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The poems of William Blake

William Blake

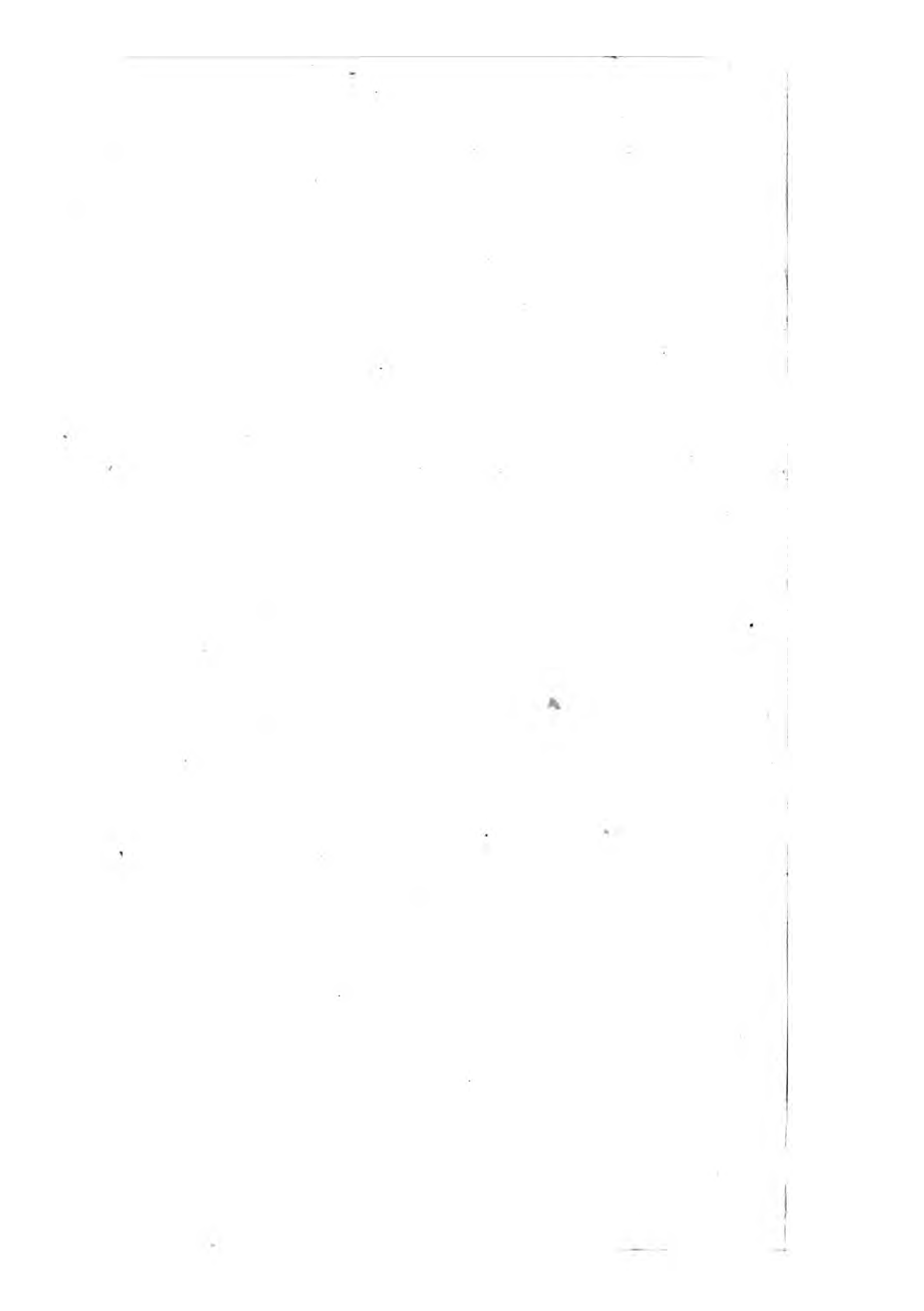
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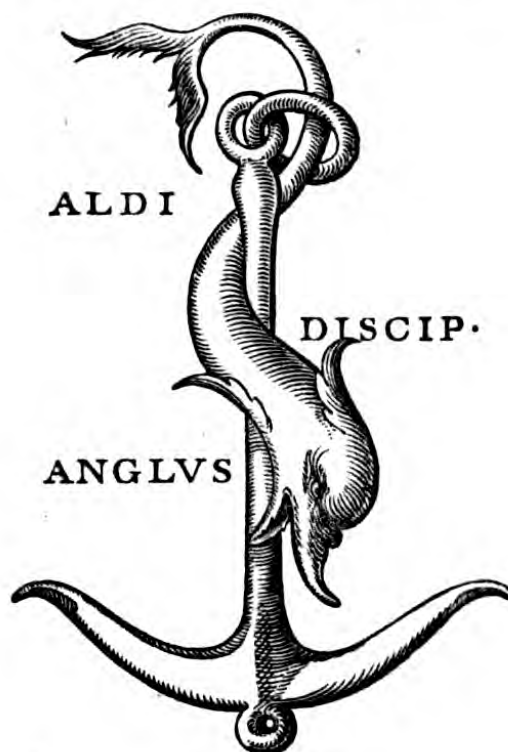
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THE POEMS
OF
WILLIAM BLAKE

COMPRISING
SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND OF EXPERIENCE
TOGETHER WITH POETICAL SKETCHES
AND SOME COPYRIGHT POEMS NOT
IN ANY OTHER EDITION



LONDON
BASIL MONTAGU PICKERING
196 PICCADILLY
1874



INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR.

A VERY few words of introduction will suffice to explain the character and purpose of this new edition of William Blake's Poetical Works. Five-and-thirty years ago, and some twelve years after the death of Blake, an edition of the Songs of Innocence and Experience* (the first, in fact, printed in the ordinary way) was issued by the father of the present Publisher. It was edited by Dr. Garth Wilkinson, who prefixed a graceful preface, which presented for the first time anything like an adequate appreciation of the high and subtle qualities of the artist-poet's verse.

Some eleven years ago the publication of Gilchrist's "Life of Blake" created, or re-awakened at least, an extraordinary interest in the poet-painter's singular genius. This memoir, which its

* Songs of Innocence and of Experience, shewing the two states of the human Soul. By William Blake. London: W. Pickering, Chancery Lane, 1839; pp. xxi. 76.

accomplished author did not live fully to complete, was accompanied by a collection of Blake's lyrical poems. This collection, it soon appeared, was very imperfect as regards completeness and very unreliable as regards accuracy of text. Apart from these serious disadvantages, the mass of extraneous matter with which it was weighted placed it beyond the reach of many readers who might desire to possess the Poems in a separate form. These considerations, his father's former connexion with the Songs of Innocence, and the purchase eventually of a number of inedited autograph Poems of Blake, led the Publisher to re-issue his father's volume, together with the newly-acquired pieces, in 1866. The ground was carefully re-traversed, and several errors into which Dr. Wilkinson had fallen were removed by a careful collation with the rare original edition issued by Blake himself. The little volume was welcomed as satisfying a public want, and it passed into a second edition (now also exhausted) two years later (1868). About the same time the loan, opportunely obtained, of a still rarer book, the juvenile Poetical Sketches, privately printed in 1783, with a few other short pieces written in the fly-leaves, enabled the Publisher to add a twin volume to the former one. These are now united,

together with a few similar pieces, not included before, scattered through the Prophetical Books. It will suffice to add that not a few of these pieces do not appear in Gilchrist's "Life of Blake," and being the present Publisher's copyright, cannot appear in Messrs. Bell's forthcoming edition.

Although the poetry of Blake was comparatively neglected until a quite recent period, it did not remain entirely unnoticed even during his lifetime. Flaxman, through whose kindly aid his early verses are preserved to us, considered Blake's poems as fine as his pictures. Wordsworth spoke of them with a generous admiration, which he did not often accord to the writings of his contemporaries. Charles Lamb also loved them as so subtle a critic and so kind and simple-hearted a man could not fail to do.

"A Father's Memoirs of his Child," by Benjamin Heath Malkin, (London, 1806), contains a portrait frontispiece designed by Blake, in introducing which the author devotes twenty pages to a disquisition on Blake's genius, and quotes the following poems: "Laughing Song," "Holy Thursday," "The Divine Image," "How sweet I roam'd," "I love the jocund dance," "The Tiger."

On this memoir the late Mr. Henry Crabb Robinson founded a notice of Blake as an artist and poet, which was translated into German by a certain Dr. Julius, and appeared in the first (and only) number of the second volume of the *Vaterländisches Museum* (Hamburg) in 1811.* The extracts were given in both languages, and included: "To the Muses," "The Piper," "Holy Thursday," "The Tiger," "The Garden of Love," and a few passages from the Prophetical Books.

The next notice of Blake's poetry was by Allan Cunningham in his "Lives of the Painters," in 1830.† His praise, however, is rather half-hearted and lukewarm, and the dozen pieces he printed as specimens, he could not refrain from touching up here and there to suit his fancy.

In a recent volume the author of "Modern Painters" thus speaks of Blake's poetry:—

"The impression that his drawings once made is fast, and justly, fading away, though they are not without noble merit. But his poems have much more than merit; they are written with absolute sincerity, with infinite tenderness, and though in the manner of them diseased and wild, are in verity the words of a great and wise mind, disturbed but not deceived, by its sickness; nay,

* Pp. 107-131.

† Vol. II., pp. 142-179.

partly exalted by it, and sometimes giving forth in fiery aphorism some of the most precious words of existing literature."*

That the poems of William Blake should have been long neglected was but the natural consequence both of the vitiated taste of his contemporaries and of the unusual manner of their publication—if publication it can, indeed, be called.

"It consisted," says Mr. Gilchrist, "in a species of engraving in relief both words and designs. The verse was written, and the designs and marginal embellishments outlined on the copper with an impervious liquid, probably the ordinary stopping-out varnish of engravers. Then all the white parts or lights, the remainder of the plate that is, were eaten away with aquafortis or other acid, so that the outline of letter and design was left prominent as in stereotype. From these plates he printed off in any tint, yellow, brown, blue, required to be the prevailing, or ground colour in his facsimiles; red he used for the letterpress. The page was then coloured up by hand in imitation of the original drawing, with more or less variety of detail in the local hues."†

It is not extraordinary that a book appearing in

* John Ruskin, "The Eagle's Nest" (1872), p. 23.

† Gilchrist's *Life of Blake* (Lond. 1863), i. 69.

this way should have failed to attract the attention of an age which chose Whitehead for its Poet Laureate, which applauded the mediocrities of Darwin and Hayley, and which refused to read or to buy the Lyrical Ballads in ordinary "hot-pressed twelves."

To William Blake must, however, be accorded the merit of having been the first to lead back English poetry to that simplicity and nature from which the school of Pope and his feeble imitators had so widely departed. Already in 1783, he had printed for circulation among his friends a tiny volume of verses written in very early youth, and containing, among other things, six songs characterized by a power of lyrical feeling and expression of which no poet had given evidence for more than a century. As these poems were all written by Blake before he had attained his one-and-twentieth year in 1777, we may fairly call him the precursor not only of Wordsworth, whom he preceded by fully fifteen years, but also of Cowper and of Burns. With respect to the first of these the fact is all the more remarkable on account of the general resemblance in tone and style, the similarities of subject and metre between the Songs of Innocence and of Experience published in 1789-1794 and the earlier poems of Wordsworth, pub-

lished in 1798, 1800, and 1807, such pieces as Goody Blake and Harry Gill, Poor Susan, The Two Thieves, Rural Architecture, Alice Fell, and all that class of poems which drew down on Wordsworth the ridicule of Jeffrey and other self-constituted critics of the period. There is precisely the same exquisite tenderness and noble simplicity in Blake. Some dozen of his Songs of Innocence might assuredly have been printed in the Lyrical Ballads and have passed for Wordsworth's, and on the whole the attentive student who follows out this hint, with the two books before him, will discover coincidences of thought and expression which are very remarkable.

Nevertheless, the fame of Blake as a poet has not kept pace with his fame as an artist. His original volumes, it is true, are sold for fabulous prices; but probably more on account of the embellishments than the poetry. Certain it is that no poet can expect to survive who depends on illustrated or illuminated editions for his celebrity.* We think, however, that the poems of William Blake are destined at length to meet with a full though tardy recognition, and that they will therefore be welcome without such adventitious aid; that they will be cherished by children for their

* As the fast-waning fame of Rogers may show.

purity and simplicity, and by grown-up men and women for the deeper meanings which always underlie the most simple of them :—

“Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

There is something sublime in the spirit of childlike innocence and Christian rebuke of worldliness and hardheartedness that pervades these productions. He sums up all the commandments under the precept, “Little children, love one another. For love is the fulfilling of the law. He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love.”

Some of his poems would doubtless have been improved by additional polish : there are many harsh and rugged lines, many with an imperfect number of feet. His ear seems to have been uncertain ; and sometimes, as in “The Little Vagabond,” he forgets to rhyme, or makes the same word do duty in lieu of a rhyme. He also now and then uses a singular verb for a plural, and *vice versa*. But a reader who should be greatly offended by these occasional inaccuracies would be quite incapable of appreciating his higher beauties : the matter makes us forget the manner.

Despite what has been said above, he sometimes attains a perfection of lyrical expression in

his shorter pieces unequalled except in Shakespeare and Tennyson, and evidently due to a reverential study of the earlier models. Our two greatest Poets have never written songs of more surpassing melody or richer music than the Blossom and the Sunflower.

Those other wonderful productions of Blake's mystical and visionary genius—the Books of Prophecy—of which the key-note is struck in the two opening pieces of the Songs of Experience, have yet to find acceptance with the public. Despite their strangeness of metre, however, and a certain forbidding aspect, at first sight, of wildness and incoherence, they will well repay study, and will be found to contain here and there lines of as great beauty as anything in his lyrical poems.

Before closing our remarks, we must say a final word respecting the principle adopted by Mr. Rossetti in his reprint of some of these poems in the second volume of Gilchrist's "Life of Blake." Once for all, while rendering due homage to his genius and rare critical perception, as well as to the great services he has rendered to the fame of Blake, we must firmly protest against the dangerous precedent he has established of tampering with his author's text. Much ruggedness of metre and crudeness of expression he has doubtless removed

or toned down by this process; but, however delicately and tastefully done, we contend that the doing of it was unwarrantable—nay, that it destroys to a certain extent the historical value of the poems. It was the growth of this mischievous system which prevented the readers of the eighteenth century from enjoying a pure text of Shakespeare; which to this day, in nine editions out of ten, gives us a corrupt and mutilated text of such writers as Bunyan, Walton, and De Foe, and which has spoilt some of the finest hymns in our language. For where is the process, once admitted as legitimate, to stop? It is not every emendator who possesses the taste and judgment of Mr. Rossetti, and, in a case like the present one, where the original edition is almost inaccessible as a check, what protection has the reader against the caprice or vanity of an editor who does not adhere religiously to his author's text? Mr. Rossetti (though sanctioned by Mr. Swinburne) has no more right to alter William Blake's poems than Mr. Millais would have to paint out some obnoxious detail of mediævalism in a work of Giotto or Cimabue; or Mr. Leighton to improve some flaw in the flesh-colour of Correggio.

R. H. SHEPHERD.

BROMPTON, *July*, 1874.

WITH BLAKE'S "SONGS OF INNOCENCE."

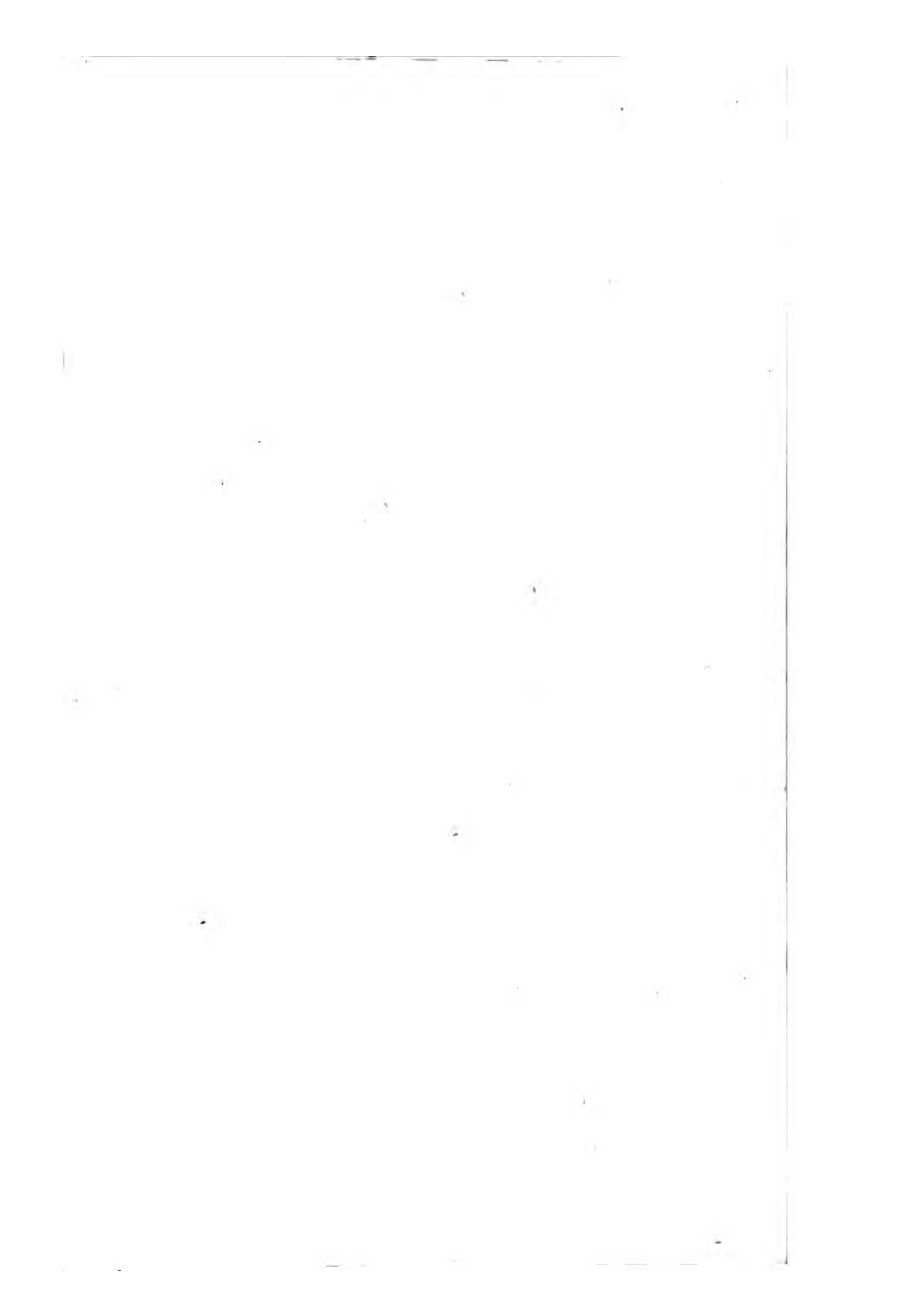
[To Florence —, at Mrs. Gilchrist's Cottage, Brookbank,
near Haslemere, whence the Preface to Blake's Life is
dated.]

ACCEPT, dear child, these songs of one whose
 Muse
For happy children piped her sweetest lays,
Nor deem'd their suffrages her lightest praise
Who hold Heaven's kingdom as their proper dues.
And wilt thou with the lyric gift refuse
His thanks, whose drooping spirits thou couldst
 raise
By airy gestures, graceful as a fay's
Dancing at eve in shady avenues?

With rapt delight I see you ponder long
'The gentle words of one so pure of blame,
Who loved the right, who scorn'd and loathed the
 wrong :
O future heiress of his double fame,
Whose smile, whose look, nay, even whose very
 name
Recalls the sunny land of art and song.

R. H. S.

1869.



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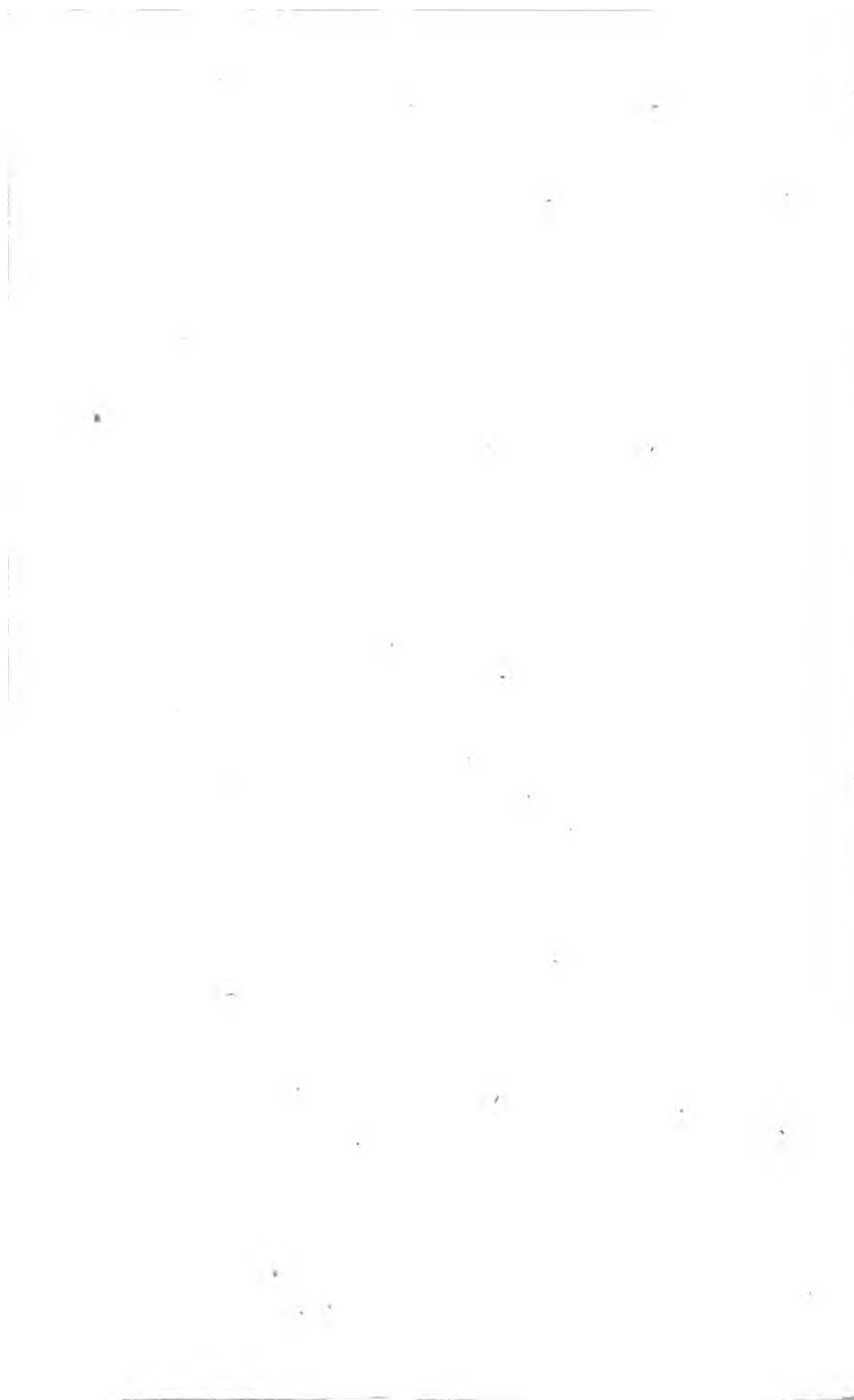
S K E T C H E S.

By W. B.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the year MDCCLXXXIII.

B



ADVERTISEMENT.



THE following Sketches were the production of untutored youth, commenced in his twelfth, and occasionally resumed by the author till his twentieth year; since which time, his talents having been wholly directed to the attainment of excellence in his profession, he has been deprived of the leisure requisite to such a revisal of these sheets, as might have rendered them less unfit to meet the public eye.

Conscious of the irregularities and defects to be found in almost every page, his friends have still believed that they possessed a poetical originality, which merited some respite from oblivion. These their opinions remain, however, to be now reproved or confirmed by a less partial public.



POETICAL SKETCHES.

TO SPRING.



THOU with dewy locks, who lookest
down
Thro' the clear windows of the morn-
ing, turn

Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring !

The hills tell each other, and the listening
Valleys hear ; all our longing eyes are turn'd
Up to thy bright pavilions : issue forth,
And let thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments ; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath ; scatter thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers ; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom ; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head,
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee !

TO SUMMER.

O THOU who passest thro' our valleys in
Thy strength, curb thy fierce steeds, allay
the heat
That flames from their large nostrils ! thou, O
Summer,
Oft pitched'st here thy golden tent, and oft
Beneath our oaks hast slept, while we beheld
With joy thy ruddy limbs and flourishing hair.

Beneath our thickest shades we oft have heard
Thy voice, when noon upon his fervid car
Rode o'er the deep of heaven : beside our springs
Sit down, and in our mossy valleys, on
Some bank beside a river clear, throw thy
Silk draperies off, and rush into the stream :
Our valleys love the Summer in his pride.

Our bards are famed who strike the silver wire :
Our youth are bolder than the southern swains :
Our maidens fairer in the sprightly dance :
We lack not songs, nor instruments of joy,
Nor echoes sweet, nor waters clear as heaven,
Nor laurel wreaths against the sultry heat.

TO AUTUMN.

O AUTUMN, laden with fruit, and stain'd
With the blood of the grape, pass not, but
sit
Beneath my shady roof, there thou mayst rest,
And tune thy jolly voice to my fresh pipe,
And all the daughters of the year shall dance !
Sing now the lusty song of fruits and flowers.

“ The narrow bud opens her beauties to
“ The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins ;
“ Blossoms hang round the brows of morning, and
“ Flourish down the bright cheek of modest eve,
“ Till clustering Summer breaks forth into singing,
“ And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

“ The spirits of the air live on the smells
“ Of fruit ; and joy, with pinions light, roves round
“ The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.”
Thus sang the jolly Autumn as he sat ;
Then rose, girded himself, and o'er the bleak
Hills fled from our sight ; but left his golden load.

POETICAL

TO WINTER.

O WINTER! bar thine adamantine doors :
The north is thine ; there hast thou built
thy dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy roofs
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car.

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep
Rides heavy ; his storms are unchain'd, sheathed
In ribbed steel ; I dare not lift mine eyes ;
For he hath rear'd his sceptre o'er the world.

Lo ! now the direful monster, whose skin clings
To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning rocks :
He withers all in silence, and in his hand
Unclothes the earth and freezes up frail life.

He takes his seat upon the cliffs, the mariner
Cries in vain. Poor little wretch ! that deal'st
With storms, till heaven smiles, and the monster
Is driven yelling to his caves beneath Mount Hecla.

TO THE EVENING STAR.

THOU fair-hair'd angel of the evening,
 Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains,
 light
 Thy bright torch of love ; thy radiant crown
 Put on, and smile upon our evening bed !
 Smile on our loves, and, while thou drawest the
 Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
 On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
 In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
 The lake ; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
 And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon,
 Dost thou withdraw ; then the wolf rages wide,
 And the lion glares thro' the dun forest :
 The fleeces of our flocks are cover'd with
 Thy sacred dew : protect them with thine influence.

TO MORNING.

O HOLY virgin ! clad in purest white,
 Unlock heaven's golden gates and issue
 forth ;
 Awake the dawn that sleeps in heaven ; let light
 Rise from the chambers of the east, and bring
 The honey'd dew that cometh on waking day.
 O radiant morning, salute the sun,
 Roused like a huntsman to the chase, and with
 Thy buskin'd feet appear upon our hills.

FAIR ELEANOR.

THE bell struck one and shook the silent tower ;
The graves give up their dead : fair Eleanor
Walk'd by the castle-gate, and looked in ;
A hollow groan ran thro' the dreary vaults.

She shriek'd aloud, and sunk upon the steps,
On the cold stone her pale cheek. Sickly smells
Of death issue as from a sepulchre,
And all is silent but the sighing vaults.

Chill death withdraws his hand, and she revives ;
Amazed she finds herself upon her feet,
And, like a ghost, through narrow passages
Walking, feeling the cold walls with her hands.

Fancy returns, and now she thinks of bones
And grinning skulls, and corruptible death
Wrapt in his shroud ; and now fancies she hears
Deep sighs, and sees pale sickly ghosts gliding.

At length no fancy, but reality
Distracts her. A rushing sound, and the feet
Of one that fled, approaches.—Ellen stood,
Like a dumb statue, froze to stone with fear.

The wretch approaches, crying, "The deed is done ;
 "Take this and send it by whom thou wilt send ;
 "It is my life—send it to Eleanor :—
 "He's dead, and howling after me for blood !

'Take this," he cried ; and thrust into her arms
 A wet napkin, wrapt about ; then rush'd
 Past, howling : she received into her arms
 Pale death, and follow'd on the wings of fear.

They pass'd swift thro' the outer gate ; the wretch
 Howling, leap'd o'er the wall into the moat,
 Stifling in mud. Fair Ellen pass'd the bridge,
 And heard a gloomy voice cry, "Is it done ?"

As the deer wounded Ellen flew over
 The pathless plain ; as the arrows that fly
 By night ; destruction flies, and strikes in darkness,
 She fled from fear, till at her house arrived.

Her maids await her ; on her bed she falls,
 That bed of joy where erst her lord hath press'd :
 "Ah, woman's fear !" she cried, "Ah, cursed duke !
 "Ah, my dear lord ! ah, wretched Eleanor !

"My lord was like a flower upon the brows
 "Of lusty May ! Ah, life as frail as flower !
 "O ghastly death ! withdraw thy cruel hand,
 "Seek'st thou that flower to deck thy horrid temples ?

“ My lord was like a star in highest heaven
“ Drawn down to earth by spells and wickedness ;
“ My lord was like the opening eyes of day,
“ When western winds creep softly o’er the flowers.

“ But he is darken’d ; like the summer’s noon
“ Clouded ; fall’n like the stately tree, cut down ;
“ The breath of heaven dwelt among his leaves.
“ O Eleanor, weak woman, fill’d with woe ! ”

Thus having spoke, she raised up her head,
And saw the bloody napkin by her side,
Which in her arms she brought ; and now, tenfold
More terrified, saw it unfold itself.

Her eyes were fix’d ; the bloody cloth unfolds,
Disclosing to her sight the murder’d head
Of her dear lord, all ghastly pale, clotted
With gory blood ; it groan’d, and thus it spake :

“ O Eleanor, behold thy husband’s head
“ Who, sleeping on the stones of yonder tower,
“ Was reft of life by the accursed duke !
“ A hired villain turn’d my sleep to death !

“ O Eleanor, beware the cursed duke,
“ O give not him thy hand, now I am dead ;
“ He seeks thy love ; who, coward, in the night,
“ Hired a villain to bereave my life.”

She sat with dead cold limbs, stiffen'd to stone ;
 She took the gory head up in her arms ;
 She kiss'd the pale lips ; she had no tears to shed ;
 She hugg'd it to her breast, and groan'd her last.

SONG.

HOW sweet I roam'd from field to field
 And tasted all the summer's pride,
 Till I the Prince of Love beheld
 Who in the sunny beams did glide !

He shew'd me lilies for my hair,
 And blushing roses for my brow ;
 He led me through his gardens fair
 Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
 And Phoebus fired my vocal rage ;
 He caught me in his silken net,
 And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
 Then, laughing, sports and plays with me ;
 Then stretches out my golden wing
 And mocks my loss of liberty.

SONG.

MY silks and fine array,
My smiles and languish'd air
By love are driven away ;
And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave :
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven
When springing buds unfold ;
O why to him was't given,
Whose heart is wintry cold ?
His breast is love's all-worshipp'd tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet ;
When I my grave have made
Let winds and tempests beat :
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay :
True love doth pass away !

SONG.

LOVE and harmony combine
And around our souls intwine,
While thy branches mix with mine,
And our roots together join.

Joys upon our branches sit,
Chirping loud, and singing sweet ;
Like gentle streams beneath our feet
Innocence and virtue meet.

Thou the golden fruit dost bear,
I am clad in flowers fair ;
Thy sweet boughs perfume the air,
And the turtle buildeth there.

There she sits and feeds her young,
Sweet I hear her mournful song ;
And thy lovely leaves among
There is Love ; I hear his tongue.

There his charming nest doth lay,
There he sleeps the night away ;
There he sports along the day
And doth among our branches play.

SONG.

I LOVE the jocund dance,
The softly-breathing song,
Where innocent eyes do glance
And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing vale,
I love the echoing hill,
Where mirth does never fail,
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

I love the pleasant cot,
I love the innocent bower,
Where white and brown is our lot
Or fruit in the mid-day hour.

I love the oaken seat,
Beneath the oaken tree,
Where all the old villagers meet,
And laugh our sports to see.

I love our neighbours all,
But, Kitty, I better love thee ;
And love them I ever shall,
But thou art all to me.

SONG.

MEMORY, hither come
And tune your merry notes :
And while upon the wind
Your music floats

SKETCHES.

17

I'll pore upon the stream
Where sighing lovers dream,
And fish for fancies as they pass
Within the watery glass.

I'll drink of the clear stream
And hear the linnet's song,
And there I'll lie and dream
The day along :
And when night comes, I'll go
To places fit for woe,
Walking along the darken'd valley
With silent Melancholy.

MAD SONG.

THE wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold ;
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs infold :
But lo ! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling beds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo ! to the vault
Of paved heaven,
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven :

C

They strike the ear of night,
Make weep the eyes of day ;
They make mad the roaring winds,
And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud
With howling woe,
After night I do crowd
And with night will go ;
I turn my back to the east
From whence comforts have increased ;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

SONG.

FRESH from the dewy hill, the merry year
Smiles on my head and mounts his flaming
car ;
Round my young brows the laurel wreathes a shade
And rising glories beam around my head.

My feet are wing'd while o'er the dewy lawn
I meet my maiden risen like the morn :
Oh bless those holy feet, like angels' feet ;
Oh bless those limbs, beaming with heavenly light !

Like as an angel glittering in the sky
In times of innocence and holy joy ;
The joyful shepherd stops his grateful song
To hear the music of an angel's tongue.

So when she speaks, the voice of Heaven I hear ;
So when we walk, nothing impure comes near ;
Each field seems Eden, and each calm retreat ;
Each village seems the haunt of holy feet.

But that sweet village, where my black-eyed maid
Closes her eyes in sleep beneath night's shade,
Whene'er I enter, more than mortal fire
Burns in my soul, and does my song inspire.

SONG.

WHEN early morn walks forth in sober gray,
Then to my black-eyed maid I haste away,
When evening sits beneath her dusky bower
And gently sighs away the silent hour,
The village-bell alarms, away I go
And the vale darkens at my pensive woe.

To that sweet village where my black-eyed maid
Doth drop a tear beneath the silent shade,
I turn my eyes ; and pensive as I go
Curse my black stars, and bless my pleasing woe.

Oft when the summer sleeps among the trees,
Whispering faint murmurs to the scanty breeze,
I walk the village round ; if at her side
A youth doth walk in stolen joy and pride,
I curse my stars in bitter grief and woe,
That made my love so high and me so low.

O should she e'er prove false, his limbs I'd tear
And throw all pity on the burning air ;
I'd curse bright fortune for my mixed lot,
And then I'd die in peace, and be forgot.

TO THE MUSES.

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased ;

Whether in heaven ye wander fair
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth ;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wandering in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry !

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you !
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few !

GWIN, KING OF NORWAY.

COME, Kings, and listen to my song :
When Gwin, the son of Nore,
Over the nations of the North
His cruel sceptre bore ;

The Nobles of the land did feed
Upon the hungry poor ;
They tear the poor man's lamb, and drive
The needy from their door !

The land is desolate ; our wives
And children cry for bread ;
Arise, and pull the tyrant down,
Let Gwin be humbled.

Gordred the giant roused himself
From sleeping in his cave ;
He shook the hills, and in the clouds
The troubled banners wave.

Beneath them roll'd, like tempests black,
The numerous sons of blood ;
Like lions' whelps, roaring abroad,
Seeking their nightly food.

Down Bleron's hills they dreadful rush,
Their cry ascends the clouds ;
The trampling horse and clanging arms
Like rushing mighty floods !

Their wives and children, weeping loud,
Follow in wild array,
Howling like ghosts, furious as wolves
In the bleak wintry day.

" Pull down the tyrant to the dust,
" Let Gwin be humbled,"
They cry, " and let ten thousand lives
" Pay for the tyrant's head."

From tower to tower the watchmen cry,
" O Gwin, the son of Nore,
" Arouse thyself ! the nations black
" Like clouds, come rolling o'er !"

Gwin rear'd his shield, his palace shakes,
His chiefs come rushing round ;
Each, like an awful thunder-cloud
With voice of solemn sound :

Like reared stones around a grave
They stand around the King ;
Then suddenly each seized his spear,
And clashing steel does ring.

The husbandman does leave his plough
To wade thro' fields of gore ;
The merchant binds his brows in steel,
And leaves the trading shore ;

The shepherd leaves his mellow pipe,
And sounds the trumpet shrill,
The workman throws his hammer down
To heave the bloody bill.

Like the tall ghost of Barraton
Who sports in stormy sky,
Gwin leads his host as black as night
When pestilence does fly,

With horses and with chariots—
And all his spearmen bold
March to the sound of mournful song,
Like clouds around him roll'd.

Gwin lifts his hand—the nations halt ;
“ Prepare for war,” he cries—
Gordred appears !—his frowning brow
Troubles our northern skies.

The armies stand, like balances
Held in the Almighty's hand ;—
“Gwin, thou hast fill'd thy measure up,
“Thou'rt swept from out the land.”

And now the raging armies rush'd
Like warring mighty seas ;
The heavens are shook with roaring war,
The dust ascends the skies !

Earth smokes with blood, and groans and shakes,
To drink her children's gore,
A sea of blood ; nor can the eye
See to the trembling shore !

And on the verge of this wild sea
Famine and death doth cry ;
The cries of women and of babes
Over the field doth fly.

The king is seen raging afar,
With all his men of might ;
Like blazing comets scattering death
Thro' the red feverous night.

Beneath his arm like sheep they die,
And groan upon the plain ;
The battle faints, and bloody men
Fight upon hills of slain.

Now death is sick, and riven men
Labour and toil for life ;
Steed rolls on steed, and shield on shield,
Sunk in this sea of strife !

The god of war is drunk with blood,
The earth doth faint and fail ;
The stench of blood makes sick the heavens,
Ghosts glut the throat of hell !

O what have kings to answer for
Before that awful throne !
When thousand deaths for vengeance cry,
And ghosts accusing groan !

Like blazing comets in the sky
That shake the stars of light,
Which drop like fruit unto the earth
Thro' the fierce burning night ;

Like these did Gwin and Gordred meet,
And the first blow decides ;
Down from the brow unto the breast
Gordred his head divides !

Gwin fell : the Sons of Norway fled,
All that remain'd alive ;
The rest did fill the vale of death,
For them the eagles strive.

The river Dorman roll'd their blood
Into the northern sea ;
Who mourn'd his sons, and overwhelm'd
The pleasant south country.

AN IMITATION OF SPENSER.

GOLDEN Apollo, that thro' heaven wide
Scatter'st the rays of light, and truth his
beams,
In lucent words my darkling verses dight
And wash my earthy mind in thy clear streams,
That wisdom may descend in fairy dreams :
All while the jocund hours in thy train
Scatter their fancies at thy poet's feet ;
And when thou yield'st to night thy wide
domain,
Let rays of truth enlight his sleeping brain.

For brutish Pan in vain might thee assay
With tinkling sounds to dash thy nervous
verse,
Sound without sense ; yet in his rude affray,
(For Ignorance is Folly's leasing nurse,
And love of Folly needs none other's curse ;)

Midas the praise hath gain'd of lengthen'd ears,
 For which himself might deem him ne'er the worse
 To sit in council with his modern peers
 And judge of tinkling rhymes and elegances terse.

And thou, Mercurius, that with winged bow
 Dost mount aloft into the yielding sky,
 And thro' Heaven's halls thy airy flight dost throw,
 Entering with holy feet to where on high
 Jove weighs the counsel of futurity ;
 Then, laden with eternal fate, dost go
 Down, like a falling star, from autumn sky,
 And o'er the surface of the silent deep dost fly.

If thou arrivest at the sandy shore
 Where nought but envious hissing adders dwell,
 Thy golden rod, thrown on the dusty floor,
 Can charm to harmony with potent spell ;
 Such is sweet Eloquence, that does dispel
 Envy and Hate, that thirst for human gore ;
 And cause in sweet society to dwell
 Vile savage minds that lurk in lonely cell.

O Mercury, assist my labouring sense
 That round the circle of the world would fly,
 As the wing'd eagle scorns the towery fence
 Of Alpine hills round his high aëry,
 And searches through the corners of the sky,

Sports in the clouds to hear the thunder's sound
 And see the winged lightnings as they fly ;
 Then, bosom'd in an amber cloud, around
 Plumes his wide wings, and seeks Sol's palace
 high.

And thou, O warrior Maid invincible,
 Arm'd with the terrors of Almighty Jove,
 Pallas, Minerva, maiden terrible,
 Lovest thou to walk the peaceful solemn grove,
 In solemn gloom of branches interwove ?
 Or bear'st thy ægis o'er the burning field,
 Where, like the sea, the waves of battle move ?
 Or have thy soft piteous eyes beheld
 The weary wanderer thro' the desert rove ?
 Or does th' afflicted man thy heavenly bosom
 move ?

BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

WHEN silver snow decks Susan's clothes,
 And jewel hangs at th' shepherd's nose,
 The blushing bank is all my care,
 With hearth so red and walls so fair.
 "Heap the sea-coal, come, heap it higher,
 "The oaken log lay on the fire :"
 The well-wash'd stools, a circling row,
 With lad and lass, how fair the show !

The merry can of nut-brown ale,
 The laughing jest, the love-sick tale,
 Till, tired of chat, the game begins,
 The lasses prick the lads with pins ;
 Roger from Dolly twitch'd the stool,
 She falling, kiss'd the ground, poor fool !
 She blush'd so red, with side-long glance
 At hob-nail Dick, who grieved the chance.
 But now for Blind-man's Buff they call ;
 Of each incumbrance clear the hall—
 Jenny her silken kerchief folds,
 And blear-eyed Will the black lot holds,
 Now laughing, stops, with " Silence, hush !"
 And Peggy Pout gives Sam a push.—
 The Blind-man's arms, extended wide,
 Sam slips between :—" O woe betide
 Thee, clumsy Will !"—but tittering Kate
 Is penn'd up in the corner strait !
 And now Will's eyes beheld the play,
 He thought his face was t'other way.
 " Now, Kitty, now ; what chance hast thou,
 " Roger so near thee trips, I vow !"
 She catches him—then Roger ties
 His own head up—but not his eyes ;
 For thro' the slender cloth he sees,
 And runs at Sam, who slips with ease
 His clumsy hold ; and, dodging round,
 Sukey is tumbled on the ground !—
 " See what it is to play unfair !

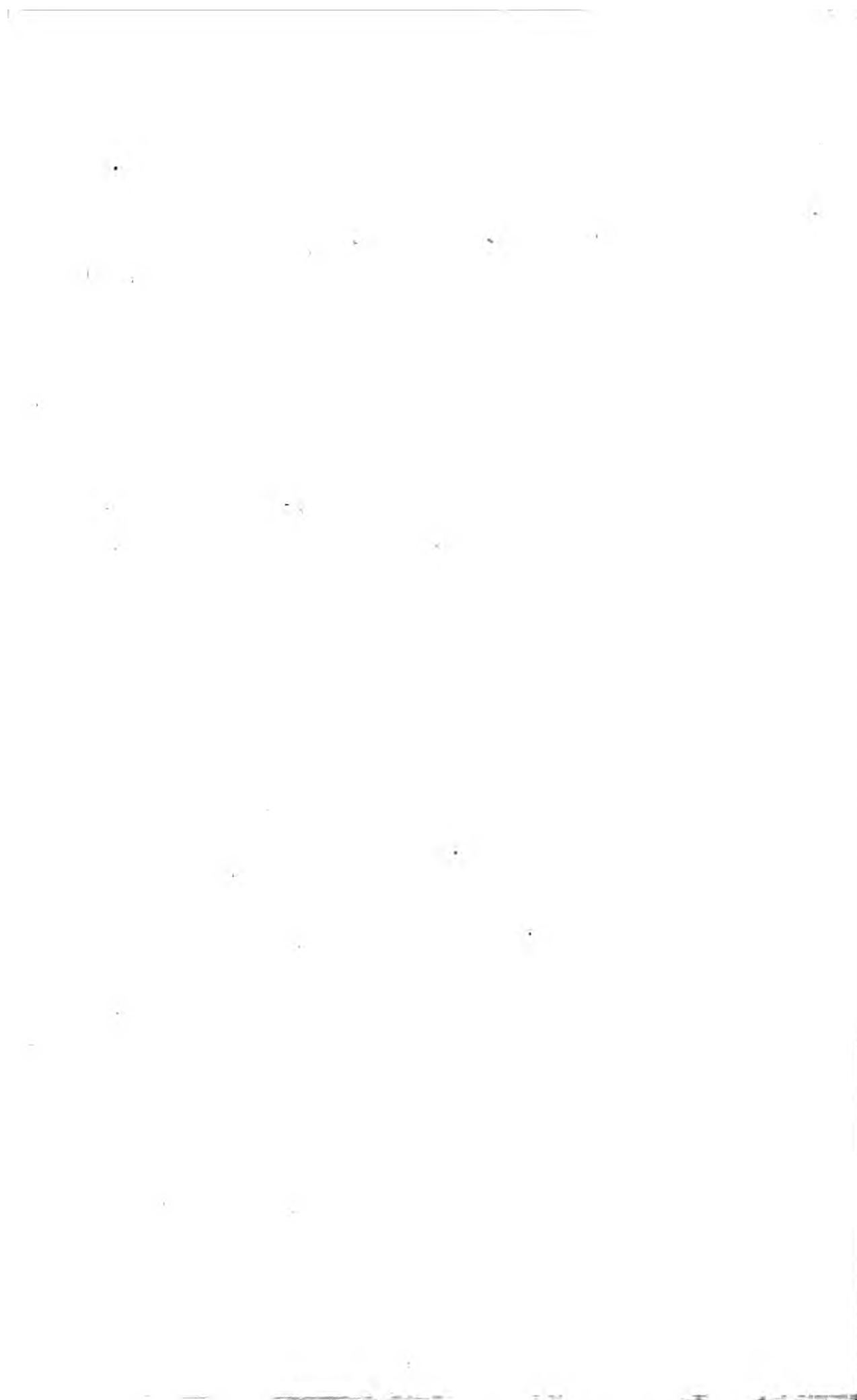
“Where cheating is, there’s mischief there.”
But Roger still pursues the chace,—
“He sees! he sees!” cries softly Grace;
“O Roger, thou, unskill’d in art
“Must, surer bound, go through thy part!”
Now, Kitty, pert, repeats the rhymes
And Roger turns him round three times,
Then pauses ere he starts; but Dick
Was mischief-bent upon a trick;
Down on his hands and knees he lay
Directly in the Blind-man’s way,
Then cries out “hem!” Hodge heard, and ran
With hood-wink’d chance—sure of his man;
But down he came.—Alas, how frail
Our best of hopes, how soon they fail!
With crimson drops he stains the ground,
Confusion startles all around!
Poor piteous Dick supports his head,
And fain would cure the hurt he made;
But Kitty hasted with a key
And down his back they straight convey
The cold relief—the blood is stay’d
And Hodge again holds up his head.
Such are the fortunes of the game,
And those who play should stop the same
By wholesome laws, such as—all those
Who on the blinded man impose,
Stand in his stead; as long ago
When men were first a nation grown,

SKETCHES.

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Lawless they lived, till wantonness
And liberty began t' increase,
And one man lay in another's way ;
Then laws were made to keep fair play.





KING EDWARD THE THIRD.

PERSONS.

KING EDWARD.

THE BLACK PRINCE.

QUEEN PHILIPPA.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

SIR JOHN CHANDOS.

SIR THOMAS DAGWORTH.

SIR WALTER MANNY.

LORD AUDLEY.

LORD PERCY.

BISHOP.

WILLIAM, *Dagworth's man.*

PETER BLUNT, *a common soldier.*

KING EDWARD THE 'THIRD.

SCENE. *The Coast of France, King Edward and Nobles before it. The Army.*

KING.



THOU to whose fury the nations are
But as dust! maintain thy servant's
right.
Without thine aid, the twisted mail
and spear,
And forged helm, and shield of seven-times beaten
brass,
Are idle trophies of the vanquisher.
When confusion rages, when the field is in a flame,
When the cries of blood tear horror from heaven,
And yelling death runs up and down the ranks,
Let Liberty, the charter'd right of Englishmen,
Won by our fathers in many a glorious field,
Enerve my soldiers; let Liberty
Blaze in each countenance and fire the battle.
The enemy fight in chains, invisible chains, but
heavy;

Their minds are fetter'd ; then how can they be free,
While, like the mounting flame,
We spring to battle o'er the floods of death ?
And these fair youths, the flower of England,
Venturing their lives in my most righteous cause,
O sheathe their hearts with triple steel, that they
May emulate their fathers' virtues.

And thou, my son, be strong ; thou fightest for a
crown

That death can never ravish from thy brow,
A crown of glory—but from thy very dust
Shall beam a radiance, to fire the breasts
Of youth unborn ! Our names are written equal
In fame's wide-trophied hall ; 'tis ours to gild
The letters, and to make them shine with gold
That never tarnishes : whether Third Edward,
Or the Prince of Wales, or Montacute, or Mortimer,
Or ev'n the least by birth, shall gain the brightest
fame,

Is in His hand to whom all men are equal.
The world of men are like the numerous stars
That beam and twinkle in the depth of night,
Each clad in glory according to his sphere ;
But we, that wander from our native seats,
And beam forth lustre on a darkling world,
Grow large as we advance ! and some perhaps
The most obscure at home, that scarce were seen
To twinkle in their sphere, may so advance,
That the astonish'd world, with upturn'd eyes,

Regardless of the moon, and those that once were
bright,
Stand only for to gaze upon their splendour !

*[He here knights the Prince and other
young Nobles.]*

Now let us take a just revenge for those
Brave Lords, who fell beneath the bloody axe
At Paris. Thanks, noble Harcourt, for 'twas
By your advice we landed here in Brittany,
A country not yet sown with destruction,
And where the fiery whirlwind of swift war
Has not yet swept its desolating wing.—
Into three parties we divide by day
And separate march, but join again at night ;
Each knows his rank, and Heaven marshal all.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE. *English Court ; Lionel, Duke of Clarence,
Queen Philippa, Lords, Bishop, &c.*

CLARENCE.

MY Lords, I have by the advice of her
Whom I am doubly bound to obey, my
Parent
And my Sovereign, called you together.
My task is great, my burden heavier than
My unfledged years ;

Yet, with your kind assistance, Lords, I hope
England shall dwell in peace : that while my father
Toils in his wars, and turns his eyes on this
His native shore, and sees commerce fly round
With his white wings, and sees his golden London
And her silver Thames, throng'd with shining spires
And corded ships, her merchants buzzing round
Like summer bees, and all the golden cities
In his land, overflowing with honey,
Glory may not be dimm'd with clouds of care.
Say, Lords, should not our thoughts be first to
commerce?
My lord bishop, you would recommend us agri-
culture?

BISHOP.

Sweet Prince, the arts of peace are great,
And no less glorious than those of war,
Perhaps more glorious in the philosophic mind.
When I sit at my home, a private man,
My thoughts are on my gardens and my fields,
How to employ the hand that lacketh bread.
If Industry is in my diocese
Religion will flourish ; each man's heart
Is cultivated and will bring forth fruit :
This is my private duty and my pleasure.
But as I sit in council with my prince,
My thoughts take in the general good of the whole,

And England is the land favour'd by Commerce ;
For Commerce, though the child of Agriculture,
Fosters his parent, who else must sweat and toil
And gain but scanty fare. Then, my dear Lord,
Be England's trade our care ; and we, as tradesmen,
Looking to the gain of this, our native land.

CLARENCE.

O my good lord,
True wisdom drops like honey from your tongue
As from a worshipp'd oak ! Forgive my lords,
My talkative youth that speaks not merely what
My narrow observation has pick'd up,
But what I have concluded from your lessons :
Now, by the Queen's advice, I ask your leave
To dine to-morrow with the Mayor of London :
If I obtain your leave, I have another boon
To ask, which is the favour of your company ;
I fear Lord Percy will not give me leave.

PERCY.

Dear Sir, a prince should always keep his state,
And grant his favours with a sparing hand,
Or they are never rightly valued.
These are my thoughts : yet it were best to go :
But keep a proper dignity, for now
You represent the sacred person of
Your father ; 'tis with princes as the sun ;

If not sometimes o'erclouded, we grow weary
Of his officious glory.

CLARENCE.

Then you will give me leave to shine sometimes,
My lord?

LORD.

Thou hast a gallant spirit, which I fear
Will be imposed on by the closer sort! [*Aside*]

CLARENCE.

Well, I'll endeavour to take
Lord Percy's advice; I have been used so much
To dignity, that I'm sick on't.

QUEEN PHILIPPA.

Fie, fie, Lord Clarence, you proceed not to business,
But speak of your own pleasures.
I hope their lordships will excuse your giddiness.

CLARENCE.

My lords, the French have fitted out many
Small ships of war, that like to ravening wolves,
Infest our English seas, devouring all
Our burden'd vessels, spoiling our naval flocks.
The merchants do complain, and beg our aid.

THE THIRD.

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PERCY.

'The merchants are rich enough ;
Can they not help themselves ?

BISHOP.

They can and may ; but how to gain their will
Requires our countenance and help.

PERCY.

When that they find they must, my lord, they will :
Let them but suffer awhile, and you shall see
They will bestir themselves.

BISHOP.

Lord Percy cannot mean that we should suffer
This disgrace ; if so, we are not sovereigns
Of the sea : our right that Heaven gave
To England, when at the birth of Nature
She was seated in the deep, the Ocean ceased
His mighty roar, and fawning, play'd around
Her snowy feet, and own'd his awful Queen.
Lord Percy, if the heart is sick, the head
Must be aggrieved ; if but one member suffer,
The heart doth fail. You say, my Lord, the
 merchants
Can, if they will, defend themselves against
These rovers : this is a noble scheme,
Worthy the brave Lord Percy, and as worthy
His generous aid to put it into practice.

PERCY.

Lord Bishop, what was rash in me, is wise
In you ; I dare not own the plan. 'Tis not
Mine. Yet will I, if you please,
Quickly to the Lord Mayor, and work him onward
To this most glorious voyage ; on which cast
I'll set my whole estate,
But we will bring these Gallic rovers under.

QUEEN PHILIPPA.

Thanks, brave Lord Percy ; you have the thanks
Of England's Queen, and will, ere long, of England.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE. *At Cressy. Sir Thomas Dagworth and
Lord Audley meeting.*

AUDLEY.

GOOD-MORROW, brave Sir Thomas ; the
bright morn
Smiles on our army, and the gallant sun
Springs from the hills like a young hero
Into the battle, shaking his golden locks
Exultingly : this is a promising day.

DAGWORTH.

Why, my Lord Audley, I don't know.
Give me your hand, and now I'll tell you what
I think you do not know. Edward's afraid of Philip.

AUDLEY.

Ha! Ha! Sir Thomas! you but joke;
Did you e'er see him fear? At Blanchetaque,
When almost singly he drove six thousand
French from the ford, did he fear then?

DAGWORTH.

Yes, fear; that made him fight so.

AUDLEY.

By the same reason I might say 'tis fear
That makes you fight.

DAGWORTH.

Mayhap you may: look upon Edward's face,
No one can say he fears. But when he turns
His back, then I will say it to his face;
He is afraid: he makes us all afraid.
I cannot bear the enemy at my back.
Now here we are at Cressy; where to-morrow,
To-morrow we shall know. I say, Lord Audley,
That Edward runs away from Philip.

AUDLEY.

Perhaps you think the Prince too, is afraid?

DAGWORTH.

No ; God forbid ! I'm sure he is not.
He is a young lion. O I have seen him fight
And give command, and lightning has flash'd
From his eyes across the field : I have seen him
Shake hands with death, and strike a bargain for
The enemy ; he has danced in the field
Of battle, like the youth at morrice-play.
I'm sure he's not afraid, nor Warwick, nor none
None of us but me ; and I am very much afraid.

AUDLEY.

Are you afraid, too, Sir Thomas ?
I believe that as much as I believe
The King's afraid ; but what are you afraid of?

DAGWORTH.

Of having my back laid open ; we turn
Our backs to the fire, till we shall burn our skirts.

AUDLEY.

And this, Sir Thomas, you call fear ? Your fear
Is of a different kind then from the King's ;
He fears to turn his face, and you your back.
I do not think, Sir Thomas, you know what fear is.

Enter Sir John Chandos.

CHANDOS.

Good-morrow, Generals ; I give you joy ;
Welcome to the fields of Cressy. Here we stop,
And wait for Philip.

DAGWORTH.

I hope so.

AUDLEY.

There, Sir Thomas ; do you call that fear ?

DAGWORTH.

I don't know ; perhaps he takes it by fits.
Why, noble Chandos, look you here—
One rotten sheep spoils the whole flock ;
And if the bell-wether is tainted, I wish
The Prince may not catch the distemper too.

CHANDOS.

Distemper, Sir Thomas, what distemper ?
I have not heard.

DAGWORTH.

Why, Chandos, you are a wise man,
I know you understand me ; a distemper
The King caught here in France of running away.

AUDLEY.

Sir Thomas, you say you have caught it too.

DAGWORTH.

And so will the whole army ; 'tis very catching,
For when the coward runs, the brave man totters.
Perhaps the air of the country is the cause.
I feel it coming upon me, so I strive against it ;
You yet are whole, but after a few more
Retreats, we all shall know how to retreat
Better than fight.—To be plain, I think retreating
Too often, takes away a soldier's courage.

CHANDOS.

Here comes the King himself: tell him your
thoughts
Plainly, Sir Thomas.

DAGWORTH.

I've told him before, but his disorder
Makes him deaf.

Enter King Edward and Black Prince.

KING.

Good-morrow, Generals; when English courage fails,
Down goes our right to France.

But we are conquerors everywhere ; nothing
Can stand our soldiers ; each man is worthy
Of a triumph. Such an army of heroes
Ne'er shouted to the Heavens, nor shook the field.
Edward, my son, thou art
Most happy, having such command : the man
Were base who were not fired to deeds
Above heroic, having such examples.

PRINCE.

Sire, with respect and deference I look
Upon such noble souls, and wish myself
Worthy the high command that Heaven and you
Have given me. When I have seen the field glow,
And in each countenance the soul of war
Curb'd by the manliest reason, I have been wing'd
With certain victory ; and 'tis my boast,
And shall be still my glory. I was inspired
By these brave troops.

DAGWORTH.

Your Grace had better make them
All Generals.

KING.

Sir Thomas Dagworth, you must have your joke,
And shall, while you can fight as you did at
The Ford.

DAGWORTH.

I have a small petition to your Majesty.

KING.

What can Sir Thomas Dagworth ask
That Edward can refuse?

DAGWORTH.

I hope your Majesty cannot refuse so great
A trifle ; I've gilt your cause with my best blood,
And would again, were I not forbid
By him whom I am bound to obey : my hands
Are tied up, my courage shrunk and wither'd,
My sinews slacken'd, and my voice scarce heard ;
Therefore I beg I may return to England.

KING.

I know not what you could have ask'd, Sir Thomas,
That I would not have sooner parted with
Than such a soldier as you have been, and such
a friend :
Nay, I will know the most remote particulars
Of this your strange petition ; that, if I can,
I still may keep you here.

DAGWORTH.

Here on the fields of Cressy we are settled
Till Philip springs the timorous covey again.

The wolf is hunted down by causeless fear;
The lion flees, and fear usurps his heart
Startled, astonish'd at the clamorous cock;
The Eagle, that doth gaze upon the sun,
Fears the small fire that plays about the fen;
If, at this moment of their idle fear,
The dog doth seize the wolf, the forester the lion,
The negro in the crevice of the rock
Doth seize the soaring eagle; undone by flight,
They tame submit: such the effect flight has
On noble souls. Now hear its opposite:
The timorous stag starts from the thicket wild,
The fearful crane springs from the splashy fen,
The shining snake glides o'er the bending grass,
The stag turns head, and bays the crying hounds;
The crane o'ertaken fighteth with the hawk;
The snake doth turn, and bite the padding foot.
And if your Majesty's afraid of Philip,
You are more like a lion than a crane:
Therefore I beg I may return to England.

KING.

Sir Thomas, now I understand your mirth,
Which often plays with wisdom for its pastime,
And brings good counsel from the breast of laughter.
I hope you'll stay and see us fight this battle
And reap rich harvest in the fields of Cressy;
Then go to England, tell them how we fight,
And set all hearts on fire to be with us.

E

Philip is plumed, and thinks we flee from him,
Else he would never dare to attack us. Now,
Now the quarry's set ! and Death doth sport
In the bright sunshine of this fatal day.

DAGWORTH.

Now my heart dances and I am as light
As the young bridegroom going to be married.
Now must I to my soldiers, get them ready,
Furbish our armours bright, new plume our helms ;
And we will sing like the young housewives busied
In the dairy ; my feet are wing'd, but not
For flight, an please your grace.

KING.

If all my soldiers are as pleased as you,
'Twill be a gallant thing to fight or die ;
Then I can never be afraid of Philip.

DAGWORTH.

A raw-boned fellow t'other day pass'd by me ;
I told him to put off his hungry looks—
He answer'd me, " I hunger for another battle."
I saw a little Welshman with a fiery face ;
I told him he look'd like a candle half
Burn'd out ; he answer'd, he was "*pig* enough
"To light another *pattle*." Last night, beneath
The moon I walk'd abroad, when all had pitch'd

Their tents, and all were still ;
I heard a blooming youth singing a song
He had composed, and at each pause he wiped
His dropping eyes. The ditty was, " if he
" Return'd victorious, he should wed a maiden
" Fairer than snow, and rich as midsummer."
Another wept, and wish'd health to his father.
I chid them both, but gave them noble hopes.
These are the minds that glory in the battle,
And leap and dance to hear the trumpet sound.

KING.

Sir Thomas Dagworth, be thou near our person ;
Thy heart is richer than the vales of France :
I will not part with such a man as thee.
If Philip came arm'd in the ribs of death,
And shook his mortal dart against my head,
Thou'dst laugh his fury into nerveless shame !
Go now, for thou art suited to the work,
Throughout the camp ; inflame the timorous,
Blow up the sluggish into ardour, and
Confirm the strong with strength, the weak inspire,
And wing their brows with hope and expectation :
Then to our tent return, and meet to council.
[*Exit Dagworth.*]

CHANDOS.

That man's a hero in his closet, and more
A hero to the servants of his house

Than to the gaping world; he carries windows
In that enlarged breast of his, that all
May see what's done within.

PRINCE.

He is a genuine Englishman, my Chandos,
And hath the spirit of Liberty within him.
Forgive my prejudice, Sir John; I think
My Englishmen the bravest people on
The face of the earth.

CHANDOS.

Courage, my Lord, proceeds from self-dependence;
Teach man to think he's a free agent,
Give but a slave his liberty, he'll shake
Off sloth, and build himself a hut, and hedge
A spot of ground; this he'll defend; 'tis his
By right of nature: thus set in action,
He will still move onward to plan conveniences,
Till glory fires his breast to enlarge his castle,
While the poor slave drudges all day, in hope
To rest at night.

KING.

O Liberty, how glorious art thou!
I see thee hovering o'er my army, with
Thy wide-stretch'd plumes; I see thee
Lead them on to battle;

I see thee blow thy golden trumpet while
Thy sons shout the strong shout of victory !
O noble Chandos, think thyself a gardener,
My son a vine, which I commit unto
Thy care ; prune all extravagant shoots, and guide
Th' ambitious tendrils in the path of wisdom ;
Water him with thy advice, and Heaven
Rain freshening dew upon his branches. And,
O Edward, my dear son ! learn to think lowly of
Thyself, as we may all each prefer other—
'Tis the best policy, and 'tis our duty.

[*Exit King Edward.*]

PRINCE.

And may our duty, Chandos, be our pleasure.—
Now we are alone, Sir John, I will unburden
And breathe my hopes into the burning air,
Where thousand deaths are posting up and down,
Commission'd to this fatal field of Cressy.
Methinks I see them arm my gallant soldiers,
And gird the sword upon each thigh, and fit
Each shining helm, and string each stubborn bow,
And dance to the neighing of our steeds.
Methinks the shout begins, the battle burns ;
Methinks I see them perch on English crests,
And roar the wild flame of fierce war upon
The thronged enemy ! In truth, I am too full ;
It is my sin to love the noise of war.

Chandos, thou seest my weakness ; strong nature
Will bend or break us : my blood, like a springtide,
Does rise so high to overflow all bounds
Of moderation ; while Reason, in her frail bark,
Can see no shore or bound for vast ambition.
Come, take the helm, my Chandos,
That my full-blown sails overset me not
In the wild tempest. Condemn my venturous
youth
That plays with danger, as the innocent child,
Unthinking, plays upon the viper's den :
I am a coward in my reason, Chandos.

CHANDOS.

You are a man, my prince, and a brave man,
If I can judge of actions ; but your heat
Is the effect of youth, and want of use :
Use makes the armed field and noisy war
Pass over as a summer cloud, unregarded,
Or but expected as a thing of course.
Age is contemplative ; each rolling year
Brings forth fruit to the mind's treasure-house ;
While vacant youth doth crave and seek about
Within itself, and findeth discontent,
Then, tired of thought, impatient takes the wing,
Seizes the fruits of time, attacks experience,
Roams round vast Nature's forest, where no bounds
Are set, the swiftest may have room, the strongest
Find prey ; till tired at length, sated and tired

With the changing sameness, old variety,
We sit us down, and view our former joys
With distaste and dislike.

PRINCE.

Then if we must tug for experience
Let us not fear to beat round Nature's wilds
And rouse the strongest prey : then if we fall,
We fall with glory. I know the wolf
Is dangerous to fight, not good for food,
Nor is the hide a comely vestment ; so
We have our battle for our pains. I know
That youth has need of age to point fit prey,
And oft the stander-by shall steal the fruit
Of the other's labour. This is philosophy ;
These are the tricks of the world ; but the pure
soul
Shall mount on native wings, disdaining little sport,
And cut a path into the heaven of glory,
Leaving a track of light for men to wonder at.
I'm glad my father does not hear me talk ;
You can find friendly excuses for me, Chandos.
But do you not think, Sir John, that if it please
The Almighty to stretch out my span of life,
I shall with pleasure view a glorious action,
Which my youth master'd ?

CHANDOS.

Considerate age, my Lord, views motives,

And not acts; when neither warbling voice
Nor trilling pipe is heard, nor pleasure sits
With trembling age, the voice of Conscience then,
Sweeter than music in a summer's eve,
Shall warble round the snowy head, and keep
Sweet symphony to feather'd angels, sitting
As guardians round your chair; then shall the
pulse
Beat slow, and taste, and touch, and sight, and
sound, and smell,
That sing and dance round Reason's fine-wrought
throne,
Shall flee away, and leave him all forlorn;
Yet not forlorn if Conscience is his friend.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE. *In Sir Thomas Dagworth's Tent.*
Dagworth and William his man.

DAGWORTH.

BRING hither my armour, William;
Ambition is the growth of every clime.

WILLIAM.

Does it grow in England, sir?

DAGWORTH.

Ay, it grows most in lands most cultivated.

WILLIAM.

Then it grows most in France ; the vines here
Are finer than any we have in England.

DAGWORTH.

Ay, but the oaks are not.

WILLIAM.

What is the tree you mentioned ? I don't think
I ever saw it.

DAGWORTH.

Ambition.

WILLIAM.

Is it a little creeping root that grows in ditches ?

DAGWORTH.

Thou dost not understand me, William.
It is a root that grows in every breast ;
Ambition is the desire or passion that one man
Has to get before another, in any pursuit after
glory ;
But I don't think you have any of it.

WILLIAM.

Yes, I have ; I have a great ambition to know everything, sir.

DAGWORTH.

But when our first ideas are wrong, what follows must all be wrong, of course ; 'tis best to know a little, and to know that little aright.

WILLIAM.

Then, sir, I should be glad to know if it was not ambition that brought over our king to France to fight for his right ?

DAGWORTH.

Though the knowledge of that will not profit thee much, yet I will tell you that it was ambition.

WILLIAM.

Then if ambition is a sin, we are all guilty in coming with him, and in fighting for him.

DAGWORTH.

Now, William, thou dost thrust the question home ; but I must tell you that guilt being an act of the mind, none are guilty but those whose minds are prompted by that same ambition.

WILLIAM.

Now, I always thought that a man might be guilty of doing wrong without knowing it was wrong.

DAGWORTH.

Thou art a natural philosopher, and knowest truth by instinct ; while reason runs aground, as we have run our argument. Only remember, William, all have it in their power to know the motives of their own actions, and 'tis a sin to act without some reason.

WILLIAM.

And whoever acts without reason may do a great deal of harm without knowing it.

DAGWORTH.

Thou art an endless moralist.

WILLIAM.

Now there's a story come into my head, that I will tell your honour, if you'll give me leave.

DAGWORTH.

No, William, save it till another time ; this is no time for story-telling ; but here comes one who is as entertaining as a good story.

Enter Peter Blunt.

PETER.

Yonder's a musician going to play before the King ; it's a new song about the French and English, and the Prince has made the minstrel a squire, and given him I don't know what, and I can't tell whether he don't mention us all one by one ; and he is to write another about all us that are to die, that we may be remembered in Old England, for all our blood and bones are in France; and a great deal more that we shall all hear by and by ; and I came to tell your honour, because you love to hear war-songs.

DAGWORTH.

And who is this minstrel, Peter, dost know ?

PETER.

O ay, I forgot to tell that ; he has got the same name as Sir John Chandos, that the Prince is always with—the wise man that knows us all as well as your honour, only ain't so good-natured.

DAGWORTH.

I thank you, Peter, for your information, but not for your compliment, which is not true : there's as

much difference between him and me as between glittering sand and fruitful mould ; or shining glass and a wrought diamond, set in rich gold, and fitted to the finger of an Emperor ; such is that worthy Chandos.

PETER.

I know your honour does not think anything of yourself, but everybody else does.

DAGWORTH.

Go, Peter, get you gone ; flattery is delicious, even from the lips of a babbler.

[Exit Peter.]

WILLIAM.

I never flatter your honour.

DAGWORTH.

I don't know that.

WILLIAM.

Why you know, sir, when we were in England, at the tournament at Windsor, and the Earl of Warwick was tumbled over, you asked me if he did not look well when he fell ? and I said no, he looked very foolish ; and you was very angry with me for not flattering you.

DAGWORTH.

You mean that I was angry with you for not flattering the Earl of Warwick.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE. *Sir Thomas Dagworth's Tent; Sir Thomas Dagworth. To him enter Sir Walter Manny.*

SIR WALTER.

SIR THOMAS DAGWORTH, I have been weeping
Over the men that are to die to-day.

DAGWORTH.

Why, brave Sir Walter, you or I may fall.

SIR WALTER.

I know this breathing flesh must lie and rot,
Cover'd with silence and forgetfulness ;
Death roams in cities' smoke, and in still night,
When men sleep in their beds, walketh about !
How many in walled cities lie and groan,
Turning themselves upon their beds,

Talking with death, answering his hard demands !
How many walk in darkness, terrors are round
The curtains of their beds, destruction is
Ready at the door ! How many sleep
In earth, cover'd with stones and deathly dust,
Resting in quietness, whose spirits walk
Upon the clouds of heaven, to die no more !
Yet death is terrible, tho' borne on angels' wings.
How terrible then is the field of death,
Where he doth rend the vault of heaven,
And shake the gates of hell !
O Dagworth, France is sick ; the very sky,
Tho' sunshine light it, seems to me as pale
As the pale fainting man on his death-bed,
Whose face is shewn by light of sickly taper.
It makes me sad and sick at very heart ;
Thousands must fall to-day.

DAGWORTH.

Thousands of souls must leave this prison-house,
To be exalted to those heavenly fields,
Where songs of triumph, palms of victory,
Where peace, and joy, and love, and calm content,
Sit singing in the azure clouds, and strew
Flowers of heaven's growth over the banquet-table.
Bind ardent hope upon your feet like shoes,
Put on the robe of preparation,
The table is prepared in shining heaven.

The flowers of immortality are blown ;
Let those that fight fight in good stedfastness,
And those that fall shall rise in victory.

SIR WALTER.

I've often seen the burning field of war,
And often heard the dismal clang of arms ;
But never, till this fatal day of Cressy,
Has my soul fainted with these views of death.
I seem to be in one great charnel-house,
And seem to scent the rotten carcasses :
I seem to hear the dismal yells of death,
While the black gore drops from his horrid jaws :
Yet I not fear the monster in his pride.—
But oh ! the souls that are to die to-day !

DAGWORTH.

Stop, brave Sir Walter ; let me drop a tear,
Then let the clarion of war begin ;
I'll fight and weep, 'tis in my country's cause ;
I'll weep and shout for glorious liberty.
Grim war shall laugh and shout, decked in tears,
And blood shall flow like streams across the
 meadows,
That murmur down their pebbly channels, and
Spend their sweet lives to do their country service :
Then shall England's verdure shoot, her fields
 shall smile,

Her ships shall sing across the foaming sea,
Her mariners shall use the flute and viol,
And rattling guns, and black and dreary war,
Shall be no more.

SIR WALTER.

Well, let the trumpet sound, and the drum beat ;
Let war stain the blue heavens with bloody banners ;
I'll draw my sword, nor ever sheathe it up
Till England blow the trump of victory,
Or I lay stretch'd upon the field of death !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE. *In the Camp. Several of the Warriors met at the King's Tent with a Minstrel, who sings the following Song :*

O SONS of Trojan Brutus, clothed in war,
Whose voices are the thunder of the field,
Rolling dark clouds o'er France, muffling the sun
In sickly darkness like a dim eclipse,
Threatening as the red brow of storms, as fire
Burning up nations in your wrath and fury !

F

Your ancestors came from the fires of Troy
(Like lions roused by lightning from their dens,
Whose eyes do glare against the stormy fires),
Heated with war, fill'd with the blood of Greeks,
With helmets hewn, and shields cover'd with gore,
In navies black, broken with wind and tide !

They landed in firm array upon the rocks
Of Albion ; they kiss'd the rocky shore ;
" Be thou our mother and our nurse," they said ;
" Our children's mother, and thou shalt be our
grave,
" The sepulchre of ancient Troy, from whence
" Shall rise cities, and thrones, and arms, and awful
powers."

Our fathers swarm from the ships. Giant voices
Are heard from the hills, the enormous sons
Of Ocean run from rocks and caves ; wild men,
Naked and roaring like lions, hurling rocks,
And wielding knotty clubs, like oaks entangled
Thick as a forest, ready for the axe.

Our fathers move in firm array to battle,
The savage monsters rush like roaring fire ;
Like as a forest roars with crackling flames
When the red lightning, borne by furious storms,
Lights on some woody shore ; the parched heavens
Rain fire into the molten raging sea !

The smoking trees are strewn upon the shore,
Spoil'd of their verdure ! O how oft have they
Defied the storm that howled o'er their heads !
Our fathers, sweating, lean on their spears, and
view

The mighty dead : giant bodies, streaming blood,
Dread visages, frowning in silent death.

Then Brutus spoke, inspired ; our fathers sit
Attentive on the melancholy shore :

Hear ye the voice of Brutus—" The flowing waves
" Of time come rolling o'er my breast," he said ;
" And my heart labours with futurity :
" Our sons shall rule the empire of the sea.

" Their mighty wings shall stretch from east to west,
" Their nest is in the sea ; but they shall roam
" Like eagles for the prey ; nor shall the young
" Crave or be heard ; for plenty shall bring forth,
" Cities shall sing, and vales in rich array
" Shall laugh, whose fruitful laps bend down with
fulness.

" Our sons shall rise from thrones in joy,
" Each one buckling on his armour ; Morning
" Shall be prevented by their swords gleaming,
" And Evening hear their song of victory !
" Their towers shall be built upon the rocks,
" Their daughters shall sing, surrounded with
shining spears !

“Liberty shall stand upon the cliffs of Albion,
“Casting her blue eyes over the green ocean ;
“Or, towering, stand upon the roaring waves,
“Stretching her mighty spear o’er distant lands ;
“While, with her eagle wings, she covereth
“Fair Albion’s shore, and all her families.”



PROLOGUE

INTENDED FOR A DRAMATIC PIECE OF KING EDWARD
THE FOURTH.

O FOR a voice like thunder, and a tongue
To drown the throat of war! When the
senses
Are shaken, and the soul is driven to madness,
Who can stand? When the souls of the oppress'd
Fight in the troubled air that rages, who can stand?
When the whirlwind of fury comes from the
Throne of God, when the frowns of His counte-
nance
Drive the nations together, who can stand?
When Sin claps his broad wings over the battle,
And sails rejoicing in the flood of death;
When souls are torn to everlasting fire,
And fiends of hell rejoice upon the slain,
O who can stand? O who hath caused this?
O who can answer at the throne of God?
The Kings and Nobles of the land have done it!
Hear it not, Heaven, thy ministers have done it!

PROLOGUE TO KING JOHN.

JUSTICE hath heaved a sword to plunge in Albion's breast ; for Albion's sins are crimson-dyed, and the red scourge follows her desolate sons. Then Patriot rose ; full oft did Patriot rise, when Tyranny hath stained fair Albion's breast with her own children's gore. Round his majestic feet deep thunders roll ; each heart does tremble, and each knee grows slack. The stars of heaven tremble ; the roaring voice of war, the trumpet, calls to battle ! Brother in brother's blood must bathe, rivers of death ! O land most hapless ! O beauteous island, how forsaken ! Weep from thy silver fountains, weep from thy gentle rivers ! The angel of the island weeps ! Thy widowed virgins weep beneath thy shades ! Thy aged fathers gird themselves for war ! The sucking infant lives to die in battle ; the weeping mother feeds him for the slaughter ! The husbandman doth leave his bending harvest ! Blood cries afar ! The land doth sow itself ! The glittering youth of courts must gleam in arms ! The aged senators their ancient swords assume ! The trembling sinews of

old age must work the work of death against their progeny ; for Tyranny hath stretched his purple arm, and "Blood," he cries : the chariots and the horses, the noise of shout, and dreadful thunder of the battle heard afar ! Beware, O proud ! thou shalt be humbled ; thy cruel brow, thine iron heart is smitten, though lingering Fate is slow. O yet may Albion smile again, and stretch her peaceful arms, and raise her golden head, exultingly ! Her citizens shall throng about her gates, her mariners shall sing upon the sea, and myriads shall to her temples crowd ! Her sons shall joy as in the morning ! Her daughters sing as to the rising year !



A WAR SONG.

TO ENGLISHMEN.

PREPARE, prepare the iron helm of war,
Bring forth the lots, cast in the spacious orb ;
The Angel of Fate turns them with mighty hands,
And casts them out upon the darken'd earth !

Prepare, prepare.

Prepare your hearts for Death's cold hand ! prepare
Your souls for flight, your bodies for the earth !
Prepare your arms for glorious victory !
Prepare your eyes to meet a holy God !

Prepare, prepare.

Whose fatal scroll is that ? Methinks 'tis mine !
Why sinks my heart, why faltereth my tongue ?
Had I three lives, I'd die in such a cause,
And rise, with ghosts, over the well-fought field.

Prepare, prepare.

The arrows of Almighty God are drawn !
Angels of Death stand in the lowering heavens !
Thousands of souls must seek the realms of light,
And walk together on the clouds of heaven !

Prepare, prepare.

Soldiers, prepare ! Our cause is Heaven's cause ;
 Soldiers, prepare ! Be worthy of our cause :
 Prepare to meet our fathers in the sky :
 Prepare, O troops that are to fall to-day !
 Prepare, prepare.

Alfred shall smile, and make his harp rejoice ;
 The Norman William and the learned Clerk,
 And Lion-Heart, and black-brow'd Edward with
 His loyal queen shall rise, and welcome us !
 Prepare, prepare.

THE COUCH OF DEATH.

THE veiled Evening walked solitary down the western hills, and Silence reposed in the valley ; the birds of day were heard in their nests, rustling in brakes and thickets ; and the owl and bat flew round the darkening trees : all is silent when Nature takes her repose.—In former times, on such an evening, when the cold clay breathed with life, and our ancestors, who now sleep in their graves, walked on the steadfast globe, the remains of a family of the tribes of Earth, a mother and a sister were gathered to the sick bed of a youth. Sorrow linked them together ; leaning on

one another's necks alternately—like lilies, dropping tears in each other's bosom, they stood by the bed like reeds bending over a lake, when the evening drops trickle down. His voice was low as the whisperings of the woods when the wind is asleep, and the visions of Heaven unfold their visitation. “Parting is hard, and death is terrible ; I seem to “walk through a deep valley, far from the light of “day, alone and comfortless ! The damps of death “fall thick upon me ! Horrors stare me in the face ! “I look behind, there is no returning ; Death follows “after me ; I walk in regions of Death, where no “tree is ; without a lantern to direct my steps, “without a staff to support me.”—Thus he laments through the still evening, till the curtains of darkness were drawn ! Like the sound of a broken pipe, the aged woman raised her voice. “O my “son, my son, I know but little of the path thou “goest ! But lo, there is a God, who made the “world ; stretch out thy hand to Him.” The youth replied, like a voice heard from a sepulchre, “My hand is feeble, how should I stretch it “out ? My ways are sinful, how should I raise mine “eyes ? My voice hath used deceit, how should I “call on Him who is Truth ? My breath is loath- “some, how should He not be offended ? If I lay “my face in the dust, the grave opens its mouth “for me ; if I lift up my head, sin covers me as a “cloak ! O my dear friends, pray ye for me !

“ stretch forth your hands, that my helper may
 “ come ! Through the void space I walk between
 “ the sinful world and eternity ! Beneath me burns
 “ eternal fire ! O for a hand to pluck me forth !”
 As the voice of an omen heard in the silent valley,
 when the few inhabitants cling trembling together ;
 as the voice of the Angel of Death, when the thin
 beams of the moon give a faint light, such was this
 young man’s voice to his friends ! Like the bub-
 bling waters of the brook in the dead of night, the
 aged woman raised her cry, and said, “ O voice,
 “ that dwellest in my breast, can I not cry, and
 “ lift my eyes to heaven ? Thinking of this, my
 “ spirit is turned within me into confusion ! O my
 “ child, my child ! is thy breath infected ? so is
 “ mine. As the deer wounded, by the brooks of
 “ water, so the arrows of sin stick in my flesh ; the
 “ poison hath entered into my marrow.”—Like
 rolling waves upon a desert shore, sighs succeeded
 sighs ; they covered their faces, and wept ! The
 youth lay silent—his mother’s arm was under his
 head ; he was like a cloud tossed by the winds, till
 the sun shine, and the drops of rain glisten, the
 yellow harvest breathes, and the thankful eyes of
 the villagers are turned up in smiles. The traveller
 that hath taken shelter under an oak, eyes the
 distant country with joy ! Such smiles were seen
 upon the face of the youth ! a visionary hand
 wiped away his tears, and a ray of light beamed

around his head ! All was still. The moon hung not out her lamp, and the stars faintly glimmered in the summer sky; the breath of night slept among the leaves of the forest; the bosom of the lofty hill drank in the silent dew, while on his majestic brow the voice of angels is heard, and stringed sounds ride upon the wings of night. The sorrowful pair lift up their heads, hovering angels are around them, voices of comfort are heard over the Couch of Death, and the youth breathes out his soul with joy into eternity.

CONTEMPLATION.

WHO is this, that with unerring step dares tempt the wilds, where only Nature's foot hath trod? 'Tis Contemplation, daughter of the grey Morning! Majestical she steppeth, and with her pure quill on every flower writeth Wisdom's name: now lowly bending, whispers in mine ear, "O man, how great, how little thou! O man, slave of each moment, lord of eternity! seest thou where Mirth sits on the painted cheek? doth it not seem ashamed of such a place, and grow immoderate to brave it out? O what an humble garb true Joy puts on! Those who want Happiness must stoop to find it; it is a flower that grows in every vale. Vain foolish man,

“that roams on lofty rocks, where, 'cause his
“garments are swoln with wind, he fancies he is
“grown into a giant! Lo, then, Humility, take it,
“and wear it in thine heart; lord of thyself, thou
“then art lord of all. Clamour brawls along the
“streets, and destruction hovers in the city's smoke;
“but on these plains, and in these silent woods, true
“joys descend: here build thy nest; here fix thy
“staff; delights blossom around; numberless beau-
“ties blow; the green grass springs in joy, and the
“nimble air kisses the leaves; the brook stretches
“its arms along the velvet meadow, its silver in-
“habitants sport and play. The youthful sun joys
“like a hunter roused to the chase; he rushes up the
“sky, and lays hold on the immortal coursers of
“day; the sky glitters with the jingling trappings!
“Like a triumph, season follows season, while the
“airy music fills the world with joyful sounds.” I
answered, “Heavenly goddess! I am wrapped
“in mortality, my flesh is a prison, my bones the
“bars of death, Misery builds over our cottage
“roofs, and Discontent runs like a brook. Even
“in childhood, sorrow slept with me in my cradle;
“he followed me up and down in the house when
“I grew up; he was my school-fellow: thus he
“was in my steps and in my play, till he became
“to me as my brother. I walked through dreary
“places with him, and in church-yards; and oft I
“found myself sitting by Sorrow on a tomb-stone!”

SAMSON.

SAMSON, the strongest of the children of men,
I sing ; how he was foiled by woman's arts,
by a false wife brought to the gates of death ! O
Truth, that shinest with propitious beams, turning
our earthly night to heavenly day, from presence
of the Almighty Father ! thou visitest our darkling
world with blessed feet, bringing good news of Sin
and Death destroyed ! O white-robed Angel, guide
my timorous hand to write as on a lofty rock with
iron pen the words of truth, that all who pass may
read.—Now Night, noon-tide of damned spirits,
over the silent earth spreads her pavilion, while in
dark council sat Philistia's lords ; and where
strength failed, black thoughts in ambush lay.
Their helmed youth and aged warriors in dust
together lie, and Desolation spreads his wings over
the land of Palestine : from side to side the land
groans, her prowess lost, and seeks to hide her
bruised head under the mists of night, breeding
dark plots. For Dalila's fair arts have long been
tried in vain ; in vain she wept in many a trea-
cherous tear. "Go on, fair traitress ; do thy
"guileful work ; ere once again the changing
"moon her circuit hath performed, thou shalt over-
"come, and conquer him by force unconquerable,
"and wrest his secret from him. Call thine alluring

"arts and honest-seeming brow, the holy kiss of
 "love and the transparent tear ; put on fair linen,
 "that with the lily vies, purple and silver ; neglect
 "thy hair, to seem more lovely in thy loose attire ;
 "put on thy country's pride, deceit ; and eyes of
 "love decked in mild sorrow, and sell thy lord for
 "gold."—For now, upon her sumptuous couch
 reclined, in gorgeous pride, she still entreats, and
 still she grasps his vigorous knees with her fair
 arms. "Thou lovest me not ! thou'rt war, thou
 "art not love ! O foolish Dalila ! O weak woman !
 "it is death clothed in flesh thou lovest, and thou
 "hast been encircled in his arms ! Alas, my lord,
 "what am I calling thee ? Thou art my God !
 "To thee I pour my tears for sacrifice morning
 "and evening : my days are covered with sorrow !
 "shut up, darkened : by night I am deceived !
 "Who says that thou wast born of mortal kind ?
 "Destruction was thy father, a lioness suckled
 "thee, thy young hands tore human limbs, and
 "gorged human flesh ! Come hither, Death ; art
 "thou not Samson's servant ? 'Tis Dalila that
 "calls ; thy master's wife ; no, stay, and let thy
 "master do the deed : one blow of that strong
 "arm would ease my pain ; then I should lay at
 "quiet and have rest. Pity forsook thee at thy
 "birth ! O Dagon furious, and all ye gods of
 "Palestine, withdraw your hand ! I am but a
 "weak woman. Alas, I am wedded to your

“enemy! I will go mad, and tear my crisped
“hair; I’ll run about, and pierce the ears o’ th’
“gods! O Samson, hold me not; thou lovest
“me not! Look not upon me with those deathful
“eyes! Thou wouldst my death, and death
“approaches fast.”—Thus, in false tears, she
bathed his feet, and thus she day by day oppressed
his soul: he seemed a mountain, his brow among
the clouds; she seemed a silver stream, his feet
embracing. Dark thoughts rolled to and fro in
his mind, like thunder-clouds troubling the sky;
his visage was troubled; his soul was distressed.
“Though I should tell her all my heart, what can
“I fear? Though I should tell this secret of my
“birth, the utmost may be warded off as well when
“told as now.” She saw him moved, and thus
resumes her wiles: “Samson, I’m thine; do with
“me what thou wilt; my friends are enemies; my
“life is death; I am a traitor to my nation, and
“despised; my joy is given into the hands of him
“who hates me, using deceit to the wife of his
“bosom. Thrice hast thou mocked me and grieved
“my soul. Didst thou not tell me with green
“withs to bind thy nervous arms, and after that,
“when I had found thy falsehood, with new ropes
“to bind thee fast? I knew thou didst but mock
“me. Alas, when in thy sleep I bound thee with
“them to try thy truth, I cried, The Philistines be
“upon thee, Samson! Then did Suspicion wake

"thee ; how didst thou rend the feeble ties ! Thou
 "fearest nought, what shouldst thou fear ? Thy
 "power is more than mortal, none can hurt thee ;
 "thy bones are brass, thy sinews are iron ! Ten
 "thousand spears are like the summer grass ; an
 "army of mighty men are as flocks in the valleys :
 "what canst thou fear ? I drink my tears like
 "water ; I live upon sorrow ! O worse than wolves
 "and tigers, what canst thou give when such a
 "trifle is denied me ? But, oh ! at last thou mockest
 "me, to shame my over-fond inquiry ! Thou toldest
 "me to weave thee to the beam by thy strong
 "hair ; I did even that to try thy truth : but when
 "I cried, The Philistines be upon thee ! then didst
 "thou leave me to bewail that Samson loved me
 "not." He sat, and inward grieved, he saw and
 loved the beauteous suppliant, nor could conceal
 aught that might appease her ; then, leaning on
 her bosom, thus he spoke : "Hear, O Dalila !
 "doubt no more of Samson's love ; for that fair
 "breast was made the ivory palace of my inmost
 "heart, where it shall lie at rest ; for sorrow is the
 "lot of all of woman born : for care was I brought
 "forth, and labour is my lot : nor matchless might,
 "nor wisdom, nor every gift enjoyed, can from
 "the heart of man hide sorrow. Twice was my
 "birth foretold from heaven, and twice a sacred
 "vow enjoined me that I should drink no wine,
 nor eat of any unclean thing, for holy unto

“Israel’s God I am, a Nazarite even from my
“mother’s womb. Twice was it told, that it might
“not be broken: Grant me a son, kind Heaven,
“Manoa cried; but Heaven refused! Childless
“he mourned, but thought his God knew best.
“In solitude, though not obscure, in Israel he
“lived, till venerable age came on: his flocks
“increased, and plenty crowned his board: be-
“loved, revered of man! But God hath other
“joys in store. Is burdened Israel his grief?
“The son of his old age shall set it free! The
“venerable sweetener of his life receives the pro-
“mise first from Heaven. She saw the maidens
“play, and blessed their innocent mirth; she
“blessed each new-joined pair; but from her the
“long-wished deliverer shall spring. Pensive, alone
“she sat within the house, when busy day was
“fading, and calm evening, time for contemplation,
“rose from the forsaken east, and drew the curtains
“of heaven: pensive she sat, and thought on Israel’s
“grief, and silent prayed to Israel’s God; when
“lo! an angel from the fields of light entered the
“house! His form was manhood in the prime,
“and from his spacious brow shot terrors through
“the evening shade! But mild he hailed her—
“Hail, highly favoured! said he; for lo! thou
“shalt conceive, and bear a son, and Israel’s
“strength shall be upon his shoulders, and he
“shall be called Israel’s Deliverer. Now, therefore,

“drink no wine, and eat not any unclean thing ;
 “for he shall be a Nazarite to God.—Then, as a
 “neighbour, when his evening tale is told, departs,
 “his blessing leaving ; so seemed he to depart : she
 “wondered with exceeding joy, nor knew he was
 “an angel. Manoa left his fields to sit in the
 “house, and take his evening’s rest from labour—
 “the sweetest time that God has allotted mortal
 “man. He sat, and heard with joy, and praised
 “God, who Israel still doth keep. The time rolled
 “on, and Israel groaned oppressed. The sword
 “was bright, while the ploughshare rusted, till
 “hope grew feeble, and was ready to give place
 “to doubting ; then prayed Manoa : O Lord, thy
 “flock is scattered on the hills ! The wolf teareth
 “them, Oppression stretches his rod over our
 “land, our country is ploughed with swords, and
 “reaped in blood ! The echoes of slaughter reach
 “from hill to hill ! Instead of peaceful pipe the
 “shepherd bears a sword ; the ox-goad is turned
 “into a spear ! O when shall our Deliverer come ?
 “The Philistine riots on our flocks, our vintage is
 “gathered by bands of enemies ! Stretch forth thy
 “hand, and save.—Thus prayed Manoa. The aged
 “woman walked into the field, and lo ! again the
 “angel came, clad as a traveller fresh risen on
 “his journey. She ran and called her husband,
 “who came and talked with him. O man of God,
 “said he, thou comest from far ! Let us detain

“thee while I make ready a kid, that thou mayest
“sit and eat, and tell us of thy name and warfare ;
“that when thy sayings come to pass, we may
“honour thee. The angel answered, My name is
“Wonderful ; inquire not after it, seeing it is a
“secret ; but, if thou wilt, offer an offering unto
“the Lord.”



SONGS OF INNOCENCE

AND OF

EXPERIENCE:

*SHOWING THE TWO CONTRARY STATES
OF THE HUMAN SOUL.*



SONGS OF INNOCENCE.

[1789.]

INTRODUCTION.



PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me :—

“ Pipe a song about a lamb :”

So I piped with merry cheer.

“ Piper, pipe that song again :”

So I piped ; he wept to hear.

“ Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,

Sing thy songs of happy cheer :”

So I sung the same again,

While he wept with joy to hear.

“ Piper, sit thee down and write

In a book that all may read—”

So he vanish'd from my sight ;

And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

THE SHEPHERD.

HOW sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot ;
From the morn to the evening he strays ;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lambs' innocent call,
And he hears the ewes' tender reply ;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their shepherd is nigh.

THE ECHOING GREEN.

THE sun does arise
And make happy the skies ;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring ;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say :
“ Such, such were the joys
When we, all girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen
On the echoing green.”

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry ;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest ;
And sport no more seen
On the darkening green.

THE LAMB.

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o’er the mead ;

Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright ;
Gave thee such a tender voice
Making all the vales rejoice ;
 Little lamb, who made thee ?
 Dost thou know who made thee ?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb :
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
 Little lamb, God bless thee,
 Little lamb, God bless thee.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY.

MY mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but oh ! my soul is white ;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap, and kissed me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say :—

“Look on the rising sun,—there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away ;
And flowers, and trees, and beast, and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon-day.

“And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love ;
And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

“For when our souls have learnt the heat to bear,
The clouds will vanish, we shall hear his voice,
Saying, ‘Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.’”

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me ;
And thus I say to little English boy,—
“When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

“I’ll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father’s knee ;
And then I’ll stand, and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.”

THE BLOSSOM.

MERRY, merry sparrow,
Under leaves so green,
A happy blossom

Sees you, swift as arrow,
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my bosom.

Pretty, pretty robin,
Under leaves so green,
A happy blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing,
Pretty, pretty robin,
Near my bosom.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

WHEN my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "'weep, 'weep, 'weep, 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said:
"Hush, Tom, never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet; and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight;
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and
Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins and set them all free ;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind ;
And the angel told Tom if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke ; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold Tom was happy
and warm :
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

THE LITTLE BOY LOST.

FATHER ! father ! where are you going ?
O, do not walk so fast.
Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
Or else I shall be lost.

The night was dark, no father was there ;
The child was wet with dew ;
The mire was deep and the child did weep,
And away the vapour flew.

THE LITTLE BOY FOUND.

THE little boy lost in the lonely fen,
Led by the wandering light,
Began to cry ; but God, ever nigh,
Appear'd like his father in white ;

He kiss'd the child, and by the hand led,
And to his mother brought,
Who, in sorrow pale, thro' the lonely dale,
Her little boy weeping sought.

A CRADLE SONG.

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head ;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles in the night
Hover over my delight ;
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dove-like sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dove-like moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled ;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee.

Smiles on thee, on me, on all ;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles ;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

THE DIVINE IMAGE.

TO mercy, pity, peace, and love
All pray in their distress ;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For mercy, pity, peace, and love
Is God, our Father dear ;
And mercy, pity, peace, and love
Is man His child and care.

For mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face ;
And love, the human form divine,
And peace, the human dress.

Then every man of every clime
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form
In heathen, Turk, or Jew ;
Where mercy, love, and pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too.

HOLY THURSDAY.

'T WAS on a Holy Thursday, their innocent
faces clean,
The children walking two and two, in red and blue
and green,
Grey-headed beadles walk'd before, with wands as
white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames'
waters flow.

O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of
London town ;
Seated in companies, they sit with radiance all their
own.

The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of
lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their
innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the
voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven
among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of
the poor ;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from
your door.

NIGHT.

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine ;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight ;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright.
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are cover'd warm ;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey
They pitying stand and weep, -
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels most heedful
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,

Saying, " Wrath, by his meekness
And by his health, sickness
Is driven away
From our immortal day.

" And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep ;
Or think on him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold."

SPRING.

SOUND the flute !
Now it's mute.
Birds delight
Day and night ;
Nightingale
In the dale,
Lark in sky,
Merrily,
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little boy,
Full of joy ;
Little girl,
Sweet and small ;

Cock does crow,
So do you.
Merry voice,
Infant noise,
Merrily, merrily to welcome in the year.

Little lamb,
Here I am ;
Come and lick
My white neck ;
Let me pull
Your soft wool ;
Let me kiss
Your soft face :
Merrily, merrily, we welcome in the year.

NURSE'S SONG.

WHEN the voices of children are heard
on the green
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone
down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.

No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep ;
Besides in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all cover'd with sheep.

Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.
The little ones leap'd and shouted and laugh'd
And all the hills echoed.



INFANT JOY.

I HAVE no name,
I am but two days old.
What shall I call thee?
I happy am,
Joy is my name.—
Sweet joy befall thee !

Pretty joy !
Sweet joy but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee.
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee !

A DREAM.

ONCE a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, wilder'd, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke I heard her say :

"O my children ! do they cry ?
Do they hear their father sigh ?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me."

Pitying I dropp'd a tear ;
But I saw a glow-worm near :
Who replied, "What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night ?

"I am set to light the ground
While the beetle goes his round :
Follow now the beetle's hum ;
Little wanderer, hie thee home."

LAUGHING SONG.

WHEN the green woods laugh with the
voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it ;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing Ha, ha, he !

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
When our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live and be happy and join with me
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha, ha, he !

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

I LOVE to rise in a summer morn
When the birds sing on every tree ;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the sky-lark sings with me.
O ! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
O! it drives all joy away;
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour;
Nor in my book can I take delight
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird, that is born for joy,
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring?

O father and mother, if buds are nipp'd,
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are stripp'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and care's dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?

ON ANOTHER'S SORROW.

CAN I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no, never can it be,
Never, never can it be.

And can he who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear,

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast;
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear;

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O! no, never can it be,
Never, never can it be.

He doth give his joy to all ;
He becomes an infant small ;
He becomes a man of woe ;
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh
And thy Maker is not by ;
Think not thou canst weep a tear
And thy Maker is not near.

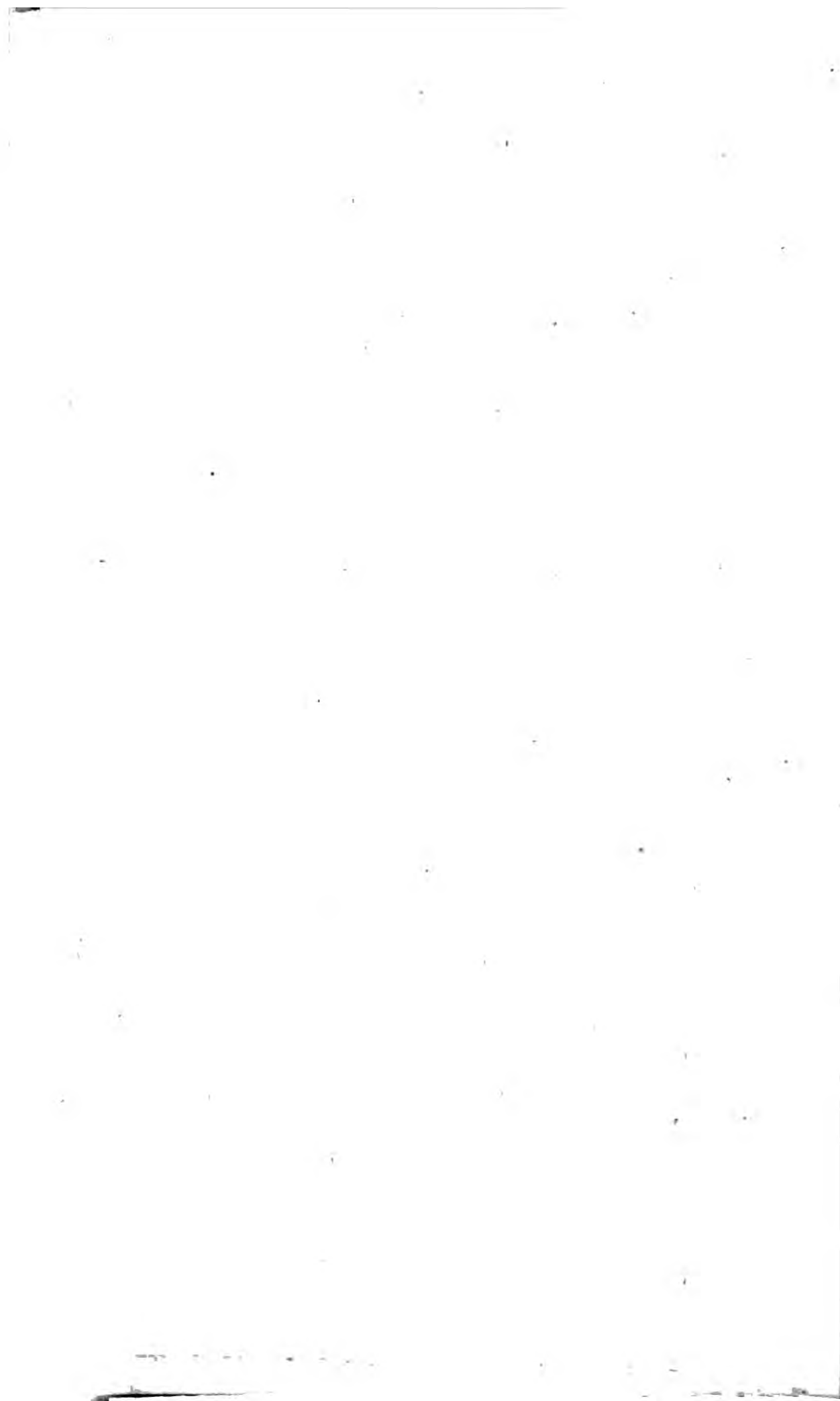
O ! he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy :
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

THE VOICE OF THE ANCIENT BARD.

YOUTH of delight, come hither,
And see the opening morn,
Image of truth new-born.
Doubt is fled and clouds of reason,
Dark disputes and artful teasing.
Folly is an endless maze,
Tangled roots perplex her ways,
How many have fallen there !
They stumble all night over bones of the dead,
And feel they know not what but care,
And wish to lead others when they should be led.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE.

[1794.]



SONGS OF EXPERIENCE.

INTRODUCTION.



HEAR the voice of the Bard,
Who present, past, and future sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees.

Calling the lapsed soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
That might control
The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew !

O Earth, O Earth, return !
Arise from out the dewy grass ;
Night is worn ;
And the morn
Rises from the slumbrous mass.

Turn away no more :
Why wilt thou turn away ?
The starry floor,
The watery shore,
Is given thee till the break of day.

EARTH'S ANSWER.

EARTH raised up her head
From the darkness dread and drear.
Her light fled,
Stony dread !
And her locks cover'd with grey despair.

Prison'd on watery shore,
Starry Jealousy does keep my den :
Cold and hoar,
Weeping o'er,
I hear the father of the ancient men.

Selfish father of men,
Cruel, jealous, selfish fear,
Can delight,
Chain'd in night,
The virgins of youth and morning bear ?

Does spring hide its joy
When buds and blossoms grow ?
Does the sower
Sow by night,
Or the ploughman in darkness plough ?

EXPERIENCE.

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Break this heavy chain
That does freeze my bones around.
Selfish ! vain !
Eternal bane !
That free love with bondage bound.

INFANT SORROW.

MY mother groan'd, my father wept,
Into the dangerous world I leapt ;
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swaddling-bands,
Bound and weary, I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.

MY PRETTY ROSE-TREE.

A FLOWER was offer'd to me,
Such a flower as May never bore ;
But I said, I've a pretty rose-tree,
And I pass'd the sweet flower o'er.

Then I went to my pretty rose-tree,
To tend her by day and by night ;
But my rose turn'd away with jealousy,
And her thorns were my only delight.

AH ! SUN-FLOWER.

AH, Sunflower ! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun ;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller's journey is done ;

Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go.

THE LILY.

THE modest rose puts forth a thorn,
The humble sheep a threatening horn ;
While the lily white shall in love delight,
Nor a thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright.

THE SICK ROSE.

O ROSE, thou art sick :
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy ;
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

NURSE'S SONG.

WHEN the voices of children are heard on
the green,
And whisperings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone
down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Your spring and your day are wasted in play
And your winter and night in disguise.

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE.

LOVE seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care ;
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair.

So sung a little clod of clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet ;
But a pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet :

Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a hell in heaven's despite.

THE GARDEN OF LOVE.

I WENT to the garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen :
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door ;
So I turn'd to the garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore ;

And I saw it was filled with graves
And tombstones where flowers should be :
And priests in black gowns were walking their
rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

THE FLY.

LITTLE fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brush'd away.

EXPERIENCE.

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Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance,
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death ;

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live
Or if I die.

THE TIGER.

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

A LITTLE BOY LOST.

N OUGHT loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know :

And, father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more ?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door.

The priest sat by and heard the child,
In trembling zeal he seized his hair :
He led him by his little coat,
And all admired the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high :
“ Lo ! what a fiend is here ! ” said he :
“ One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy mystery.”

The weeping child could not be heard,
The weeping parents wept in vain ;
They stripp’d him to his little shirt
And bound him in an iron chain ;

And burn’d him in a holy place
Where many had been burn’d before :
The weeping parents wept in vain.
Are such things done on Albion’s shore ?

HOLY THURSDAY.

IS this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand ?

Is that trembling cry a song ?
Can it be a song of joy ?
And so many children poor ?
It is a land of poverty !

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare.
And their ways are fill'd with thorns :
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

THE ANGEL.

I DREAMT a dream ! what can it mean ?
And that I was a maiden queen,
Guarded by an angel mild :
Witless woe was ne'er beguiled.

And I wept both night and day,
And he wiped my tears away,
And I wept both day and night,
And hid from him my heart's delight.

So he took his wings and fled ;
Then the morn blush'd rosy red ;
I dried my tears and arm'd my fears
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my angel came again :
I was arm'd, he came in vain ;
For the time of youth was fled,
And grey hairs were on my head.

THE LITTLE GIRL LOST.

IN futurity
I prophetic see
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek
For her maker meek ;
And the desert wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away,
Lovely Lyca lay.

SONGS OF

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told ;
She had wander'd long
Hearing wild birds' song.

Sweet sleep, come to me
Underneath this tree.
Do father, mother weep ?
Where can Lyca sleep ?

Lost in desert wild
Is your little child.
How can Lyca sleep
If her mother weep ?

If her heart does ache,
Then let Lyca wake ;
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

Frowning, frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes.

Sleeping Lyca lay :
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
View'd the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood,
And the virgin view'd,
Then he gamboll'd round
O'er the hallow'd ground.

Leopards, tigers play
Round her as she lay,
While the lion old
Bow'd his mane of gold,

And her bosom lick,
And upon her neck
From his eyes of flame
Ruby tears there came.

While the lioness
Loosed her slender dress,
And naked they convey'd
To caves the sleeping maid.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND.

ALL the night in woe
Lyca's parents go
Over valleys deep,
While the deserts weep.

SONGS OF

Tired and woe-begone,
Hoarse with making moan,
Arm in arm seven days
They traced the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep
Among shadows deep,
And dream they see their child
Starved in desert wild.

Pale, through pathless ways
The fancied image strays,
Famish'd, weeping, weak,
With hollow piteous shriek.

Rising from unrest
The trembling woman press'd
With feet of weary woe :
She could no further go.

In his arms he bore
Her, arm'd with sorrow sore ;
Till before their way
A couching lion lay.

Turning back was vain :
Soon his heavy mane
Bore them to the ground ;
Then he stalk'd around,

Smelling to his prey ;
But their fears allay
When he licks their hands,
And silent by them stands.

They look upon his eyes
Fill'd with deep surprise ;
And, wondering, behold
A spirit arm'd in gold—

On his head a crown ;
On his shoulders down
Flow'd his golden hair ;
Gone was all their care.

“ Follow me,” he said ;
“ Weep not for the maid ;
“ In my palace deep
“ Lyca lies asleep.”

Then they followed
Where the vision led ;
And saw their sleeping child
Among tigers wild.

To this day they dwell
In a lonely dell ;
Nor fear the wolvish howl,
Nor the lion's growl.

LONDON.

I WANDER thro' each charter'd street
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appals ;
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace-walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

TO TIRZAH.

W HATE'ER is born of mortal birth
Must be consumed with the earth,
To rise from generation free :
Then what have I to do with thee ?

The sexes sprung from shame and pride
Blow'd in the morn ; in evening died.
But mercy changed death into sleep :
The sexes rose to work and weep.

Thou mother of my mortal part
With cruelty didst mould my heart,
And with false, self-deceiving tears
Didst bind my nostrils, eyes and ears ;

Didst close my tongue in senseless clay
And me to mortal life betray :
The death of Jesus set me free :
Then what have I to do with thee ?

IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY.

THE HUMAN ABSTRACT.

PITY would be no more
If we did not make somebody poor ;
And mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we.

And mutual fear brings peace,
Till the selfish loves increase ;
Then cruelty knits a snare
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears ;
Then humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of mystery over his head ;
And the caterpillar and fly
Feed on the mystery.

And it bears the fruit of deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat ;
And the raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The gods of the earth and sea
Sought through Nature to find this tree ;
But their search was all in vain.
There grows one in the human brain.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

A LITTLE black thing among the snow,
Crying, “ ’weep ! ’weep ! ” in notes of woe :
Where are thy father and mother, say ?
—They are both gone up to the church to pray.
Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winter’s snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and
King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

A POISON-TREE.

I WAS angry with my friend ;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe ;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears ;
And I sunned it with smiles
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright ;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veil'd the pole :
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

A LITTLE GIRL LOST.

C HILDREN of the future age,
Reading this indignant page,
Know that in a former time,
Love, sweet love, was thought a crime !

In the Age of Gold,
Free from winter's cold,
Youth and maiden bright,
To the holy light,
Naked in the sunny beams delight.

Once a youthful pair,
Fill'd with softest care,
Met in garden bright,
Where the holy light
Had just removed the curtains of the night.

There in rising day,
On the grass they play ;
Parents were afar,
Strangers came not near ;
And the maiden soon forgot her fear.

Tired with kisses sweet,
They agree to meet
When the silent sleep
Waves o'er heaven's deep,
And the weary tired wanderers weep.

To her father white
Came the maiden bright ;
But his loving look,
Like the holy book,
All her tender limbs with terror shook.

Ona, pale and weak,
To thy father speak !
O the trembling fear,
O the dismal care
That shakes the blossoms of my hoary hair !

A DIVINE IMAGE.

CRUELTY has a human heart
And Jealousy a human face ;
Terror the human form divine,
And Secrecy the human dress.

The human dress is forged iron,
The human form a fiery forge,
The human face a furnace seal'd,
The human heart its hungry gorge.

THE LITTLE VAGABOND.

DEAR mother, dear mother, the church is cold,
But the ale-house is healthy and pleasant
'and warm ;
Besides I can tell where I am used well,
Such usage in heaven will never do well.

But if at the church they would give us some ale
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,
We'd sing and we'd pray all the livelong day :
Nor ever once wish from the church to stray.

Then the parson might preach and drink and sing,
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring :
And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at church,
Would not have bandy children nor fasting nor
birch.

And God like a Father rejoicing to see
His children as pleasant and happy as He,
Would have no more quarrel with the devil or the
barrel,
But kiss him and give him both drink and apparel.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE SMILE.

 HERE is a smile of love,
And there is a smile of deceit,
And there is a smile of smiles
In which these two smiles meet.

And there is a frown of hate,
And there is a frown of disdain,
And there is a frown of frowns
Which you strive to forget in vain.

For it sticks in the heart's deep core
And it sticks in the deep back-bone ;
And no smile that ever was smiled,
But only one smile alone,—

That betwixt the cradle and grave
It only once smiled can be ;
And when it once is smiled
There's an end to all misery.

THE GOLDEN NET.

THREE Virgins at the break of day,
“Whither, young man, whither away?
Alas for woe ! alas for woe !”
They cry, and tears for ever flow.
The one was clothed in flames of fire,
The other clothed in iron wire,
The other clothed in tears and sighs,
Dazzling bright before my eyes.
They bore a net of golden twine
To hang upon the branches fine.
Pitying I wept to see the woe
That Love and Beauty undergo,
To be consumed in burning fires
And in ungratified desires.
And in tears clothed night and day
Melted all my soul away.
When they saw my tears, a smile
That did heaven itself beguile,
Bore the golden net aloft,
As on downy pinions soft,
Over the morning of my day.
Underneath the net I stray,
Now entreating Burning Fire,
Now entreating Iron Wire,
Now entreating Tears and Sighs.
O when will the morning rise ?

THE MENTAL TRAVELLER.

I TRAVELL'D through a land of men,
A land of men and women too,
And heard and saw such dreadful things
As cold earth-wanderers never knew.

For there the babe is born in joy
That was begotten in dire woe ;
Just as we reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did sow.

And if the babe is born a boy,
He's given to a woman old,
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.

She binds iron thorns around his head,
She pierces both his hands and feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side,
To make it feel both cold and heat.

Her fingers number every nerve,
Just as a miser counts his gold ;
She lives upon his shrieks and cries,
And she grows young as he grows old :

Till he becomes a bleeding youth,
And she becomes a virgin bright,
Then he rends up his manacles,
And binds her down for his delight.

He plants himself in all her nerves,
Just as a husbandman his mould,
And she becomes his dwelling-place,
And garden fruitful seventy-fold :

An aged shadow, soon he fades,
Wandering round an earthly cot,
Full-filled all with gains and gold,
Which he by industry had got ;

And these are the gems of the human soul,
The rubies and pearls of a love-sick eye,
The countless gold of the aching heart,
The martyr's groan, and the lover's sigh.

They are his meat, they are his drink ;
He feeds the beggar and the poor,
And the wayfaring traveller,
For ever open is his door.

His grief is their eternal joy ;
They make the roofs and walls to ring—
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little female babe does spring ;

And she is all of solid fire
And gems and gold, that none his hand
Dares stretch to touch her baby form,
Or wrap her in his swaddling band.

But she comes to the man she loves,
If young or old, or rich or poor,
They soon drive out the aged host,
A beggar at another's door.

He wanders, weeping, far away,
Until some other take him in ;
Oft blind and age-bent, sore distress'd,
Until he can a maiden win :

And to allay his freezing age,
The poor man takes her in his arms ;
The cottage fades before his sight,
The garden and its lovely charms ;

The guests are scatter'd through the land,
For the eye altering alters all ;
The senses roll themselves in fear,
And the flat earth becomes a ball ;

The stars, sun, moon, all shrink away,
A desert vast without a bound,
And nothing left to eat or drink,
And a dark desert all around :

The honey of her infant lips,
The bread and wine of her sweet smile,
The wild game of her roving eye,
Does him to infancy beguile ;

For as he eats and drinks, he grows
Younger and younger every day ;
And on the desert wild they both
Wander in terror and dismay.

Like the wild stag she flees away,
Her fear plants many a thicket wild ;
While he pursues her night and day,
By various arts of love beguiled ;

By various arts of love and hate ;
Till (the wide desert planted o'er
With labyrinths of wayward love,
Where roam the lion, wolf, and boar,)

Till he becomes a wayward babe,
And she a weeping woman old.
Then many a lover wanders here ;
The sun and stars are nearer roll'd ;

The trees bring forth sweet ecstasy
To all who in the desert roam ;
Till many a city there is built,
And many a pleasant shepherd's home.

But when they find the frowning babe,
Terror strikes through the region wide,—
They cry, “The babe, the babe is born!”
And flee away on every side.

For who dare touch the frowning form,
His arm is wither'd to its root;
Lions, bears, wolves, all howling flee,
And every tree does shed its fruit.

And none can touch that frowning form,
Except it be a woman old;
She nails him down upon the rock,
And all is done as I have told.

THE LAND OF DREAMS.

A WAKE, awake, my little boy!
Thou wast thy mother's only joy.
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
Awake, thy father does thee keep.

“O, what land is the land of dreams,
What are its mountains, and what are its
streams?
O father, I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

“ Among the lambs clothed in white,
She walk’d with her Thomas in sweet delight ;
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn,
O, when shall I again return ? ”

Dear child, I also by pleasant streams,
Have wander’d all night in the land of dreams,
But though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side.

“ Father, O father ! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear ?
The land of dreams is better far
Above the light of the morning-star.”

MARY.

SWEET Mary, the first time she ever was there,
Came into the ball-room among the fair,
The young men and maidens around her throng,
And these are the words upon every tongue :—

“ An Angel is here from the heavenly climes,
Or again does return the golden times ;
Her eyes outshine every brilliant ray ;
She opens her lips—’tis the month of May.

“ Mary moves in soft beauty and conscious delight,
To augment with sweet smiles all the joys of the
 night ;
Nor once blushes to own to the rest of the fair
That sweet love and beauty are worthy our care.”

In the morning the villagers rose with delight
And repeated with pleasure the joys of the night,
And Mary arose among friends to be free,
But no friend from henceforward thou, Mary, shalt
 see.

Some said she was proud ; some call'd her a
 whore,
And some when she passed by, shut-to the door.
A damp cold came o'er her, her blushes all fled,
Her lilies and roses are blighted and shed.

“ O, why was I born with a different face ?
Why was I not born like this envious race ?
Why did Heaven adorn me with bountiful hand,
And then set me down in an envious land ?

“ To be weak as a lamb and smooth as a dove,
And not to raise envy is call'd Christian love ;
But if you raise envy your merit's to blame
For planting such spite in the weak and the tame.

“ I will humble my beauty : I will not dress fine ;
I will keep from the ball and my eyes shall not
shine ;
And if any girl's lover forsake her for me,
I'll refuse him my hand and from envy be free.”

She went out in morning, attired plain and neat :
“ Proud Mary's gone mad ! ” said the child in the
street.

She went out in morning in plain neat attire
And came home in evening bespatter'd with mire.

She trembled and wept, sitting on the bed-side,
She forgot it was night, and she trembled and
cried ;
She forgot it was night, she forgot it was morn,
Her soft memory imprinted with faces of scorn.

With faces of scorn and with eyes of disdain,
Like foul fiends inhabiting Mary's mild brain :
She remembers no face like the human divine,
All faces have envy, sweet Mary, but thine.

And thine is a face of sweet love in despair,
And thine is a face of mild sorrow and care,
And thine is a face of wild terror and fear,
That shall never be quiet till laid on its bier.

THE CRYSTAL CABINET.

THE maiden caught me in the wild,
Where I was dancing merrily,
She put me into her cabinet
And lock'd me up with a golden key.

This cabinet is form'd of gold
And pearl and crystal shining bright,
And within it opens into a world,
And a little lovely moony night.

Another England there I saw,
Another London with its Tower,
Another Thames and other hills,
And another pleasant Surrey bower.

Another maiden, like herself,
Translucent, lovely, shining clear,
Threefold each in the other closed ;
O what a pleasant trembling fear !

O what a smile, a threefold smile,
Fill'd me, that like a flame I burn'd ;
I bent to kiss the lovely maid
And found a threefold kiss return'd.

I strove to seize the inmost form
With ardour fierce and hands of flame,
But burst the crystal cabinet,
And like a weeping babe became—

A weeping babe upon the wild
And weeping woman pale reclined ;
And in the outward air again
I fill'd with woes the passing wind.

THE GREY MONK.

“ **I** DIE, I die ! ” the Mother said,
“ My children die for lack of bread.
What more has the merciless tyrant said ? ”
The Monk sat down on the stony bed.

The blood red ran from the grey monk's side,
His hands and feet were wounded wide,
His body bent, his arms and knees
Like to the roots of ancient trees.*

His eye was dry : no tear could flow :
A hollow groan first spoke his woe.
He trembled and shudder'd upon the bed ;
At length with a feeble cry he said :

“ When God commanded this hand to write
In the studious hours of deep midnight,
He told me the writing I wrote should prove
The bane of all that on earth I love.

“ My brother starved between two walls,
His children's cry my soul appals ;
I mock'd at the rack and grinding chain,
My bent body mocks their torturing pain.

* *Vide postea*, p. 154.

“Thy father drew his sword in the North,
With his thousands strong he marched forth;
Thy brother has arm’d himself in steel,
To avenge the wrongs thy children feel.

“But vain the sword and vain the bow,
They never can work war’s overthrow.
The hermit’s prayer and the widow’s tear
Alone can free the world from fear.

“For a tear is an intellectual thing,
And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,
And the bitter groan of the martyr’s woe
Is an arrow from the Almighty’s bow.

“The hand of vengeance found the bed
To which the purple tyrant fled;
The iron hand crush’d the tyrant’s head,
And became a tyrant in his stead.”

AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE.

TO see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.
A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage.
A dove-house fill’d with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell through all its regions.

A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare,
A fibre from the brain does tear.
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game-cock clipt and arm'd for fight
Does the rising sun affright.
Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.
The wild deer, wandering here and there,
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misused breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe.
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.
He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men.
He who the ox to wrath has moved
Shall never be by woman loved.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.

The caterpillar on the leaf
 Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
 Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
 For the last judgment draweth nigh.
 He who shall train the horse to war
 Shall never pass the polar bar.
 The beggar's dog and widow's cat
 Feed them, and thou wilt grow fat.
 The gnat that sings his summer's song
 Poison gets from slander's tongue.
 The poison of the snake and newt
 Is the sweat of Envy's foot.
 The poison of the honey-bee
 Is the artist's jealousy.
 The prince's robes and beggar's rags
 Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
 A truth that's told with bad intent
 Beats all the lies you can invent.
 It is right it should be so,
 Man was made for joy and woe ;
 And, when this we rightly know,
 Through the world we safely go.
 Joy and woe are woven fine,
 A clothing for the soul divine.
 Under every grief and pine
 Runs a joy with silken twine.
 The babe is more than swaddling-bands ;
 Throughout all these human lands

Tools were made, and born were hands,
Every farmer understands.
Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in eternity ;
This is caught by females bright,
And return'd to its own delight.
The bleat, the bark, bellow and roar,
Are waves that beat on heaven's shore.
The babe that weeps the rod beneath
Writes revenge in realms of death.
The beggar's rags, fluttering in air,
Does to rags the heavens tear.
The soldier, arm'd with sword and gun,
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.
The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore.
One mite, wrung from the labourer's hands,
Shall buy and sell the miser's lands ;
Or, if protected from on high,
Does that whole nation sell and buy.
He who mocks the infant's faith,
Shall be mock'd in age and death.
He who shall teach the child to doubt,
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the infant's faith,
Triumphs over hell and death.
The child's toys, and the old man's reasons,
Are the fruits of the two seasons.

The questioner, who sits so sly,
Shall never know how to reply ;
He who replies to words of doubt
Doth put the light of knowledge out.
The strongest poison ever known,
Came from Cæsar's laurel crown.
Nought can deform the human race,
Like to the armour's iron brace.
When gold and gems adorn the plough,
To peaceful arts shall envy bow.
A riddle, or the cricket's cry,
Is to doubt a fit reply.
The emmet's inch, and eagle's mile,
Make lame philosophy to smile.
He who doubts from what he sees,
Will ne'er believe, do what you please ;
If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out.
To be in a passion you good may do,
But no good if a passion is in you.
The whore and gambler, by the state
Licensed, build that nation's fate.
The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave old England's winding-sheet.
The winner's shout, the loser's curse,
Dance before dead England's hearse.
Every night and every morn
Some to misery are born ;

Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight ;
Some are born to sweet delight,
Some are born to endless night.
We are led to believe a lie,
When we see not through the eye,
Which was born in a night to perish in a night,
When the soul slept in beams of light.
God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night ;
But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.

LONG JOHN BROWN AND LITTLE
MARY BELL.

LITTLE Mary Bell had a fairy in a nut,
Long John Brown had the devil in his gut ;
Long John Brown loved little Mary Bell,
And the fairy drew the devil into the nutshell.

Her fairy skipp'd out, and her fairy skipp'd in,
He laugh'd at the devil, saying, " Love is a sin."
The devil he raged, and the devil he was wroth,
And the devil enter'd into the young man's broth.

He was soon in the gut of the loving young swain,
For John eat and drank to drive away love's pain ;

But all he could do he grew thinner and thinner,
Though he eat and drank as much as ten men for
his dinner.

Some said he had a wolf, in his stomach day and
night,
Some said he had the devil, and they guess'd right;
The fairy skipp'd about in his glory, joy, and pride,
And he laugh'd at the devil till poor John Brown
died.

Then the fairy skipp'd out of the old nutshell,
And woe and alack ! for pretty Mary Bell ;
For the devil crept in when the fairy skipp'd out,
And there goes Miss Bell with her fusty old nut.

WILLIAM BOND.

I WONDER whether the girls are mad,
And I wonder whether they mean to kill,
And I wonder if William Bond will die,
For assuredly he is very ill.

He went to church in a May morning,
Attended by fairies one, two, and three ;
But the angels of Providence drove them away,
And he return'd home in misery.

He went not out to the field nor fold,
He went not out to the village nor town,
But he came home in a black black cloud,
And took to his bed, and there lay down.

And an angel of Providence at his feet,
And an angel of Providence at his head,
And in the midst a black black cloud,
And in the midst the sick man on his bed.

And on his right hand was Mary Green,
And on his left hand was his sister Jane,
And their tears fell through the black black cloud,
To drive away the sick man's pain.

"William, if thou dost another love,
Dost another love better than poor Mary,
Go and take that other to be thy wife,
And Mary Green shall her servant be."

"Yes, Mary, I do another love,
Another I love far better than thee,
And another I will have for my wife ;
Then what have I to do with thee ?

"For thou art melancholy pale,
And on thy head is the cold moon's shine .
But she is ruddy and bright as day,
And the sunbeams dazzle from her eyne."

Mary trembled and Mary chill'd,
And Mary fell down on the right-hand floor,
That William Bond and his sister Jane
Scarce could recover Mary more.

When Mary woke and found her laid
On the right hand of her William dear,
On the right hand of his loved bed,
And saw her William Bond so near,

The fairies that fled from William Bond
Danced around her shining head,
They danced over the pillow white,
And the angels of Providence left the bed.

"I thought Love lived in the hot sunshine,
But O, he lives in the moony light :
I thought to find Love in the heat of day,
But sweet Love is the comforter of night.

"Seek Love in the pity of others' woe,
In the gentle relief of another's care,
In the darkness of night and the winter's snow,
In the naked and outcast, seek Love there."

SONG BY A SHEPHERD.

WELCOME, stranger, to this place,
Where joy doth sit on every bough,
Paleness flies from every face ;
We reap not what we do not sow.

Innocence doth like a rose
Bloom on every maiden's cheek ;
Honour twines around her brows,
The jewel health adorns her neck.

SONG BY AN OLD SHEPHERD.

WHEN silver snow decks Sylvia's clothes,
And jewel hangs at shepherd's nose,*
We can abide life's pelting storm,
That makes our limbs quake, if our hearts be warm.

Whilst Virtue is our walking-staff,
And Truth a lantern to our path,
We can abide life's pelting storm,
That makes our limbs quake, if our hearts be warm.

Blow, boisterous wind, stern Winter frown,
Innocence is a Winter's gown.
So clad, we'll abide life's pelting storm,
That makes our limbs quake, if our hearts be warm.

* See the opening lines of *Blindman's Buff* (in the "Poetical Sketches.")—ED.

FROM JERUSALEM (1804).

TO THE JEWS.

THE fields from Islington to Marybone,
To Primrose-hill and St. John's-wood ;
Were builded over with pillars of gold,
And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.

Her little ones ran on the fields,
The Lamb of God among them seen,
And fair Jerusalem his Bride,
Among the little meadows green.

Pancras and Kentish-town repose
Among her golden pillars high ;
Among her golden arches which
Shine upon the starry sky.

The Jews-harp-house and the Green Man,
The ponds where boys to bathe delight,
The fields of cows by Willan's farm,
Shine in Jerusalem's pleasant sight.

She walks upon her meadows green ;
The Lamb of God walks by her side :
And every English child is seen,
Children of Jesus and his Bride.

Forgiving trespasses and sins
Lest Babylon with cruel Og,
With moral and self-righteous law,
Should crucify in Satan's synagogue.

What are those golden builders doing
Near mournful, ever-weeping Paddington,
Standing above that mighty ruin
Where Satan the first victory won.

Where Albion slept beneath the fatal tree,
And the Druid's golden knife
Rioted in human gore,
In offerings of human life.

They groan'd aloud on London stone,
They groan'd aloud on Tyburn's brook :
Albion gave his deadly groan,
And all the Atlantic mountains shook.

Albion's spectre from his loins
Tore forth in all the pomp of war ;
Satan his name ; in flames of fire
He stretch'd his Druid pillars far.

Jerusalem fell from Lambeth's vale,
Down thro' Poplar and Old Bow ;
Thro' Malden and across the sea,
In war and howling, death and woe.

The Rhine was red with human blood ;
The Danube roll'd a purple tide :
On the Euphrates Satan stood,
And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

He wither'd up sweet Zion's hill
From every nation of the earth ;
He wither'd up Jerusalem's gates,
And in a dark land gave her birth.

He wither'd up the human form,
By laws of sacrifice for sin ;
Till it became a mortal worm ;
But oh ! translucent all within.

The Divine vision still was seen,
Still was the human form divine,
Weeping in weak and mortal clay—
O Jesus, still the form was thine.

And thine the human face, and thine
The human hands and feet and breath,
Entering thro' the gates of birth,
And passing thro' the gates of death.

And oh thou Lamb of God, whom I
Slew in my dark self-righteous pride,
Art thou return'd to Albion's land,
And is Jerusalem thy bride ?

Come to my arms and never more
Depart ; but dwell for ever here ;
Create my spirit to thy love ;
Subdue my spectre to thy fear.

Spectre of Albion ! warlike fiend !
In clouds of blood and ruin roll'd,
I here reclaim thee as my own,
My self-hood, Satan ! arm'd in gold.

Is this thy soft family-love,
Thy cruel patriarchal pride ;
Planting thy family above,
Destroying all the world beside ?

A man's worst enemies are those
Of his own house and family ;
And he who makes his law a curse,
By his own law shall surely die.

In my Exchanges every land
Shall walk, and mine in every land,
Mutual shall build Jerusalem,
Both heart in heart and hand in hand.

TO THE DEISTS.

I SAW a monk of Charlemagne
Arise before my sight,
I talk'd with the grey monk as we stood
In beams of infernal light.

Gibbon arose with a lash of steel,
And Voltaire with a wracking wheel ;
The schools in clouds of learning roll'd,
Arose with war in iron and gold

“Thou lazy monk !” they sound afar,
“In vain condemning glorious war,
And in your cell you shall ever dwell :
Rise, War, and bind him in his cell.”

The blood red ran from the grey monk's side,
His hands and feet were wounded wide,
His body bent, his arms and knees
Like to the roots of ancient trees.*

When Satan first the black bow bent
And the Moral Law from the Gospel rent,
He forged the Law into a Sword,
And spill'd the blood of Mercy's Lord.

Titus ! Constantine ! Charlemagne !
O Voltaire ! Rousseau ! Gibbon ! vain
Your Grecian mocks and Roman sword
Against this image of his Lord.

For a Tear is an intellectual thing ;
And a Sigh is the sword of an Angel King ;
And the bitter groan of a martyr's woe
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

* This and the final stanza occur also in the poem entitled
The Grey Monk (*Vide anted*, pp. 143-144).—ED.

TO THE CHRISTIANS.

I GIVE you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball ;
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall.

England ! awake, awake, awake !
Jerusalem, thy sister, calls,
Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death,
And close her from thy ancient walls ?

Thy hills and valleys felt her feet
Gently upon their bosoms move ;
Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways ;
Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again :
Our souls exult, and London's towers
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

Each man is in his spectre's power
Until the arrival of that hour,
When his Humanity awake,
And cast his spectre into the lake.

In heaven the only art of living
Is forgetting and forgiving ;
But if you on earth forgive
You shall not find where to live.

FROM "MILTON." (1804.)

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green ;
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen ?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold ;
Bring me my arrows of desire ;
Bring me my spear : O clouds, unfold ;
Bring me my chariot of fire.

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

"Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets."
Numbers xi. 29.

DEDICATION
OF BLAIR'S POEM OF THE GRAVE TO
THE QUEEN. (1808.)*

THE door of Death is made of gold
That mortal eyes cannot behold ;
But when the mortal eyes are closed,
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,
The soul awakes and, wondering, sees
In her mild hand the golden keys :
The grave is heaven's golden gate,
And rich and poor around it wait.
Oh ! shepherdess of England's fold,
Behold this gate of pearl and gold !

To dedicate to England's Queen
The visions that my soul has seen,
And by her kind permission bring
What I have borne on silken wing
From the vast region of the grave,
Before her throne my wings I wave ;
Bowing before my sovereign's feet.
The grave produced these blossoms sweet,
In mild repose from earthly strife—
The blossoms of Eternal Life!

* An edition illustrated with designs by Blake.—ED.

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ERRATUM.

Page 91, line 3, for "beast," read *beasts*.

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