging legions, bright in arms,
And all the pomp of war. Before them sound
Clarions and trumpets, breathing martial airs,
And bold defiance. High upon his throne,
Borne on the back of his proud elephant,
Sits the great chief of Tamur's glorious race:
Sublime he sits, amid the radiant blaze
Of gems and gold. Omrahs about him crowd,
And rein the Arabian steed, and watch his nod:

330

*And potent Rajahs, who themselves preside
O'er realms of wide extent; but here submit
Their homage pay, alternate kings and slaves.
Next these, with prying eunuchs girt around,
The fair sultanas of his court; a troop
Of chosen beauties, but with care concealed
From each intrusive eye; one look is death.
A cruel Eastern law! (had kings a power
But equal to their wild tyrannic will)
To rob us of the sun's all-cheering ray,*

340

Were less severe. The vulgar close the march,
Slaves and artificers; and Delhi mourns
Her empty and depopulated streets.
Now at the camp arrived, with stern review,
Through groves of spears, from file to file he darts
His sharp experienced eye; their order marks,
Each in his station ranged, exact and firm,
Till in the boundless line his sight is lost.
Not greater multitudes in arms appeared,
On these extended plains, when Ammon's[8] son

350

*With mighty Porus in dread battle joined,
The vassal world the prize. Nor was that host
More numerous of old, which the great king*



*Poured out on Greece from all the unpeopled East;
That bridged the Hellespont from shore to shore,
And drank the rivers dry. Meanwhile in troops
The busy hunter-train mark out the ground,
A wide circumference; full many a league
In compass round; woods, rivers, hills, and plains,
Large provinces; enough to gratify*

360

*Ambition's highest aim, could reason bound
Man's erring will. Now sit in close divan
The mighty chiefs of this prodigious host.
He from the throne high-eminent presides,
Gives out his mandates proud, laws of the chase,
From ancient records drawn. With reverence low,
And prostrate at his feet, the chiefs receive
His irreversible decrees, from which
To vary is to die. Then his brave bands
Each to his station leads; encamping round,*

370

*Till the wide circle is completely formed;
Where decent order reigns, what these command,
Those execute with speed, and punctual care;
In all the strictest discipline of war:*



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*As if some watchful foe, with bold insult
Hung lowering o'er their camp. The high resolve,
That flies on wings, through all the encircling line,
Each motion steers, and animates the whole.
So by the sun's attractive power controlled,
The planets in their spheres roll round his orb,*
380

On all he shines, and rules the great machine.
Ere yet the morn dispels the fleeting mists,
The signal given by the loud trumpet's voice,
Now high in air the imperial standard waves,
Emblazoned rich with gold, and glittering gems;
And like a sheet of fire, through the dun gloom
Streaming meteorous. The soldiers' shouts,
And all the brazen instruments of war,
With mutual clamor, and united din,
Fill the large concave. While from camp to camp,
390

*They catch the varied sounds, floating in air,
Round all the wide circumference, tigers fell
Shrink at the noise; deep in his gloomy den
The lion starts, and morsels yet unchewed
Drop from his trembling jaws. Now all at once
Onward they march embattled, to the sound
Of martial harmony; fifes, cornets, drums,
That rouse the sleepy soul to arms, and bold
Heroic deeds. In parties here and there
Detached o'er hill and dale, the hunters range*
400

Inquisitive; strong dogs that match in fight
The boldest brute, around their masters wait,
A faithful guard. No haunt unsearched, they drive
From every covert, and from every den,
The lurking savages. Incessant shouts
Re-echo through the woods, and kindling fires
Gleam from the mountain tops; the forest seems
One mingling blaze: like flocks of sheep they fly
Before the flaming brand: fierce lions, pards,
Boars, tigers, bears, and wolves; a dreadful crew
410

Of grim blood-thirsty foes: growling along,



*They stalk indignant; but fierce vengeance still
Hangs pealing on their rear, and pointed spears
Present immediate death. Soon as the night
Wrapt in her sable veil forbids the chase,
They pitch their tents, in even ranks around
The circling camp. The guards are placed, and fires
At proper distances ascending rise,
And paint the horizon with their ruddy light.
So round some island's shore of large extent,*

420

*Amid the gloomy horrors of the night,
The billows breaking on the pointed rocks,
Seem all one flame, and the bright circuit wide
Appears a bulwark of surrounding fire.
What dreadful bowlings, and what hideous roar,
Disturb those peaceful shades where erst the bird
That glads the night, had cheered the listening groves
With sweet complainings! Through the silent gloom
Oft they the guards assail; as oft repelled
They fly reluctant, with hot-boiling rage*

430

Stung to the quick, and mad with wild



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despair.

*Thus day by day, they still the chase renew;
At night encamp; till now in straiter bounds
The circle lessens, and the beasts perceive
The wall that hems them in on every side.
And now their fury bursts, and knows no mean;
From man they turn, and point their ill-judged rage
Against their fellow brutes. With teeth and claws
The civil war begins; grappling they tear.
Lions on tigers prey, and bears on wolves:*

440

*Horrible discord! till the crowd behind
Shouting pursue, and part the bloody fray.
At once their wrath subsides; tame as the lamb
The lion hangs his head, the furious pard,
Cowed and subdued, flies from the face of man,
Nor bears one glance of his commanding eye.
So abject is a tyrant in distress!*

*At last within the narrow plain confined,
A listed field, marked out for bloody deeds,
An amphitheatre more glorious far*

450

*Than ancient Rome could boast, they crowd in heaps,
Dismayed, and quite appalled. In meet array
Sheathed in refulgent arms, a noble band
Advance; great lords of high imperial blood,
Early resolved to assert their royal race,
And prove by glorious deeds their valour's growth
Mature, ere yet the callow down has spread
Its curling shade. On bold Arabian steeds
With decent pride they sit, that fearless hear
The lion's dreadful roar; and down the rock*

460

*Swift-shooting plunge, or o'er the mountain's ridge
Stretching along, the greedy tiger leave
Panting behind. On foot their faithful slaves
With javelins armed attend; each watchful eye
Fixed on his youthful care, for him alone
He fears, and to redeem his life, unmoved
Would lose his own. The mighty Aurengzebe,
From his high-elevated throne, beholds
His blooming race; revolving in his mind
What once he was, in his gay spring of life,*



470

*When vigour strung his nerves. Parental joy
Melts in his eyes, and flushes in his cheeks.
Now the loud trumpet sounds a charge. The shouts
Of eager hosts, through all the circling line,
And the wild bowlings of the beasts within
Rend wide the welkin, flights of arrows, winged
With death, and javelins launched from every arm,
Gall sore the brutal bands, with many a wound
Gored through and through. Despair at last prevails,
When fainting nature shrinks, and rouses all*

480

*Their drooping courage. Swelled with furious rage,
Their eyes dart fire; and on the youthful band
They rush implacable. They their broad shields
Quick interpose; on each devoted head
Their flaming falchions, as the bolts of Jove,
Descend unerring. Prostrate on the ground
The grinning monsters lie, and their foul gore
Defiles the verdant plain. Nor idle stand
The trusty slaves; with pointed spears*



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they pierce

Through their tough hides; or at their gaping mouths
490

*An easier passage find. The king of brutes
In broken roarings breathes his last; the bear
Grumbles in death; nor can his spotted skin,
Though sleek it shine, with varied beauties gay,
Save the proud pard from unrelenting fate.
The battle bleeds, grim Slaughter strides along,
Glutting her greedy jaws, grins o'er her prey.
Men, horses, dogs, fierce beasts of every kind,
A strange promiscuous carnage, drenched in blood,
And heaps on heaps amassed. What yet remain*

500

Alive, with vain assault contend to break
The impenetrable line. Others, whom fear
Inspires with self-preserving wiles, beneath
The bodies of the slain for shelter creep.
Aghast they fly, or hide their heads dispersed.
And now perchance (had Heaven but pleased) the work
Of death had been complete; and Aurengzebe
By one dread frown extinguished half their race.
When lo! the bright sultanas of his court
Appear, and to his ravished eyes display

510

*Those charms, but rarely to the day revealed.
Lowly they bend, and humbly sue, to save
The vanquished host. What mortal can deny
When suppliant beauty begs? At his command
Opening to right and left, the well-trained troops
Leave a large void for their retreating foes.
Away they fly, on wings of fear upborne,
To seek on distant hills their late abodes.*

*Ye proud oppressors, whose vain hearts exult
In wantonness of power, 'gainst the brute race,*

520

Fierce robbers like yourselves, a guiltless war
Wage uncontrolled: here quench your thirst of blood:
But learn from Aurengzebe to spare mankind.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Of King Edgar and his imposing a tribute of wolves' heads upon the kings of Wales: from hence a transition to fox-hunting, which is described in all its parts.—Censure of an over-numerous pack.—Of the several engines to destroy foxes, and other wild beasts.—The steel-trap described, and the manner of using it.—Description of the pitfall for the lion; and another for the elephant.—The ancient way of hunting the tiger with a mirror.—The Arabian manner of hunting the wild boar.—Description of the royal stag-chase at Windsor Forest.—Concludes with an address to his Majesty, and an eulogy upon mercy.

In Albion's isle when glorious Edgar reigned,
He wisely provident, from her white cliffs
Launched half her forests, and with numerous fleets
Covered his wide domain: there proudly rode
Lord of the deep, the great prerogative
Of British monarchs. Each invader bold,
Dane and Norwegian, at a distance gazed,
And disappointed, gnashed his teeth in vain.
He scoured the seas, and to remotest shores

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With swelling sails the trembling corsair fled.

10

*Rich commerce flourished; and with busy oars
Dashed the resounding surge. Nor less at land
His royal cares; wise, potent, gracious prince!
His subjects from their cruel foes he saved,
And from rapacious savages their flocks.
Cambria's proud kings (though with reluctance) paid
Their tributary wolves; head after head,
In full account, till the woods yield no more,
And all the ravenous race extinct is lost.
In fertile pastures, more securely grazed*

20

The social troops; and soon their large increase
With curling fleeces whitened all the plains.
But yet, alas! the wily fox remained,
A subtle, pilfering foe, prowling around
In midnight shades, and wakeful to destroy.
In the full fold, the poor defenceless lamb,
Seized by his guileful arts, with sweet warm blood
Supplies a rich repast. The mournful ewe,
Her dearest treasure lost, through the dun night
Wanders perplexed, and darkling bleats in vain:

30

*While in the adjacent bush, poor Philomel,
(Herself a parent once, till wanton churls
Despoiled her nest) joins in her loud laments,
With sweeter notes, and more melodious woe.
For these nocturnal thieves, huntsman, prepare
Thy sharpest vengeance. Oh! how glorious 'tis
To right the oppressed, and bring the felon vile
To just disgrace! Ere yet the morning peep,
Or stars retire from the first blush of day,
With thy far-echoing voice alarm thy pack,*

40

And rouse thy bold compeers. Then to the copse,
Thick with entangling grass, or prickly furze,
With silence lead thy many-coloured hounds,
In all their beauty's pride. See! how they range
Dispersed, how busily this way and that,



They cross, examining with curious nose
Each likely haunt. Hark! on the drag I hear
Their doubtful notes, preluding to a cry
More nobly full, and swelled with every mouth.
As straggling armies at the trumpet's voice,
50

*Press to their standard; hither all repair,
And hurry through the woods; with hasty step
Bustling, and full of hope; now driven on heaps
They push, they strive; while from his kennel sneaks
The conscious villain. See! he skulks along,
Sleek at the shepherd's cost, and plump with meals
Purloined. So thrive the wicked here below.
Though high his brush he bear, though tipped with white
It gaily shine; yet ere the sun declined
Recall the shades of night, the pampered rogue*

60

Shall rue his fate reversed; and at his heels
Behold the just avenger, swift to seize
His forfeit head, and thirsting for his blood.

Heavens! what melodious strains! how beat our hearts
Big with tumultuous joy! the loaded gales
Breathe harmony; and as the tempest drives



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From wood to wood, through every dark recess
The forest thunders, and the mountains shake.
The chorus swells; less various, and less sweet
The trilling notes, when in those very groves,

70

*The feathered choristers salute the spring,
And every bush in concert joins; or when
The master's hand, in modulated air,
Bids the loud organ breathe, and all the powers
Of music in one instrument combine,
An universal minstrelsy. And now
In vain each earth he tries, the doors are barred
Impregnable, nor is the covert safe;
He pants for purer air. Hark! what loud shouts
Re-echo through the groves! he breaks away,*

80

Shrill horns proclaim his flight. Each straggling hound
Strains o'er the lawn to reach the distant pack.
'Tis triumph all and joy. Now, my brave youths,
Now give a loose to the clean generous steed;
Flourish the whip, nor spare the galling spur;
But in the madness of delight, forget
Your fears. Far o'er the rocky hills we range,
And dangerous our course; but in the brave
True courage never fails. In vain the stream
In foaming eddies whirls; in vain the ditch

90

*Wide-gaping threatens death. The craggy steep
Where the poor dizzy shepherd crawls with care,
And clings to every twig, gives us no pain;
But down we sweep, as stoops the falcon bold
To pounce his prey. Then up the opponent hill,
By the swift motion slung, we mount aloft:
So ships in winter-seas now sliding sink
Adown the steepy wave, then tossed on high
Ride on the billows, and defy the storm.*

What lengths we pass! where will the wandering chase

100

Lead us bewildered! smooth as the swallows skim
The new-shorn mead, and far more swift we fly.



See my brave pack! how to the head they press,
Jostling in close array; then more diffuse
Obliquely wheel, while from their opening mouths
The vollied thunder breaks. So when the cranes
Their annual voyage steer, with wanton wing
Their figure oft they change, and their loud clang
From cloud to cloud rebounds. How far behind
The hunter-crew, wide straggling o'er the plain!

110

*The panting courser now with trembling nerves
Begins to reel; urged by the goring spur,
Makes many a faint effort: he snorts, he foams,
The big round drops run trickling down his sides,
With sweat and blood distained. Look back and view
The strange confusion of the vale below,
Where sour vexation reigns; see yon poor jade,
In vain the impatient rider frets and swears,
With galling spurs harrows his mangled sides;
He can no more: his stiff unpliant limbs*

120

Rooted in earth, unmoved and fixed he stands,
For every cruel curse returns a groan,
And sobs, and faints, and dies. Who without grief

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Can view that pampered steed, his master's joy,
His minion, and his daily care, well clothed,
Well fed with every nicer cate; no cost,
No labour spared; who, when the flying chase
Broke from the copse, without a rival led
The numerous train: now a sad spectacle
Of pride brought low, and humbled insolence,

130

*Drove like a panniered ass, and scourged along.
While these with loosened reins, and dangling heels,
Hang on their reeling palfreys, that scarce bear
Their weights; another in the treacherous bog
Lies floundering half engulfed. What biting thoughts
Torment the abandoned crew! Old age laments
His vigour spent: the tall, plump, brawny youth
Curses his cumbrous bulk; and envies now
The short Pygmean race, he whilom kenn'd
With proud insulting leer. A chosen few*

140

Alone the sport enjoy, nor droop beneath
Their pleasing toils. Here, huntsman, from this height
Observe yon birds of prey; if I can judge,
'Tis there the villain lurks; they hover round
And claim him as their own. Was I not right?
See! there he creeps along; his brush he drags,
And sweeps the mire impure; from his wide jaws
His tongue unmoistened hangs; symptoms too sure
Of sudden death. Ha! yet he flies, nor yields
To black despair. But one loose more, and all

150

*His wiles are vain. Hark! through yon village now
The rattling clamour rings. The barns, the cots
And leafless elms return the joyous sounds.
Through every homestall, and through every yard,
His midnight walks, panting, forlorn, he flies;
Through every hole he sneaks, through every jakes
Plunging he wades besmeared, and fondly hopes
In a superior stench to lose his own:
But faithful to the track, the unerring hounds
With peals of echoing vengeance close pursue.*



160

And now distressed, no sheltering covert near,
Into the hen-roost creeps, whose walls with gore
Distained attest his guilt. There, villain, there
Expect thy fate deserved. And soon from thence
The pack inquisitive, with clamour loud,
Drag out their trembling prize; and on his blood
With greedy transport feast. In bolder notes
Each sounding horn proclaims the felon dead:
And all the assembled village shouts for joy.
The farmer who beholds his mortal foe

170

*Stretched at his feet, applauds the glorious deed,
And grateful calls us to a short repast!
In the full glass the liquid amber smiles,
Our native product. And his good old mate
With choicest viands heaps the liberal board,
To crown our triumphs, and reward our toils.
Here must the instructive Muse (but with respect)
Censure that numerous pack, that crowd of state,
With which the vain profusion of the great
Covers the lawn, and shakes the trembling*



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copse.

180

Pompous incumbrance! A magnificence
Useless, vexatious! For the wily fox,
Safe in the increasing number of his foes,
Kens well the great advantage: slinks behind
And sliily creeps through the same beaten track,
And hunts them step by step; then views escaped
With inward ecstasy, the panting throng
In their own footsteps puzzled, foiled and lost.
So when proud Eastern kings summon to arms
Their gaudy legions, from far distant climes

190

*They flock in crowds, unpeopling half a world:
But when the day of battle calls them forth
To charge the well-trained foe, a band compact
Of chosen veterans; they press blindly on,
In heaps confused, by their own weapons fall,
A smoking carnage scattered o'er the plain.*

*Nor hounds alone this noxious brood destroy:
The plundered warrener full many a wile
Devises to entrap his greedy foe,
Fat with nocturnal spoils. At close of day,*

200

With silence drags his trail; then from the ground
Pares thin the close-grazed turf, there with nice hand
Covers the latent death, with curious springs
Prepared to fly at once, whene'er the tread
Of man or beast unwarily shall press
The yielding surface. By the indented steel
With gripe tenacious held, the felon grins,
And struggles, but in vain: yet oft 'tis known,
When every art has failed, the captive fox
Has shared the wounded joint, and with a limb

210

*Compounded for his life. But if perchance
In the deep pitfall plunged, there's no escape;
But unreprieved he dies, and bleached in air
The jest of clowns, his reeking carcase hangs.*

*Of these are various kinds; not even the king
Of brutes evades this deep devouring grave:
But by the wily African betrayed,
Heedless of fate, within its gaping jaws*



*Expires indignant. When the orient beam
With blushes paints the dawn; and all the race*

220

Carnivorous, with blood full-gorged, retire
Into their darksome cells, there satiate snore
O'er dripping offals, and the mangled limbs
Of men and beasts; the painful forester 224
Climbs the high hills, whose proud aspiring tops,
With the tall cedar crowned, and taper fir,
Assail the clouds. There 'mong the craggy rocks,
And thickets intricate, trembling he views
His footsteps in the sand; the dismal road
And avenue to death. Hither he calls

230

*His watchful bands; and low into the ground
A pit they sink, full many a fathom deep.
Then in the midst a column high is reared,
The butt of some fair tree; upon whose top
A lamb is placed, just ravished from his dam.
And next a wall they build, with stones and earth
Encircling round, and hiding from all view
The dreadful precipice. Now when*



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the shades

*Of night hang lowering o'er the mountain's brow;
And hunger keen, and pungent thirst of blood,*

240

Rouse up the slothful beast, he shakes his sides,
Slow-rising from his lair, and stretches wide
His ravenous jaws, with recent gore distained.
The forests tremble, as he roars aloud,
Impatient to destroy. O'erjoyed he hears
The bleating innocent, that claims in vain
The shepherd's care, and seeks with piteous moan
The foodful teat; himself, alas! designed
Another's meal. For now the greedy brute
Winds him from far; and leaping o'er the mound

250

*To seize his trembling prey, headlong is plunged
Into the deep abyss. Prostrate he lies
Astunned and impotent. Ah! what avail
Thine eye-balls flashing fire, thy length of tail,
That lashes thy broad sides, thy jaws besmeared
With blood and offals crude, thy shaggy mane
The terror of the woods, thy stately port,
And bulk enormous, since by stratagem
Thy strength is foiled? Unequal is the strife,
When sovereign reason combats brutal rage.*

260

On distant Ethiopia's sun-burnt coasts,
The black inhabitants a pitfall frame,
But of a different kind, and different use.
With slender poles the wide capacious mouth,
And hurdles slight, they close; o'er these is spread
A floor of verdant turf, with all its flowers
Smiling delusive, and from strictest search
Concealing the deep grave that yawns below.
Then boughs of trees they cut, with tempting fruit
Of various kinds surcharged; the downy peach,

270

*The clustering vine, and of bright golden rind
The fragrant orange. Soon as evening gray
Advances slow, besprinkling all around
With kind refreshing dews the thirsty glebe,
The stately elephant from the close shade
With step majestic strides, eager to taste*



*The cooler breeze, that from the sea-beat shore
Delightful breathes, or in the limpid stream
To lave his panting sides; joyous he scents
The rich repast, unweeting of the death*

280

That lurks within. And soon he sporting breaks
The brittle boughs, and greedily devours
The fruit delicious. Ah! too dearly bought;
The price is life. For now the treacherous turf
Trembling gives way; and the unwieldy beast
Self-sinking, drops into the dark profound.
So when dilated vapours, struggling heave
The incumbent earth; if chance the caverned ground
Shrinking subside, and the thin surface yield,
Down sinks at once the ponderous dome, engulfed

290

*With all its towers. Subtle, delusive man!
How various are thy wiles! artful to kill
Thy savage foes, a dull unthinking race!
Fierce from his lair, springs forth the speckled pard,
Thirsting for blood, and eager to destroy;
The huntsman flies, but to his flight*



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alone

*Confides not: at convenient distance fixed,
A polished mirror stops in full career
The furious brute: he there his image views;
Spots against spots with rage improving glow;*

300

*Another pard his bristly whiskers curls,
Grins as he grins, fierce-menacing, and wide
Distends his opening jaws; himself against
Himself opposed, and with dread vengeance armed.
The huntsman now secure, with fatal aim
Directs the pointed spear, by which transfixed
He dies, and with him dies the rival shade.
Thus man innumerable engines forms, to assail
The savage kind: but most the docile horse,
Swift and confederate with man, annoys*

310

*His brethren of the plains; without whose aid
The hunter's arts are vain, unskilled to wage
With the more active brutes an equal war.
But borne by him, without the well-trained pack,
Man dares his foe, on wings of wind secure.
Him the fierce Arab mounts, and with his troop
Of bold compeers, ranges the deserts wild,
Where by the magnet's aid, the traveller
Steers his untrodden course; yet oft on land
Is wrecked, in the high-rolling waves of sand*

320

*Immersed and lost; while these intrepid bands,
Safe in their horses' speed, out-fly the storm,
And scouring round, make men and beasts their prey.
The grisly boar is singled from his herd
As large as that in Erimanthian woods.
A match for Hercules. Round him they fly
In circles wide; and each in passing sends
His feathered death into his brawny sides.
But perilous the attempt. For if the steed
Haply too near approach; or the loose earth*

330

*His footing fail; the watchful angry beast
The advantage spies; and at one sidelong glance
Rips up his groin. Wounded, he rears aloft,
And plunging, from his back the rider hurls*



*Precipitant; then bleeding spurns the ground,
And drags his reeking entrails o'er the plain.
Meanwhile the surly monster trots along,
But with unequal speed; for still they wound,
Swift-wheeling in the spacious ring. A wood
Of darts upon his back he bears; adown*

340

*His tortured sides, the crimson torrents roll
From many a gaping font. And now at last
Staggering he falls, in blood and foam expires.*

*But whither roves my devious Muse, intent
On antique tales, while yet the royal stag
Unsung remains? Tread with respectful awe
Windsor's green glades; where Denham, tuneful bard,
Charmed once the listening dryads, with his song
Sublimely sweet. Oh! grant me, sacred shade,
To glean submiss what thy full sickle leaves.*

350

*The morning sun that gilds with trembling rays
Windsor's high towers, beholds the courtly train
Mount for the chase, nor views in all his course
A scene so gay: heroic, noble youths,*

Page 203

*In arts and arms renowned, and lovely nymphs
The fairest of this isle, where Beauty dwells
Delighted, and deserts her Paphian grove
For our more favoured shades: in proud parade
These shine magnificent, and press around
The royal happy pair. Great in themselves,*
360

They smile superior; of external show
Regardless, while their inbred virtues give
A lustre to their power, and grace their court
With real splendours, far above the pomp
Of eastern kings, in all their tinsel pride.
Like troops of Amazons, the female band
Prance round their cars, not in refulgent arms
As those of old; unskilled to wield the sword,
Or bend the bow, these kill with surer aim.
The royal offspring, fairest of the fair,
370

*Lead on the splendid train. Anna, more bright
Than summer suns, or as the lightning keen,
With irresistible effulgence armed,
Fires every heart. He must be more than man,
Who unconcerned can bear the piercing ray.
Amelia, milder than the blushing dawn,
With sweet engaging air, but equal power,
Insensibly subdues, and in soft chains
Her willing captives leads. Illustrious maids,
Ever triumphant! whose victorious charms,*
380

Without the needless aid of high descent,
Had awed mankind, and taught the world's great lords
To bow and sue for grace. But who is he
Fresh as a rose-bud newly blown, and fair
As opening lilies; on whom every eye
With joy and admiration dwells? See, see,
He reins his docile barb with manly grace.
Is it Adonis for the chase arrayed?
Or Britain's second hope? Hail, blooming youth![9]
May all your virtues with your years improve,
390

Till in consummate worth, you shine the pride



*Of these our days, and to succeeding times
A bright example. As his guard of mutes
On the great sultan wait, with eyes deject
And fixed on earth, no voice, no sound is heard
Within the wide serail, but all is hushed,
And awful silence reigns; thus stand the pack
Mute and unmoved, and cowering low to earth,
While pass the glittering court, and royal pair:
So disciplined those hounds, and so reserved,*
400

Whose honour 'tis to glad the hearts of kings.
But soon the winding horn, and huntsman's voice,
Let loose the general chorus; far around
Joy spreads its wings, and the gay morning smiles.
Unharboured now the royal stag forsakes
His wonted lair; he shakes his dappled sides,
And tosses high his beamy head, the copse
Beneath his antlers bends. What doubling shifts
He tries! not more the wily hare; in these
Would still persist, did not the full-mouthed pack
410

*With dreadful concert thunder in his rear.
The woods reply, the hunter's cheering shouts
Float through the glades, and the wide*



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forest rings.

*How merrily they chant! their nostrils deep
Inhale the grateful steam. Such is the cry,
And such the harmonious din, the soldier deems
The battle kindling, and the statesman grave
Forgets his weighty cares; each age, each sex
In the wild transport joins; luxuriant joy,
And pleasure in excess, sparkling exult*

420

*On every brow, and revel unrestrained.
How happy art thou, man, when thou 'rt no more
Thyself! when all the pangs that grind thy soul,
In rapture and in sweet oblivion lost,
Yield a short interval, and ease from pain!*

*See the swift courser strains, his shining hoofs
Securely beat the solid ground. Who now
The dangerous pitfall fears, with tangling heath
High-overgrown? Or who the quivering bog
Soft yielding to the step? All now is plain,*

430

*Plain as the strand sea-laved, that stretches far
Beneath the rocky shore. Glades crossing glades
The forest opens to our wondering view:
Such was the king's command. Let tyrants fierce
Lay waste the world; his the more glorious part
To check their pride; and when the brazen voice
Of war is hushed (as erst victorious Rome)
To employ his stationed legions in the works
Of peace; to smoothe the rugged wilderness,
To drain the stagnate fen, to raise the slope*

440

*Depending road, and to make gay the face
Of nature, with the embellishments of art.*

*How melts my beating heart! as I behold
Each lovely nymph our island's boast and pride,
Push on the generous steed, that strokes along
O'er rough, o'er smooth, nor heeds the steepy hill,
Nor falters in the extended vale below:*

*Their garments loosely waving in the wind,
And all the flush of beauty in their cheeks!
While at their sides their pensive lovers wait,*

450

Direct their dubious course; now chilled with fear



*Sollicitous, and now with love inflamed.
Oh! grant, indulgent Heaven, no rising storm
May darken with black wings, this glorious scene!
Should some malignant power thus damp our joys,
Vain were the gloomy cave, such as of old
Betrayed to lawless love the Tyrian queen.
For Britain's virtuous nymphs are chaste as fair,
Spotless, unblamed, with equal triumph reign
In the dun gloom, as in the blaze of day.*

460

Now the blown stag, through woods, bogs, roads, and streams
Has measured half the forest; but alas!
He flies in vain, he flies not from his fears.
Though far he cast the lingering pack behind,
His haggard fancy still with horror views
The fell destroyer; still the fatal cry
Insults his ears, and wounds his trembling heart.
So the poor fury-haunted wretch (his hands
In guiltless blood distained) still seems to hear



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The dying shrieks; and the pale threatening ghost
470

*Moves as he moves, and as he flies pursues.
See here his slot; up yon green hill he climbs,
Pants on its brow a while, sadly looks back
On his pursuers, covering all the plain;
But wrung with anguish, bears not long the sight,
Shoots down the steep, and sweats along the vale:
There mingles with the herd, where once he reigned
Proud monarch of the groves, whose clashing beam*

His rivals awed, and whose exalted power
Was still rewarded with successful love.
480

*But the base herd have learned the ways of men,
Averse they fly, or with rebellious aim
Chase him from thence: needless their impious deed,
The huntsman knows him by a thousand marks,
Black, and embossed; nor are his hounds deceived;
Too well distinguish these, and never leave
Their once devoted foe; familiar grows
His scent, and strong their appetite to kill.
Again he flies, and with redoubled speed
Skims o'er the lawn; still the tenacious crew*

490
Hang on the track, aloud demand their prey,
And push him many a league. If haply then
Too far escaped, and the gay courtly train
Behind are cast, the huntsman's clanging whip
Stops full their bold career; passive they stand,
Unmoved, an humble, an obsequious crowd,
As if by stern Medusa gazed to stones.
So at their general's voice whole armies halt
In full pursuit, and check their thirst of blood.
Soon at the king's command, like hasty streams

500
*Dammed up a while, they foam, and pour along
With fresh-recruited might. The stag, who hoped
His foes were lost, now once more hears astunned
The dreadful din; he shivers every limb,
He starts, he bounds; each bush presents a foe.
Pressed by the fresh relay, no pause allowed,
Breathless, and faint, he falters in his pace,*



*And lifts his weary limbs with pain, that scarce
Sustain their load! he pants, he sobs appalled;
Drops down his heavy head to earth, beneath*

510

His cumbrous beams oppressed. But if perchance
Some prying eye surprise him; soon he rears
Erect his towering front, bounds o'er the lawn
With ill-dissembled vigour, to amuse
The knowing forester; who inly smiles

At his weak shifts, and unavailing frauds.
So midnight tapers waste their last remains,
Shine forth a while, and as they blaze expire.
From wood to wood redoubling thunders roll,
And bellow through the vales; the moving storm

520

*Thickens amain, and loud triumphant shouts,
And horns shrill-warbling in each glade, prelude
To his approaching fate. And now in view
With hobbling gait, and high, exerts amazed
What strength is left: to the last dregs of life
Reduced, his spirits fail, on every side*



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*Hemmed in, besieged; not the least opening left
To gleaming hope, the unhappy's last reserve.
Where shall he turn? or whither fly? Despair
Gives courage to the weak. Resolved to die,*

530

He fears no more, but rushes on his foes,
And deals his deaths around; beneath his feet
These grovelling lie, those by his antlers gored
Defile the ensanguined plain. Ah! see distressed
He stands at bay against yon knotty trunk,
That covers well his rear, his front presents
An host of foes. Oh! shun, ye noble train,
The rude encounter, and believe your lives
Your country's due alone. As now aloof
They wing around, he finds his soul upraised

540

*To dare some great exploit; he charges home
Upon the broken pack, that on each side
Fly diverse; then as o'er the turf he strains,
He vents the cooling stream, and up the breeze
Urges his course with eager violence:
Then takes the soil, and plunges in the flood
Precipitant; down the mid-stream he wafts
Along, till (like a ship distressed, that runs
Into some winding creek) close to the verge
Of a small island, for his weary feet*

550

Sure anchorage he finds, there skulks immersed.
His nose alone above the wave draws in
The vital air; all else beneath the flood
Concealed, and lost, deceives each prying eye
Of man or brute. In vain the crowding pack
Draw on the margin of the stream, or cut
The liquid wave with oary feet, that move
In equal time. The gliding waters leave
No trace behind, and his contracted pores
But sparingly perspire: the huntsman strains

560

*His labouring lungs, and puffs his cheeks in vain;
At length a blood-hound bold, studious to kill,
And exquisite of sense, winds him from far;*



*Headlong he leaps into the flood, his mouth
Loud opening spends amain, and his wide throat
Swells every note with joy; then fearless dives
Beneath the wave, hangs on his haunch, and wounds
The unhappy brute, that flounders in the stream,
Sorely distressed, and struggling strives to mount
The steepy shore. Haply once more escaped,*

570

Again he stands at bay, amid the groves
Of willows, bending low their downy heads.
Outrageous transport fires the greedy pack;
These swim the deep, and those crawl up with pain
The slippery bank, while others on firm land
Engage; the stag repels each bold assault,
Maintains his post, and wounds for wounds returns.
As when some wily corsair boards a ship
Full-freighted, or from Afric's golden coasts,
Or India's wealthy strand, his bloody crew

580

*Upon her deck he slings; these in the deep
Drop short, and swim to reach her steepy sides,
And clinging, climb aloft; while those on board
Urge on the work of fate; the master bold,*

Page 207

*Pressed to his last retreat, bravely resolves
To sink his wealth beneath the whelming wave,
His wealth, his foes, nor unrevenged to die.
So fares it with the stag: so he resolves
To plunge at once into the flood below,
Himself, his foes in one deep gulf immersed.*

590

Ere yet he executes this dire intent,
In wild disorder once more views the light;
Beneath a weight of woe, he groans distressed:
The tears run trickling down his hairy cheeks;
He weeps, nor weeps in vain. The king beholds
His wretched plight, and tenderness innate
Moves his great soul. Soon at his high command
Rebuked, the disappointed, hungry pack
Retire submiss, and grumbling quit their prey.
Great Prince! from thee, what may thy subjects hope;

600

*So kind, and so beneficent to brutes?
O mercy, heavenly born! Sweet attribute!
Thou great, thou best prerogative of power!
Justice may guard the throne, but joined with thee,
On rocks of adamant it stands secure,
And braves the storm beneath; soon as thy smiles
Gild the rough deep, the foaming waves subside,
And all the noisy tumult sinks in peace.*

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Of the necessity of destroying some beasts, and preserving others for the use of man.—Of breeding of hounds; the season for this business.—The choice of the dog, of great moment.—Of the litter of whelps.—Number to be reared.—Of setting them out to their several walks.—Care to be taken to prevent their hunting too soon.—Of entering the whelps.—Of breaking them from running at sheep.—Of the diseases of hounds.—Of their age.—Of madness; two sorts of it described, the dumb, and outrageous madness: its dreadful effects.—Burning of the wound recommended as preventing all ill consequences.—The infectious hounds to be separated, and fed apart.—The vanity of trusting to the many infallible cures for this malady.—The dismal effects of the biting of a mad dog, upon man, described. —Description of the otter hunting.—The conclusion.



Whate'er of earth is formed, to earth returns
Dissolved: the various objects we behold,
Plants, animals, this whole material mass,
Are ever changing, ever new. The soul
Of man alone, that particle divine,
Escapes the wreck of worlds, when all things fail.
Hence great the distance 'twixt the beasts that perish,
And God's bright image, man's immortal race.
The brute creation are his property,
Subservient to his will, and for him made.

10

*As hurtful these he kills, as useful those
Preserves; their sole and arbitrary king.
Should he not kill, as erst the Samian sage
Taught unadvised, and Indian Brahmins now
As vainly preach; the teeming ravenous brutes
Might fill the scanty space of this terrene,*

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*Encumbering all the globe: should not his care
Improve his growing stock, their kinds might fail,
Man might once more on roots, and acorns, feed,
And through the deserts range, shivering, forlorn,*
20

Quite destitute of every solace dear,
And every smiling gaiety of life.

The prudent huntsman, therefore, will supply,
With annual large recruits, his broken pack,
And propagate their kind. As from the root
Fresh scions still spring forth, and daily yield
New blooming honours to the parent-tree;
Far shall his pack be famed, far sought his breed,
And princes at their tables feast those hounds
His hand presents, an acceptable boon.

30
*Ere yet the Sun through the bright Ram has urged
His steepy course, or mother Earth unbound
Her frozen bosom to the western gale;
When feathered troops, their social leagues dissolved,
Select their mates, and on the leafless elm
The noisy rook builds high her wicker nest;
Mark well the wanton females of thy pack,
That curl their taper tails, and frisking court
Their pyebald mates enamoured; their red eyes
Flash fires impure; nor rest, nor food they take,*

40
Goaded by furious love. In separate cells
Confine them now, lest bloody civil wars
Annoy thy peaceful state. If left at large,
The growling rivals in dread battle join,
And rude encounter. On Scamander's streams
Heroes of old with far less fury fought,
For the bright Spartan dame, their valour's prize.
Mangled and torn thy favourite hounds shall lie,
Stretched on the ground; thy kennel shall appear
A field of blood: like some unhappy town

50
*In civil broils confused, while Discord shakes
Her bloody scourge aloft, fierce parties rage,
Staining their impious hands in mutual death.*



*And still the best beloved, and bravest fall:
Such are the dire effects of lawless love.*

*Huntsman! these ills by timely prudent care
Prevent: for every longing dame select
Some happy paramour; to him alone
In leagues connubial join. Consider well
His lineage; what his fathers did of old,*

60

Chiefs of the pack, and first to climb the rock,
Or plunge into the deep, or thread the brake
With thorns sharp-pointed, plashed, and briers inwoven.
Observe with care his shape, sort, colour, size.
Nor will sagacious huntsmen less regard
His inward habits: the vain babbler shun,
Ever loquacious, ever in the wrong.
His foolish offspring shall offend thy ears
With false alarms, and loud impertinence.
Nor less the shifting cur avoid, that breaks

70

*Illusive from the pack; to the next hedge
Devious he strays, there every mews he tries:
If haply then he cross the steaming scent,
Away he flies vain-glorious; and exults*



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*As of the pack supreme, and in his speed
And strength unrivalled. Lo! cast far behind
His vexed associates pant, and labouring strain
To climb the steep ascent. Soon as they reach
The insulting boaster, his false courage fails,
Behind he lags, doomed to the fatal noose,*

80

His master's hate, and scorn of all the field.
What can from such be hoped, but a base brood
Of coward curs, a frantic, vagrant race?

When now the third revolving moon appears,
With sharpened horns, above the horizon's brink;
Without Lucina's aid, expect thy hopes
Are amply crowned; short pangs produce to light
The smoking litter; crawling, helpless, blind,
Nature their guide, they seek the pouting teat
That plenteous streams. Soon as the tender dam

90

*Has formed them with her tongue, with pleasure view
The marks of their renowned progenitors,
Sure pledge of triumphs yet to come. All these
Select with joy; but to the merciless flood
Expose the dwindling refuse, nor o'erload
The indulgent mother. If thy heart relent,
Unwilling to destroy, a nurse provide,
And to the foster-parent give the care
Of thy superfluous brood; she'll cherish kind
The alien offspring; pleased thou shalt behold*

100

Her tenderness, and hospitable love.

If frolic now, and playful they desert
Their gloomy cell, and on the verdant turf
With nerves improved, pursue the mimic chase,
Coursing around; unto thy choicest friends
Commit thy valued prize: the rustic dames
Shall at thy kennel wait, and in their laps
Receive thy growing hopes, with many a kiss
Caress, and dignify their little charge
With some great title, and resounding name

110

Of high import. But cautious here observe



*To check their youthful ardour, nor permit
The unexperienced youngster, immature,
Alone to range the woods, or haunt the brakes
Where dodging conies sport: his nerves unstrung,
And strength unequal; the laborious chase
Shall stint his growth, and his rash forward youth
Contract such vicious habits, as thy care
And late correction never shall reclaim.*

When to full strength arrived, mature and bold,

120

Conduct them to the field; not all at once
But as thy cooler prudence shall direct,
Select a few, and form them by degrees
To stricter discipline. With these consort
The stanch and steady sages of thy pack,
By long experience versed in all the wiles,
And subtle doublings of the various chase.
Easy the lesson of the youthful train,
When instinct prompts, and when example guides.
If the too forward youngster at the head

130

*Press boldly on, in wanton sportive mood,
Correct his haste, and let him feel abashed
The ruling whip. But if he stoop*



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behind

*In wary modest guise, to his own nose
Confiding sure; give him full scope to work
His winding way, and with thy voice applaud
His patience, and his care; soon shalt thou view
The hopeful pupil leader of his tribe,
And all the listening pack attend his call.
Oft lead them forth where wanton lambkins play,*

140

*And bleating dams with jealous eyes observe
Their tender care. If at the crowding flock
He bay presumptuous, or with eager haste
Pursue them scattered o'er the verdant plain;
In the foul fact attached, to the strong ram
Tie fast the rash offender. See! at first
His horned companion, fearful, and amazed,
Shall drag him trembling o'er the rugged ground;
Then with his load fatigued, shall turn a-head,
And with his curled hard front incessant peal*

150

*The panting wretch; till breathless and astunned,
Stretched on the turf he lie. Then spare not thou
The twining whip, but ply his bleeding sides
Lash after lash, and with thy threatening voice,
Harsh-echoing from the hills, inculcate loud
His vile offence. Sooner shall trembling doves
Escaped the hawk's sharp talons, in mid air,
Assail their dangerous foe, than he once more
Disturb the peaceful flocks. In tender age
Thus youth is trained; as curious artists bend*

160

*The taper, pliant twig; or potters form
Their soft and ductile clay to various shapes.
Nor is't enough to breed; but to preserve
Must be the huntsman's care. The stanch old hounds
Guides of thy pack, though but in number few,
Are yet of great account; shall oft untie
The Gordian knot, when reason at a stand
Puzzling is lost, and all thy art is vain.
O'er clogging fallows, o'er dry plastered roads,
O'er floated meads, o'er plains with flocks distained*

170

Rank-scenting, these must lead the dubious way.



*As party-chiefs in senates who preside,
With pleaded reason and with well turned speech
Conduct the staring multitude; so these
Direct the pack, who with joint cry approve,
And loudly boast discoveries not their own.*

*Unnumbered accidents, and various ills,
Attend thy pack, hang hovering o'er their heads,
And point the way that leads to Death's dark cave.
Short is their span; few at the date arrive
Of ancient Argus in old Homer's song*

180

So highly honoured: kind, sagacious brute!
Not even Minerva's wisdom could conceal
Thy much-loved master from thy nicer sense.
Dying, his lord he owned, viewed him all o'er
With eager eyes, then closed those eyes, well pleased.

Of lesser ills the Muse declines to sing,
Nor stoops so low; of these each groom can tell
The proper remedy. But oh! what care!
What prudence can prevent madness, the worst

Page 211

Of maladies? Terrific pest! that blasts
190

*The huntsman's hopes, and desolation spreads
Through all the unpeopled kennel unrestrained.
More fatal than the envenomed viper's bite;
Or that Apulian[10] spider's poisonous sting,
Healed by the pleasing antidote of sounds.*

*When Sirius reigns, and the sun's parching beams
Bake the dry gaping surface, visit thou
Each even and morn, with quick observant eye,
Thy panting pack. If in dark sullen mood,
The gloating hound refuse his wonted meal,*
200

Retiring to some close, obscure retreat,
Gloomy, disconsolate: with speed remove
The poor infectious wretch, and in strong chains
Bind him suspected. Thus that dire disease
Which art can't cure, wise caution may prevent.

But this neglected, soon expect a change,
A dismal change, confusion, frenzy, death.
Or in some dark recess the senseless brute
Sits sadly pining: deep melancholy,
And black despair, upon his clouded brow
210

*Hang lowering; from his half-opening jaws
The clammy venom, and infectious froth,
Distilling fall; and from his lungs inflamed,
Malignant vapours taint the ambient air,
Breathing perdition: his dim eyes are glazed,
He droops his pensive head, his trembling limbs
No more support his weight; abject he lies,
Dumb, spiritless, benumbed; till death at last
Gracious attends, and kindly brings relief.*

Or if outrageous grown, behold alas!
220

A yet more dreadful scene; his glaring eye
Redden with fury, like some angry boar
Churning he foams; and on his back erect
His pointed bristles rise; his tail incurved
He drops, and with harsh broken bowlings rends



The poison-tainted air, with rough hoarse voice
Incessant bays; and snuff's the infectious breeze;
This way and that he stares aghast, and starts
At his own shade; jealous, as if he deemed
The world his foes. If haply toward the stream

230

*He cast his roving eye, cold horror chills
His soul; averse he flies, trembling, appalled.
Now frantic to the kennel's utmost verge
Raving he runs, and deals destruction round.
The pack fly diverse; for whate'er he meets
Vengeful he bites, and every bite is death.*

*If now perchance through the weak fence escaped,
Far up the wind he roves, with open mouth
Inhales the cooling breeze, nor man, nor beast
He spares, implacable. The hunter-horse,*

240

Once kind associate of his sylvan toils,
(Who haply now without the kennel's mound
Crops the rank mead, and listening hears with joy
The cheering cry, that morn and eve salutes
His raptured sense) a wretched victim falls.
Unhappy quadruped! no more, alas!
Shall thy fond master with his voice applaud
Thy gentleness, thy speed; or with his



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hand

Stroke thy soft dappled sides, as he each day
Visits thy stall, well pleased; no more shalt thou

250

*With sprightly neighings, to the winding horn
And the loud opening pack in concert joined,
Glad his proud heart. For oh! the secret wound
Rankling inflames, he bites the ground and dies.*

*Hence to the village with pernicious haste
Baleful he bends his course: the village flies
Alarmed; the tender mother in her arms
Hugs close the trembling babe; the doors are barred,
And flying curs, by native instinct taught,
Shun the contagious bane; the rustic bands*

260

Hurry to arms, the rude militia seize
Whate'er at hand they find; clubs, forks, or guns
From every quarter charge the furious foe,
In wild disorder, and uncouth array:
Till now with wounds on wounds oppressed and gored,
At one short poisonous gasp he breathes his last.

Hence to the kennel, Muse, return, and view
With heavy heart that hospital of woe:
Where Horror stalks at large; insatiate Death
Sits growling o'er his prey: each hour presents

270

*A different scene of ruin and distress.
How busy art thou, Fate! and how severe
Thy pointed wrath! the dying and the dead
Promiscuous lie; o'er these the living fight
In one eternal broil; not conscious why,
Nor yet with whom. So drunkards in their cups,
Spare not their friends, while senseless squabble reigns.*

*Huntsman! it much behoves thee to avoid
The perilous debate! Ah! rouse up all
Thy vigilance, and tread the treacherous ground*

280

With careful step. Thy fires unquenched preserve,
As erst the vestal flame; the pointed steel
In the hot embers hide; and if surprised
Thou feel'st the deadly bite, quick urge it home
Into the recent sore, and cauterise



The wound; spare not thy flesh, nor dread the event:
Vulcan shall save when Aesculapius fails.

Here, should the knowing Muse recount the means
To stop this growing plague. And here, alas!
Each hand presents a sovereign cure, and boasts

290

Infallibility, but boasts in vain.

*On this depend, each to his separate seat
Confine, in fetters bound; give each his mess
Apart, his range in open air; and then
If deadly symptoms to thy grief appear,
Devote the wretch, and let him greatly fall,
A generous victim for the public weal.*

*Sing, philosophic Muse, the dire effects
Of this contagious bite on hapless man.
The rustic swains, by long tradition taught*

300

Of leeches old, as soon as they perceive
The bite impressed, to the sea-coasts repair.
Plunged in the briny flood, the unhappy youth
Now journeys home secure; but soon shall wish
The seas as yet had covered him beneath
The foaming surge, full many a fathom



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deep.

A fate more dismal, and superior ills
Hang o'er his head devoted. When the moon,
Closing her monthly round, returns again
To glad the night; or when full orb'd she shines

310

*High in the vault of heaven; the lurking pest
Begins the dire assault. The poisonous foam,
Through the deep wound instilled with hostile rage,
And all its fiery particles saline,
Invades the arterial fluid; whose red waves
Tempestuous heave, and their cohesion broke,
Fermenting boil; intestine war ensues,
And order to confusion turns embroiled.
Now the distended vessels scarce contain
The wild uproar, but press each weaker part,*

320

Unable to resist: the tender brain
And stomach suffer most; convulsions shake
His trembling nerves, and wandering pungent pains
Pinch sore the sleepless wretch; his fluttering pulse
Oft intermits; pensive, and sad, he mourns
His cruel fate, and to his weeping friends
Laments in vain; to hasty anger prone,
Resents each slight offence, walks with quick step,
And wildly stares; at last with boundless sway
The tyrant frenzy reigns. For as the dog

330

*(Whose fatal bite conveyed the infectious bane)
Raving he foams, and howls, and barks, and bites.
Like agitations in his boiling blood
Present like species to his troubled mind;
His nature, and his actions all canine.
So as (old Homer sung) the associates wild
Of wandering Ithacus, by Circe's charms
To swine transformed, ran grunting through the groves.
Dreadful example to a wicked world!
See there distressed he lies! parched up with thirst,*

340

But dares not drink. Till now at last his soul
Trembling escapes, her noisome dungeon leaves,
And to some purer region wings away.



One labour yet remains, celestial Maid!
Another element demands thy song.
No more o'er craggy steep, through coverts thick
With pointed thorn, and briers intricate,
Urge on with horn and voice the painful pack
But skim with wanton wing the irriguous vale,
Where winding streams amid the flowery meads

350

*Perpetual glide along; and undermine
The caverned banks, by the tenacious roots
Of hoary willows arched; gloomy retreat
Of the bright scaly kind; where they at will,
On the green watery reed their pasture graze,
Suck the moist soil, or slumber at their ease,
Rocked by the restless brook, that draws aslope
Its humid train, and laves their dark abodes.
Where rages not oppression? Where, alas!
Is innocence secure? Rapine and spoil*

360

Haunt even the lowest deep; seas have their sharks,
Rivers and ponds inclose the ravenous pike;
He in his turn becomes a prey; on him
The amphibious otter feasts. Just is his fate
Deserved; but tyrants know no bounds;



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nor spears

That bristle on his back, defend the perch
From his wide greedy jaws; nor burnished mail
The yellow carp; nor all his arts can save
The insinuating eel, that hides his head
Beneath the slimy mud; nor yet escapes

370

*The crimson-spotted trout, the river's pride,
And beauty of the stream. Without remorse,
This midnight pillager ranging around,
Insatiate swallows all. The owner mourns
The unpeopled rivulet, and gladly hears
The huntsman's early call, and sees with joy
The jovial crew, that march upon its banks
In gay parade, with bearded lances armed.*

*This subtle spoiler of the beaver kind,
Far off, perhaps, where ancient alders shade
The deep still pool; within some hollow trunk*

380

Contrives his wicker couch: whence he surveys
His long purlieu, lord of the stream, and all
The finny shoals his own. But you, brave youths,
Dispute the felon's claim; try every root,
And every reedy bank; encourage all
The busy-spreading pack, that fearless plunge
Into the flood, and cross the rapid stream.
Bid rocks and caves, and each resounding shore,
Proclaim your bold defiance; loudly raise

390

*Each cheering voice, till distant hills repeat
The triumphs of the vale. On the soft sand
See there his seal impressed! and on that bank
Behold the glittering spoils, half-eaten fish,
Scales, fins, and bones, the leavings of his feast.
Ah! on that yielding sag-bed, see, once more
His seal I view. O'er yon dank rushy marsh
The sly goose-footed prowler bends his course,
And seeks the distant shallows. Huntsman, bring
Thy eager pack; and trail him to his couch.*

400

Hark! the loud peal begins, the clamorous joy,
The gallant chiding, loads the trembling air.



Ye Naiads fair, who o'er these floods preside,
Raise up your dripping heads above the wave,
And hear our melody. The harmonious notes
Float with the stream; and every winding creek
And hollow rock, that o'er the dimpling flood
Nods pendant; still improve from shore to shore
Our sweet reiterated joys. What shouts!
What clamour loud! What gay heart-cheering sounds

410

*Urge through, the breathing brass their mazy way!
Nor choirs of Tritons glad with sprightlier strains
The dancing billows, when proud Neptune rides
In triumph o'er the deep. How greedily
They snuff the fishy steam, that to each blade
Rank-scenting clings! See! how the morning dews
They sweep, that from their feet besprinkling drop
Dispersed, and leave a track oblique behind.
Now on firm land they range; then in the flood
They plunge tumultuous; or through reedy pools*

420

Rustling they work their way: no holt escapes
Their curious search. With quick



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sensation now

The fuming vapour stings; flutter their hearts,
And joy redoubled bursts from every mouth
In louder symphonies. Yon hollow trunk,
That with its hoary head incurved, salutes
The passing wave, must be the tyrant's fort,
And dread abode. How these impatient climb,
While others at the root incessant bay:
They put him down. See, there he dives along!

430

*The ascending bubbles mark his gloomy way.
Quick fix the nets, and cut off his retreat
Into the sheltering deeps. Ah, there he vents!
The pack lunge headlong, and protended spears
Menace destruction: while the troubled surge
Indignant foams, and all the scaly kind
Affrighted, hide their heads. Wild tumult reigns,
And loud uproar. Ah, there once more he vents!
See, that bold hound has seized him; down they sink,
Together lost: but soon shall he repent*

440

His rash assault. See there escaped, he flies
Half-drowned, and clambers up the slippery bank
With ouze and blood distained. Of all the brutes,
Whether by Nature formed, or by long use,
This artful diver best can bear the want
Of vital air. Unequal is the fight,
Beneath the whelming element. Yet there
He lives not long; but respiration needs
At proper intervals. Again he vents;
Again the crowd attack. That spear has pierced

450

*His neck; the crimson waves confess the wound.
Fixed is the bearded lance, unwelcome guest,
Where'er he flies; with him it sinks beneath,
With him it mounts; sure guide to every foe.
Inly he groans; nor can his tender wound
Bear the cold stream. Lo! to yon sedgy bank
He creeps disconsolate; his numerous foes
Surround him, hounds and men. Pierced through and through,
On pointed spears they lift him high in air;
Wriggling he hangs, and grins, and bites in vain:*



460

Bid the loud horns, in gaily warbling strains,
Proclaim the felon's fate; he dies, he dies.
Rejoice, ye scaly tribes, and leaping dance
Above the wave, in sign of liberty
Restored; the cruel tyrant is no more.

Rejoice, secure and blessed; did not as yet
Remain, some of your own rapacious kind;
And man, fierce man, with all his various wiles.

O happy, if ye knew your happy state,
Ye rangers of the fields! whom Nature boon

470

*Cheers with her smiles, and every element
Conspires to bless. What, if no heroes frown
From marble pedestals; nor Raphael's works,
Nor Titian's lively tints, adorn our walls?
Yet these the meanest of us may behold;
And at another's cost may feast at will
Our wondering eyes; what can the owner more?
But vain, alas! is wealth, not graced with power.
The flowery landscape, and the gilded dome,
And vistas opening to the wearied eye,*



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480

Through all his wide domain; the planted grove,
The shrubby wilderness with its gay choir
Of warbling birds, can't lull to soft repose
The ambitious wretch, whose discontented soul
Is harrowed day and night; he mourns, he pines,
Until his prince's favour makes him great.
See, there he comes, the exalted idol comes!
The circle's formed, and all his fawning slaves
Devoutly bow to earth; from every mouth
The nauseous flattery flows, which he returns

490

*With promises, that die as soon as born.
Vile intercourse! where virtue has no place.
Frown but the monarch; all his glories fade;
He mingles with the throng, outcast, undone,
The pageant of a day; without one friend
To soothe his tortured mind; all, all are fled.
For though they basked in his meridian ray,
The insects vanish, as his beams decline.*

*Not such our friends; for here no dark design,
No wicked interest bribes the venal heart;*

500

But inclination to our bosom leads,
And weds them there for life; our social cups
Smile, as we smile; open, and unreserved.
We speak our inmost souls; good humour, mirth,
Soft complaisance, and wit from malice free,
Smoother every brow, and glow on every cheek.

O happiness sincere! what wretch would groan
Beneath the galling load of power, or walk
Upon the slippery pavements of the great,
Who thus could reign, unenvied and secure?

510

*Ye guardian powers who make mankind your care,
Give me to know wise Nature's hidden depths,
Trace each mysterious cause, with judgment read
The expanded volume, and submit to adore
That great creative Will, who at a word
Spoke forth the wondrous scene. But if my soul*



*To this gross clay confined, flutters on earth
With less ambitious wing; unskilled to range
From orb to orb, where Newton leads the way;
And view with piercing eyes, the grand machine,*

520

Worlds above worlds; subservient to his voice,
Who veiled in clouded majesty, alone
Gives light to all; bids the great system move,
And changeful seasons in their turns advance,
Unmoved, unchanged himself; yet this at least
Grant me propitious, an inglorious life,
Calm and serene, nor lost in false pursuits
Of wealth or honours; but enough to raise
My drooping friends, preventing modest want
That dares not ask. And if to crown my joys,

530

*Ye grant me health, that, ruddy in my cheeks,
Blooms in my life's decline; fields, woods, and streams,
Each towering hill, each humble vale below,
Shall hear my cheering voice, my hounds shall wake
The lazy morn, and glad the horizon round.*

END OF SOMERVILLE'S CHASE.

[Footnote 1: In republishing only the "Chase" of Somerville and "the Fables" of Gay, we have acted on the principle of selecting the best, and the most characteristic, in our age, perhaps the only readable specimen of either poet.]

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[Footnote 2: 'Great Prince:' Prince Frederick. Our readers will remember the humorous epitaph on him, in edifying contrast to Somerville's praise:—

'Here lies Fred,
Who was alive, and is dead:
If it had been his father,
I'd much rather;
Had it been his mother,
Better than another;
Were it his sister,
Nobody would have miss'd her;
Were it the whole generation,
The better for the nation.
But since it's only Fred,
There's no more to be said,
But that he was alive, and is dead.'

We quote this from recollection of Thackeray's recitation, but think it pretty accurate.]

[Footnote 3: 'Neustria:' Normandy.]

[Footnote 4: 'Fountain of light,' &c. Scott as well as Somerville loved to write in brilliant sunshine.]

[Footnote 6: 'Talbot kind:' Derived, we think, from the famous John Talbot, the first Earl of Shrewsbury, who employed this species of hound against the Irish rebels.]

[Footnote 7: 'Aurengzebe:' in 1659, seized the throne of India, after murdering his relatives, but became a good, wise, and brave emperor.]

[Footnote 8: 'Ammon's son:' Alexander the Great.]

[Footnote 9: 'Blooming youth:' Fred again.]

[Footnote 10: 'Apulia:' now Puglia, the south-eastern part of Italy.]