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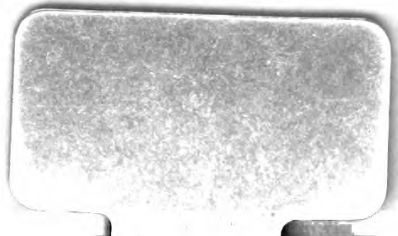
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2799

e. 441



TEL. 34232.

22 St. John's Road,

Clifton, Bristol.

January 31st.1934.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your
letter, and am pleased to send
you herewith the 4th.edition
of the Yearsley Poems.

Yours faithfully,

J. E. Prioleau

The Librarian,

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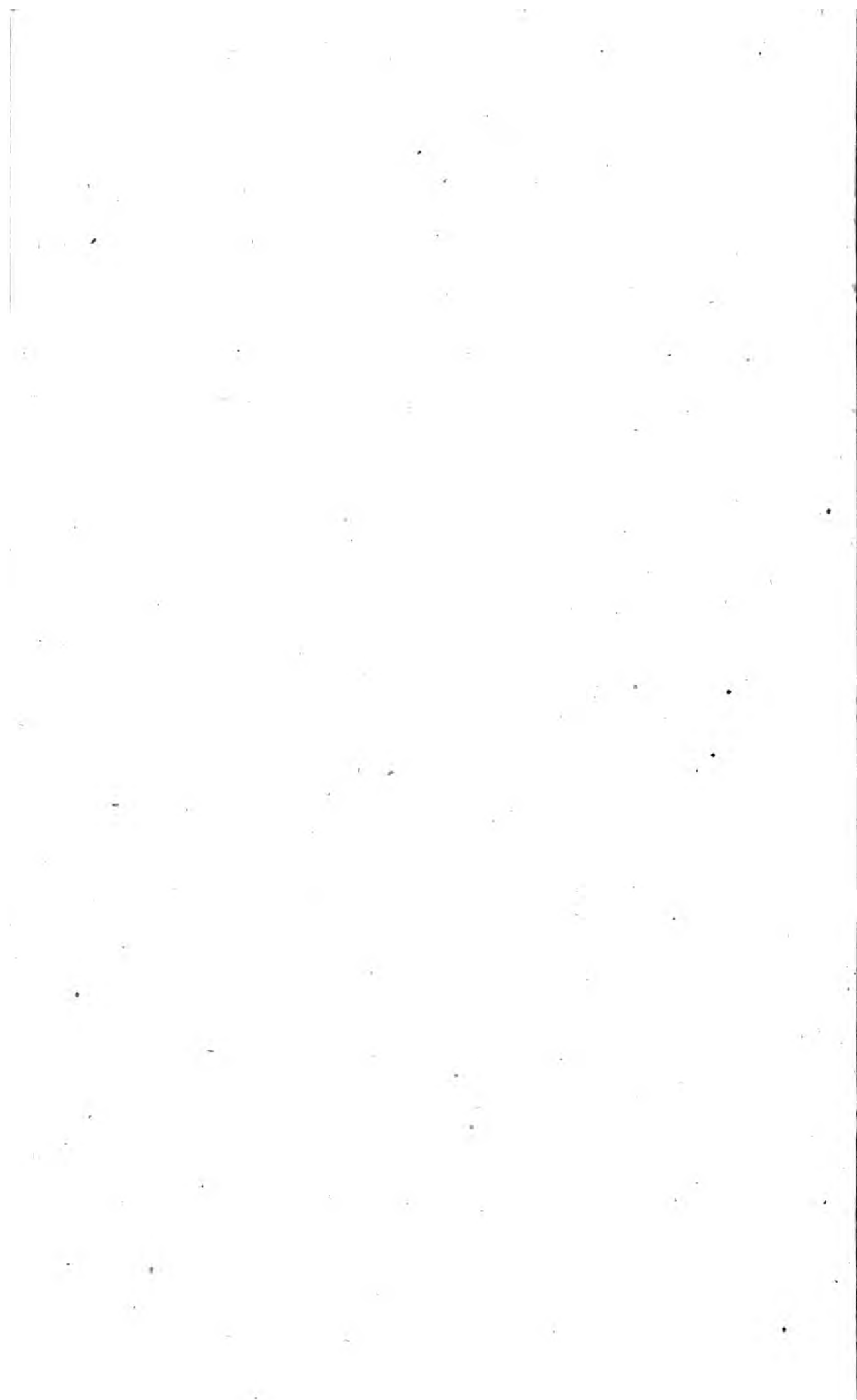
Oxford.

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P O E M S,
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

B Y
ANN YEARSLEY.



P O E M S,
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

B Y
ANN YEARSLEY,
A
MILKWOMAN OF BRISTOL.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATER-NOSTER ROW,

MDCCLXXXVI.



A P R E F A T O R Y
L E T T E R
T O
Mrs. M O N T A G U.
B Y A F R I E N D.

DEAR MADAM,

Bristol, October 20, 1784.

TH E R E is nothing more inconvenient than a high reputation, as it subjects the possessor to continual applications, which those of a contrary character entirely escape. The delight which you are known to feel in protecting real genius, and in cherishing depressed virtue, exposes you to the present intrusion,

vi A PREFATORY LETTER

trusion, from which a cold heart, and an illiberal spirit, would have effectually secured you.

On my return from Sandleford, a copy of verses was shewn me, said to be written by a poor illiterate woman in this neighbourhood, who sells milk from door to door. The story did not engage my faith, but the verses excited my attention ; for, though incorrect, they breathed the genuine spirit of Poetry, and were rendered still more interesting, by a certain natural and strong expression of misery, which seemed to fill the heart and mind of the Author. On making diligent enquiry into her history and character, I found that she had been born and bred in her present humble station, and had never received the least education, except that her brother had taught her to write. Her mother, who was also a milk-woman, appears to have had sense and piety, and to have given an early tincture of religion to this poor woman's mind. She is about
eight-

eight-and-twenty, was married very young, to a man who is said to be honest and sober, but of a turn of mind very different from her own. Repeated losses, and a numerous family, for they had six children in seven years, reduced them very low, and the rigours of the last severe winter sunk them to the extremity of distress. For your sake, dear Madam, and for my own, I wish I could entirely pass over this part of her story; but some of her most affecting verses would be unintelligible without it. Her aged mother, her six little infants, and herself (expecting every hour to lie in), were actually on the point of perishing, and had given up every hope of human assistance, when the Gentleman, so gratefully mentioned in her Poem to STELLA, providentially heard of their distress, which I am afraid she had too carefully concealed, and hastened to their relief. The poor woman and her children were preserved; but—(imagine, dear Madam, a scene which will not bear a detail) for the unhappy mother,

viii A PREFATORY LETTER

all assistance came too late; she had the joy to see it arrive, but it was a joy she was no longer able to bear, and it was more fatal to her than famine had been. You will find our Poetess frequently alluding to this terrible circumstance, which has left a settled impression of sorrow on her mind.

When I went to see her, I observed a perfect simplicity in her manners, without the least affectation or pretension of any kind: she neither attempted to raise my compassion by her distress, nor my admiration by her parts. But, on a more familiar acquaintance, I have had reason to be surprised at the justness of her taste, the faculty I least expected to find in her. In truth, her remarks on the books she has read are so accurate, and so consonant to the opinions of the best critics, that, from that very circumstance, they would appear trite and common-place, in any one who had been in habits of society; for, without having ever conversed with any body above her own level,
she

TO MRS. MONTAGU. ix

she seems to possess the general principles of sound taste and just thinking.

I was curious to know what poetry she had read. With the Night Thoughts, and Paradise Lost, I found her well acquainted; but she was astonished to learn that Young and Milton had written any thing else. Of Pope, she had only seen the Eloisa; and Dryden, Spenser, Thomson, and Prior, were quite unknown to her, even by name. She has read a few of Shakespeare's Plays, and speaks of a translation of the Georgics, which she has somewhere seen, with the warmest poetic rapture.

But though it has been denied to her to drink at the *pure well-head* of Pagan Poesy, yet, from the true fountain of divine Inspiration, her mind seems to have been wonderfully nourished and enriched. The study of the sacred Scriptures has enlarged her imagination, and ennobled her language, to a degree only
credible

x A PREFATORY LETTER

credible to those, who, receiving them as the voice of everlasting Truth, are at the pains to appreciate the various and exquisite beauties of composition which they exhibit. For there is, as I have heard you remark, in the Prophets, in Job, and in the Psalms, a character of thought, and a style of expression, between Eloquence and Poetry, by which a great mind, disposed to either, may be so elevated and warmed, as, with little other assistance, to become a Poet or an Orator.

By the next post, I will send you some of her wild wood-notes. You will find her, like all unlettered Poets, abounding in imagery, metaphor, and personification; her faults, in this respect, being rather those of superfluity than of want. If her epithets are now and then bold and vehement, they are striking and original; and I should be sorry to see the wild vigour of her rustic muse polished into elegance, or laboured into correctness. Her ear is perfect; there is sometimes great felicity
in

in the structure of her blank verse, and she often varies the pause with a happiness which looks like skill. She abounds in false concords, and inaccuracies of various kinds; the grossest of which have been corrected. You will find her often diffuse from redundancy, and oftener obscure from brevity; but you will seldom find in her those inexpressible poetic sins, the false thought, the puerile conceit, the distorted image, and the incongruous metaphor, the common resources of bad Poets, and the not uncommon blemishes of good ones.

If this commendation be thought exaggerated, qualify it, dear Madam, with the reflection that it belongs to one who writes under every complicated disadvantage; who is destitute of all the elegancies of literature, the accommodations of leisure, and, I will not barely say the conveniences, but the necessities of life: to one who does not know a single rule of Grammar, and who has never even *seen* a Dictionary.

Chill

xii A PRÉFATORY LETTER

Chill Penury repress'd her noble rage,
And froze the genial current of her soul.

Though I have a high reverence for art, study, and institution, and for all the mighty names and master spirits who have given laws to Taste, yet I am not sorry, now and then, to convince the supercilious Critic, whose mass of knowledge is not warmed by a single particle of native fire, that genius is antecedent to rules, and independent on criticism; for who, but his own divine and incomprehensible genius, pointed out to Shakespeare, while he was holding horses at the play-house door, every varied position of the human mind, every shade of discrimination in the human character? all the distinct affections, and all the complicated feelings of the heart of man? Who taught him to give to the dead letter of narrative the living spirit of action; to combine the most philosophic turn of thinking with the warmest energies of Passion, and to embellish both with all the graces of Imagination,

2

tion,

tion, and all the enthusiasm of Poetry? to make every description a picture, and every sentiment an axiom? to know how every being which *did* exist, would speak and act in every supposed circumstance of situation; and how every being, which did *not* exist but in imagination, *must* speak and act, if ever he were to be called into real existence?

But to return to the subject of my Letter: When I expressed to her my surprise at two or three classical allusions in one of her Poems, and inquired how she came by them, she said she had taken them from little ordinary prints which hung in a shop-window. This hint may, perhaps, help to account for the manner in which a late untutored, and unhappy, but very sublime genius of this town *, caught some of those ideas which diffuse through his writings a certain air of learning, the reality

* Chatterton.

xiv A PREFATORY LETTER

of which he did not possess. A great mind at once seizes and appropriates to itself whatever is new and striking ; and I am persuaded, that a truly poetic spirit has often the art of appearing to be deeply informed on subjects of which he only knows the general principle ; by skilfully seizing the master feature, he is thought artfully to reject the detail with which, in fact, he is unacquainted ; and obtains that credit for his knowledge which is better due to his judgment.

I have the satisfaction to tell you, dear Madam, that our poor Enthusiast is active and industrious in no common degree. The Muses have not cheated her into an opinion, that the retailing a few fine maxims of virtue, may exempt her from the most exact probity in her conduct. I have had some unequivocal proofs that her morality has not evaporated in sentiment, but is, I verily believe, fixed in a settled principle. Without this, with all her
7 ingenuity,

TO MRS. MONTAGU. xv

ingenuity, as she would not have obtained my friendship, so I should not have had the courage to solicit for her your protection.

I already anticipate your generous concurrence in a little project I have in view for her relief. It is not intended to place her in such a state of independence as might seduce her to devote her time to the idleness of Poetry. I hope she is convinced, that the making of verses is not the great business of human life; and that, as a wife and a mother, she has duties to fill, the smallest of which is of more value than the finest verses she can write; but as it has pleased God to give her these talents, may they not be made an instrument to mend her situation, if we publish a small volume of her Poems by subscription? The liberality of my friends leaves me no room to doubt of success. — Pressing as her distresses are, if I did not think her heart was rightly turned,

ed,

xvi A PREFATORY LETTER

ed, I should be afraid of proposing such a measure, lest it should unsettle the sobriety of her mind, and, by exciting her vanity, indispose her for the laborious employments of her humble condition; but it would be cruel to imagine that we cannot mend her fortune without impairing her virtue.

For my own part, I do not feel myself actuated by the idle vanity of a *discoverer*; for I confess, that the ambition of bringing to light a genius buried in obscurity, operates much less powerfully on my mind, than the wish to rescue a meritorious woman from misery, for it is not fame, but bread, which I am anxious to secure to her.

I should ask your pardon for this dull and tedious Letter, if I were not assured that you are always ready to sacrifice your most elegant pursuits to the humblest claims of humanity; and that the sweetness of renown has not lessened

TO MRS. MONTAGU. xvii

fened your fenfibility for the pleasures of benevolence, nor destroyed your relish for that most touching and irresistibile eloquence, *the blessing of him who was ready to perish.*

I am,

Dear MADAM,

Your much obliged,

and very faithful

humble Servant,

HANNAH MORE.

TO THE
NOBLE AND GENEROUS
SUBSCRIBERS,

Who so liberally patronized
A BOOK OF POEMS,

Published under the Auspices of

MISS H. MORE,
Of PARK-STREET, BRISTOL,

The following NARRATIVE is most humbly addressed.

I AM said to have proved ungrateful to my patroness.—The charge I disclaim. Every return that powerless gratitude could make, I have offered; but have fatally experienced, that simple expression only was inadequate to Miss MORE's extensive and superior mind.—To exculpate myself from the monstrous charge of ingratitude falls to my lot. Most irksome the task! yet, with the most humble deference to the noble patronage I am honoured with, I will pursue it.

Highly meritorious would it have been in Miss H. MORE, not to have urged me to the task,

task, by injuring my character, after chaining me down by obligations. And, great as those obligations are, which that lady has *conditionally* laid on me, I would *gladly* resign every advantage resulting from them, for that untainted and happy obscurity I once possessed.

When the first edition of my book came out, and the balance was paid by the bookseller to Miss H. MORE, she ordered her attorney to prepare a deed of trust, appointing Mrs. Montagu (for whom I will ever retain the highest veneration and respect) with herself, the trustees. It was sent to Bristol the day my books came here, with an order for it to be signed by my husband and me immediately, and returned to London the next morning.—I had no time to peruse it, nor take a copy ; and, from the rapidity with which this circumstance was conducted, I feared to ask it. The eldest Miss More read the deed, who, in a conversation some time before, had told me, “ that if her sister chose to say she had but two pence of mine, she might, for the *world* could not get it out of her hands.”—My feelings were all struck at—I felt as a mother deemed unworthy the tuition or care of her family ; and imagined my conduct and principles must of necessity be falsely represented to a generous public, in order to justify the present measure.—Even the interest was not allowed me,

XX MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE.

but on the capricious terms, that she should lay it out as she thought proper ; without any condition in the deed whereby my children might have an undeniable claim in future. In short, every circumstance was calculated to depress a mind naturally despairing ; and in despair I signed this incomplete and unsatisfactory deed ; and I vainly imagined, by this submission, I had secured my character from the imputation of ingratitude, as I relinquished all, even the rights of a mother, at Miss H. More's request. When that lady came to Bristol, we had several interviews, in one of which her sister mentioned my owing a little money. Miss H. More said she was sorry I owed any money ; adding, " If it is much, I cannot pay it—Will you give me an account, to a shilling, what you owe ?"—I told her, I believed it was about ten pounds. She said it should be paid. I was invited to sup with her a few nights after, and she then gave me the above sum ; addressing me, after supper, in the following words : " Mrs. Yearsley, now you know what you have to trust to. I can do no more, if any thing should happen ; the money lodged in the funds is three hundred and fifty pounds, which nobody but myself or Mrs. Montagu can ever call out. You have complained much of being in debt—we hear it from every quarter." — " Madam," said

said I, " I * complain of nothing, but for the
 " want of a declaration of the deed for the fu-
 " ture security of my children; therefore shall be
 " much obliged to you for it, and a copy of the
 " deed itself."—Miss H. More exclaimed, " Are
 " you *mad*, Mrs. Yearsley ? or have you drank a
 " glass too much ? Who are your advisers ? I am
 " certain you have drank, or you would not talk
 " to me in this manner."

I replied, " *Madam*, you are very wrong to
 " think I have drank. I am only anxious on
 " my children's account. Circumstances may
 " change, ten or twenty years hence, when per-
 " haps I am no more; and I only wish for a
 " copy of the deed, as a little memorandum for
 " my children ; nor do I think the requisition
 " unreasonable."

Miss Betty More said, " I don't think you
 " unreasonable, Mrs. Yearsley; but there is a
 " manner of speaking."—I told her, " As to

* From this time, I became very obnoxious to Miss
 H. More, on account of a very trifling additional
 circumstance, the discovery of my buying what is
 called the hog-wash of her kitchen; and I am charged
 with the publication of it. I told her, when she charged
 me with it, that I could not see how it could offend her,
 as it was the perquisite of her Cook, and had been paid
 for by the person who had it before I had the honour of
 knowing her.

xxii MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE,

“ the manner of speaking, I fear I shall always
“ err in that, as I have not been accustomed to
“ your rules of polished life.”—Miss H. More
said, “ I wonder you can suspect Mrs. Montagu,
“ if you suspect me.”—I answered, “ Far be it
“ from me to suspect either ; nor do I think I
“ have acted as if I was suspicious.”—Miss H.
More replied, “ How would you have acted if
“ you were ?”—“ Different from what I have,
Madam,” said I.—[My answer here alluded to
my confidence in giving Miss More all the pre-
sents I had received, from time to time, from
those generous friends who visited me while I
was writing my poems ; often leaving myself
without a shilling. My motive was, that no
person's generosity might be concealed.]

Miss H. More then said, “ Why it is your
“ openness of heart, Mrs. Yearsley, that has al-
“ ways charmed us.”

I felt more emotion from this trifling com-
mendation, than from all she had haughtily ex-
pressed ; and, finding I could not conceal it, hastily
withdrew, only wishing the ladies a good night.

Three weeks elapsed before I again saw Miss
H. More, though I went daily to the house for
the dish-washings *.

Miss

* I am greatly hurt in obliging my readers to descend
to this poor circumstance ; but the explanation will fur-
ther

Miss More, from that period, intirely altered her conduct to me. Though, after the most diligent enquiry, she had given me the most flattering character, in her letter to Mrs. Montagu, informing that lady, "That it has been denied
 "this poor recluse to drink at the pure well-
 "head of pagan poesy; yet, from the true foun-
 "tain of divine inspiration, her mind has been
 "wonderfully cherished and enriched; nor has
 "the retailing a few fine maxims of virtue cheat-
 "ed her of the most exact probity of heart: in-
 "dustrious in no common degree, pious, unam-
 "bitious, simple and unaffected in her man-
 "ners, of which I have received incontestable
 "proofs."

These, with many more perfections, are the ornaments with which this very consistent lady has thought fit to adorn the Milk-woman of Clifton! But, alas! how fallacious is eloquence! how inconstant capricious affection, when steady principle is not the basis!—From elaborate commendation, the elevated Stella descends to low scurrility, charging me with "drunkenness," ther elucidate Stella's friendly letter to a lady in London, wherein she says, "At the time this *wretch* is arraign-
 "ing my conduct, she is fetching the wash every day
 "from my house."—It was in the course of these three weeks her letter was wrote, and, in this interval, the servant offered me the money which I had paid for the year past, which I did not accept.

XXIV MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE.

"gambling," "extravagance," and terming me "wretched," "base," "ungrateful," "spend-thrift;" boasting, in the same letter, of her charity to a *departed mother*, whom, I solemnly declare, Miss More never saw, nor ever relieved. My mother quitted this life in March; the first time I saw Miss More was in September following, when she presented me with a guinea, from the worthy Mrs. Montagu, which was afterwards charged to the subscription, and added to the money which Miss More allowed me while I was writing my poems.

The last and final interview between Miss More and me, took place in July, when three gentlemen were present, and all took a part in the conversation. I spoke but little, my spirits were depressed, but I carefully concealed my emotion.—Miss More appeared to be greatly moved, and told me imperiously, that I was "a savage"—that "my veracity agreed with my other virtues"—that I had "a reprobate mind, and was a bad woman."—I replied, "that her accusations could never make me a bad woman—that she descended in calling me a savage, nor would she have had the temerity to do it, had I not given myself that name!"

Miss More then gave me her account of the money she had advanced me since her friendship first commenced, which was twenty-eight pounds fourteen shillings, and offered me the dividend
for

for the first half-year; which, with so much insult, I could not accept *; but told her calmly, that she had rendered obligation insupportable already, and I never would make it more oppressive; but should be obliged to her if she would return my *MS. copies*.

Miss More replied, "They are left at the printer's, Mrs. Yearsley—Don't think I shall make any use of them—They are burnt."—"Burnt!" said I!!—She seemed confused—my heart felt for her;—those short pauses convinced me that she was hurt, and from that consideration I was silent; but am still concerned that she would not return those poems which are not published.—Miss More gave me a copy of the deed. I told her I desired no more, and took my leave.

Motives the most powerful and natural that can possess the female breast, urged me to require a copy of the deed; nor can I now, at this present period, repent the requisition, though it has been attended with so much calumny, and *so many false representations*.—My character, which in one moment appeared so bright, and

* Stella wrote to London, that I dashed the money in her face, and that I was otherwise very violent. I declare those charges to be totally without foundation: the money lay on the table, but was not touched by me.

in

xxvi MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE.

in the next tinged with every vice that can disgrace the sex, excited many gentlemen and ladies to visit me. To these I simply rehearsed the real fact; and produced the copy of the deed. None could justify it:—but I am particularly indebted to Mr. Shiells, for his generous and disinterested friendship. On reading the copy, that worthy gentleman immediately wrote to Miss H. More; but received no answer. Instead of answering his letter, the ingenuous Stella wrote to a lady in London, desiring her letter might be read to Mr. Shiells.—It was; and contained all those false charges on my character which I have here mentioned.—Mr. S. immediately wrote to Miss More, desiring he might be allowed a copy of this scurrilous letter; but received no answer.—Three months elapsed before any thing more was done. Miss More was advised either to grant a new deed, or resign the trust; both which she peremptorily refused, declaring, that “no power upon earth should oblige her to give up the trust.” But my friends becoming still more in earnest and determined, she at last resigned; but still continues to justify her conduct, by defaming mine.—Deplorable extremity! when innate principle condemns the varnished tale.

Every cause of difference being now removed, my generous friend (Mr. S.) wrote to Miss More,
through

through the channel of her bookseller, not knowing where to address her.—The contents of his impartial letter may not be unpleasing to the mind that dare profess itself candid and unprejudiced.

“ Mr. S—— presents his compliments to Mr.
 “ C——, and informs him, that by a letter he
 “ has lately received from a friend at Bristol, he
 “ is agreeably informed, that by the interposi-
 “ tion and good offices of the friends of Miss
 “ More and the Milk-woman, the difference
 “ which unfortunately took place some months
 “ ago, has been happily brought to a conclusion;
 “ Miss M—— having complied with the requi-
 “ sition of Mrs. Yearley, and both their friends.
 “ It is therefore to be hoped that Miss M——
 “ will now herself, or permit some friend of
 “ both to draw up a short paragraph, to wipe
 “ away the ill-founded charges too hastily
 “ thrown upon that poor woman's character—
 “ he is persuaded, not from a badness of heart,
 “ but in the warmth of resentment for her hasty
 “ requisition of a copy of the deed of trust, (which
 “ all her friends thought she ought to have had a
 “ declaration of that deed, instead of the copy.)
 “ That business may now be happily terminated,
 “ by the insertion of a paragraph in the Public
 “ Advertiser, this being the proper period for the
 purpose,

xxviii MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE.

“ purpose, as the public opinion on the subject
“ has been arrested for some months, as to the cause
“ of such altercation between the “ Patroness
“ and Client,” which produced that invidious pa-
“ ragraph in the Public Advertiser, on the 8th
“ of September last, which is strongly suspected
“ to come from Miss H. M—— (she having
“ been called upon to disavow it, without effect)
“ and the consequent appearance of that of the
“ 10th of the same month, in reply.—Here is
“ now a fair opportunity of putting the whole
“ matter upon a pleasant footing, if Miss M——
“ possesses the mind she is generally allowed to
“ have ; but if she should decline, at least a
“ public reconciliation, she can blame none but
“ herself.—This application proceeds from no
“ other motive than that of being instrumental
“ in opening again that source of kindly inter-
“ course between minds so congenial. If this
“ hint be adopted, it must certainly create very
“ pleasing emotions, as well in the breast of Miss
“ M——, as in every one of those who are held
“ in suspense till it happens ; but must have a
“ contrary effect if it is neglected. By comply-
“ ing with this advice, the interest and happiness
“ of this poor woman, whom she has brought
“ into public view, may still receive the advan-
“ tage of her future patronage, and her own cha-
“ racter

MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE. XXIX

“ racter be preserved from the strong suspicion
“ of jealousy, pique, or interested views.”

“ *Lambeth, January 6th, 1786.*”

But to proceed to the narrative.—Instead of benefiting from the friendly advice given by the above note, she still remained inexorable; and returned her answer in the following lines to her bookseller:

“ Miss More’s compliments to Mr. C——;
“ will be obliged to him to let Mr. Shiells
“ know, that, as nothing has happened to alter
“ her opinion of the Milk-woman, there never
“ can be any more communication between
“ them: and she thinks she has a right to de-
“ sire, that no use may be made of her name in
“ any news-paper or publication whatever; at
“ least it never will be with her consent.”

“ *Hampton, January 12th, 1786.*”

This very generous and ultimate note was conveyed to my friend by the bookseller:—who has paid to me the cash in his hands, after deducting all expences, with his declaration, that “ he will not engage any farther with me.”—And, being by him informed, that my poems are out of print, I have presumed to publish this fourth edition, with a faithful state of facts as they successively arose.

Shielded

XXX MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE.

Shielded by popular opinion, the ungenerous Stella aims at a defenceless breast—her arrows are of the most malignant kind—yet her endeavours to crush an insignificant wretch need not be so amazingly strenuous; for I should have sunk into obscurity again, had not my reputation been so cruelly wounded.—I have to lament, that it does not require one short hour for this expeditious lady to make her wonderful transit from the zenith of praise to the center of malicious detraction.—For all the perfection, fame, or virtues she can boast of possessing, *I would not be so much a Proteus!*

It having been represented that my last work received great ornament and addition from a learned and superior genius, and my manuscripts *not existing* to contradict it, I have ventured, without a guide, on a second volume of poems, and will complete them with as much expedition as the more important duties of my family will permit.

Here let me close this true but unpleasant narrative, with the humble hope of your forgiveness, for obtruding on your attention so insignificant a tale: but, as character is more precious than life itself, the protection of that alone compelled me to the task.—And, in order to wipe away the suggestion of having been aided

ed

MRS. YEARSLEY'S NARRATIVE. xxxi

ed by other assistance, I will lose as little time as possible in laying before you and the public the promised work, and rest in full confidence of your future protection and support.

I am,

With the utmost respect and gratitude,

Your devoted and faithful servant,

ANN YEARSLEY.

Clifton Hill, October 12th, 1786.

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POEMS,

P O E M S, &c.

N I G H T.

To S T E L L A.

A T this lone hour, when Nature silent lies,
And CYNTHIA, solemn, aids the rising scene,
Whilst Hydra-headed Care one moment sleeps,
And, listless, drops his galling chain to earth ;
O! let swift Fancy plume her ruffled wing, 5
And seek the spot where sacred raptures rise ;
Where thy mild form, relax'd in guiltless sleep,
Forgets to think, to feel ; may dreams of bliss

B

Lull

Lull thy soft sense, nor paint the scene of woe,
 I lately told ; think not my spirit near, 10
 Light airy shade, that would elude thine eye,
 And shrink to nothing, conscious of thy worth.
 Yet here I dare, in Fancy's boundless walk,
 Invoke thy Muse, and hail thy song sublime.

MELPOMENE ! thou sadly fighting maid ! 15
 Great Queen of Sorrows, in majestic weed,
 Whose gayest airs are solemn sounds of woe ;
 Thou who awak'st fair STELLA's soothing lay,
 Soon as Aurora gilds the blushing East,
 O lend thy aid, while thy soft votary sleeps, 20
 And bid *me* boldly swell the artless line,
 Lend me *her* pen, and guide my rustic hand,
 To draw soft pity from the Tragic Tale,
 Where goading misery drives her ploughshare deep ;
 Teach me to paint the tremors of the soul 25

In sorrow's deepest tints; assist the sigh,
And, with its breathings, swell the throbbing heart.
The tear-clad eye, when softer passions rush
T' assault the soul besieged by others' woe,
That eye where pity tips the pointed beam 30
With treble softness—Oh! that eye is hers.

The hoary hermit, chill'd by frigid rules,
Who totters on the hair-breadth verge of fate,
And dies an age that he may live for ever,
Would sudden stop, forgetful of the past, 35
Nor heed the future, list'ning to her song;
Her song, least part, her soaring spirit shares
An early Heaven, anticipates her bliss,
And quaffs nectareous draughts of joy sublime;
Beyond yon starry firmament she roves, 40
And basks in suns that never warm'd the earth;
Newtonian systems lag her rapid flight,

She pierces thro' his planetary worlds,
And, eager, grasps creations yet to be.

Ye busy World! what are your cobweb toils, 45
Your Sisyphéan labours? Infant piles,
To raise a bubble, which in air dissolves;
You toil an age to grasp the shining dust,
Death trips your heels, you throw it to the wind:
“ Ah! let your irons on their anvils cool,” 50
And lift a while to STELLA's moral strain;
She'll teach thy eye in mental maze to creep,
Timid and trembling, to explore the past;
Alarm'd by her, the monitor within
Shall aid thy search, and bring thyself to view. 55
Examine deep; that secret arbitrator
Shall give thee self-applause or deep remorse.
Heav'n guard thee from that Harpy, never fill'd,
Still, still insatiate as the bird of Jove,

That

N I G H T.

5

That deeply gores the breast for meals eternal, 60
 Nor knows a glut from ever-growing food.
 Still struggle, restless; sink to depths profound,
 Nor ever own a thought beneath immortal;
 As such Jehovah views thee in the dust,
 As such he'll waft thee to the plains of Heaven. 65
 What's Death? Like infants sick of senseless toys,
 We sink to rest—awake to love and joy;
 To love and joy awakes the ravish'd soul,
 Who liv'd to virtue, and who own'd a God.
 But, ah! too daring theme—STELLA, assist! 70
 My humble spirit waits your social hand,
 Whose friendly beckon points to realms of bliss;
 See, STELLA soars, nor heeds my plaintive note,
 Nor will the Muse assist my sluggish flight;
 With rapture, see, she clasps her fav'rite maid, 75
 And bids me fix where Science never dawn'd;
 Hard, hard command! and yet I will obey;

Unaided, unassisted, will deplore
That learning, Heaven's best gift, is lost to me.
Cheerless and pensive o'er the wilds of life, 80
Like the poor beetle creep my hours away ;
The journey clos'd, I shoot the gulf unknown,
To find a home, perhaps—a long-lost mother.
How does fond thought hang on her much-lov'd name,
And tear each fibre of my bursting heart ! 85
Ah ! dear supporter of my infant mind,
Whose nobler precept bade my soul aspire
To more than tinsel joy ; the filial tear
Shall drop for thee when pleasure loudest calls.
The dark sky lour'd, and the storms of life 90
Rose high with wildest roar ; no voice was heard,
But Horror's dismal train affrights our souls.
For see, from the dark caverns of the deep,
Their griesly forms arise ; the crown of Death
Shone horribly resplendent. See ! they seize 95
A trembling,

N I G H T.

7

A trembling, fainting, unresisting form,
Which hourly met their grasp: Ah! spare her yet.
See from the shore V—— wafts his friendly hand;
He's born to bless, and we may yet be happy :
Quick let me clasp her to my panting heart, 100
And bear her swiftly o'er the beating wave.
In vain, in vain ; some greater power unnerves
My feeble arm ; inexorable Death,
Why wilt thou tear her from me? Oh ! she dies,
Tho' V——'s dear name had lent a feeble glow 105
To her pale cheek,—she owns him, and expires.
Tremendous stroke ! this is thy pastime, Fate :
If shrinking atoms thus thy vengeance feel,
What the grand stroke of final dissolution ?

Believe me, gentle friend, I could complain ; 110
But what avails the deep repining sigh ?
How inexpressive of the heart-felt pang !

When Heav'n afflicts, none should oppose the plea,
For who shall hold the arm that thus has wreck'd me?

Say, bright Instructress! soother of the soul, 115
Whose flowing numbers, strong as Jesse's harp,
Despair ne'er heard, but loathing left the soul;
Dire fiend! whom sounds of joy could ne'er allure;
O say, for strong-eyed Faith has borne you far
Beyond the gloomy chambers of the grave; 120
Speak loudly to my late corrected soul,
That sure reward awaits the blameless mind;
Else will I give the strenuous struggle o'er,
Deny a V—— as delegate of Heaven,
Throw up your Angel mind, as painted shade, 125
Or notion strong from early precept caught,
Rove thro' the maze of all-alluring sense,
And this side JORDAN every hope shall fix:
Mere ravings all—these crude ideas die,

As Faith to CALVARY's mount directs my view ; 130
Nor will I lose, thus humbled as I am,
My dear-bought claim to Immortality.

Excuse me, STELLA ! lo, I guideless stray,
No friendly hand assists my wilder'd thought ;
Uncouth, unciviliz'd, and rudely rough, 135
Unpolish'd, as the form thrown bye by Heaven,
Not worth completion, or the Artift's hand,
To add a something more. Such is the mind
Which thou may'st yet illumine ; 'tis a task
For Angels thus to raise the groveling soul, 140
And bid it pant for more than earthly blifs.
Then show Heaven's opening glories to my eyes ;
And I will view thee as the fount of light,
Which pierc'd old Chaos to his depth profound,
While all his native horrors flood reveal'd. 145

Yet

Yet more I ask—Ah, STELLA ! aid my pen
To paint the grateful rapture, to describe
How the big heart, exulting, scarcely beats,
And joy too vast oppresses all the frame !
The extacy in languor leaves the soul, 150
And all her slacken'd faculties relax.
The web of Gratitude's so finely wrought,
Thought hardly dares to touch it ; soft'ning time,
And frequent pauses, give it strength of growth,
E'en to oppression. Oh, delightful pain ! 155
My soul wants firm support. The gloomy joy
I once preferr'd, and thought the nobler choice,
Has lost its relish ; grand mistake of fools,
In fullen self absorb'd ! Lo ! far estrang'd
From social joy, I fix'd my woe-fraught eye 160
Where riches blaz'd upon a murky soul,
And serv'd to light its errors to the world ;
I met th' ungenial influence, bright, but cold,
And,

And, hardening by th' encounter, deep I sunk
Abstracted—Scorn and Silence led the way, 165
No matter whither :—The too gaudy Sun
Shines not for me ; no bed of Nature yields
Her varied sweets ; no music wakes the grove ;
No vallies blow, no waving grain uprears
Its tender stalk to cheer my coming hour ; 170
But horrid Silence broods upon my soul,
With wing deep-drench'd in Misery's torpid dews.
That heart which once had join'd the laughing train,
Whose guiltless rapture flew on Fancy's wing,
Nor once suspected thus to feel the gripe 175
Of iron-claw'd Despair, now yields to pangs,
To agonies more exquisite than Death ;
That is—to live. O, Nature ! shriek no more,
I have no answer for thy thrilling voice ;
Go, melt the soul, less frozen in her pow'rs, 180
And bid her weep o'er miseries not her own ;

Hold

Hold up the fainting babe who sighs its wants,
 So mutely incoherent ; mark the head
 Which age and woe bend tremulous to earth ;
 Whose lamp, now quivering in the socket, calls 185
 In haste for aid, ne'er finds it, and goes out.
 Plead thou for those, but never talk of aid
 For miseries like mine, which mock relief.

Thus desperately I reason'd, madly talk'd—
 Thus horrid as I was, of rugged growth, 190
 More savage than the nightly-prowling wolf ;
 She feels what Nature taught ; I, wilder far,
 Oppos'd her dictates—but my panting soul
 Now shivers in the agony of change,
 As insects tremble in the doubtful hour 195
 Of transmigration ; loth to lose the form
 Of various tints, its fondly cherish'd pride ;
 Disrob'd like me they fall, and boast no more.

STELLA,

STELLA, how strong thy gentle argument!

By thee convinc'd, I scorn the iron lore, 200

The savage virtues of untutor'd minds :

In thy mild rhetoric dwells a social love

Beyond my wild conceptions, optics false !

Thro' which I falsely judg'd of polish'd life.

This is the fullen curse of furly souls, 205

To disbelieve the virtues which they feel not.

Ah, STELLA ! I'm a convert ; thou hast tun'd

My rusting powers to the bright strain of joy :

My chill'd ideas quit their frozen pole

Of blank Despair, and, gently usher'd in 210

By grateful Rapture, meet thy genial warmth :

'Tis more than joy, or joy to an extreme ;

Then teach my honest heart to feel more faint,

More moderate in her grateful change, or lend

Fair Elocution, who the Mimic aids, 215

To paint in brightest hues the unfelt joy.

Accept the wild and untaught rapture, form'd
From simple Nature, in her artless guise;
Yet in its wildness charming to excess
To souls like thine, distasteful to the vain, 220
Who relish nothing honest; nothing love
But flattering strains, trick'd out with every art
Of gaudy Eloquence, and trim Deceit.

T H O U G H T S
O N T H E
AUTHOR'S OWN DEATH.

WRITTEN WHEN VERY YOUNG.

THUS, when the fatal stroke of Death's design'd,
On oozy banks th' expiring swan reclin'd,
Her own sad requiem sings in languid note,
While o'er the stream the dying echoes float.

But, ah ! can youth dwell on the tragic part ? §
Can I describe the trembling, panting heart ?

In

16 THOUGHTS ON THE

In Fancy's frolic age can I relate

The pangs, the terrors of a dying state ?

Yes—tho' unskill'd, I'll the grim shade pursue,

And bring the distant terror to my view ; 10

Dwell on the horrors of that gloomy hour ;

Death, made familiar, loses half his power.

Peace then, ye passions of ungovern'd youth,

Foes to reflection, enemies to truth !

Let me, unruffled by your clamorous voice, 15

Make the drear regions of the tomb my choice ;

And while sad Fancy paints the dismal scene,

Where restless ghosts by midnight moons are seen

Stalk o'er the gloomy grave, Muse ! be it thine

To rouse the vain, the giddy, and supine, 20

Who Pleasure's rounds pursue ; while young Desire

Wakes the gay dream, and feeds the dangerous fire :

From these I fly—and now, my pensive soul,

Mark the harsh scream of yon death-boding owl ;

Perhaps

AUTHOR'S OWN DEATH. 17

Perhaps she calls some lingering, tardy ghost 25
To smell the world, ere the dread hour be lost
That parts the night from morn. Come, restless souls,
Relax from torture ; you whom Fate controuls
To purge your earthly crimes in liquid fire,
In anguish plung'd, till ages shall expire ; 30
(This, ROME's grand tenet) sin thus wash'd away,
Pure, bright, and cleans'd, you'll wing to endless day.
Presumption, hold ! Lo, o'er yon misty tomb
Leans a sad spectre, and bemoans the doom
Of never-erring Justice ; heavenly power ! 35
Support and guard me in this gloomy hour
Of dread inquiry !—" Say, thou wretched soul,
O teach a young, rash, inexperienced fool,
What 'tis to die, and where thou wing'dst thy way,
When turn'd a wanderer from thy house of clay ? 40
Did'st tread soft lawns, or seek Elyfian groves,
Where Poets feign the lover's spirit roves ?

18 THOUGHTS ON THE

Or, on light pinions cut the closing air,
And to each planetary world repair?
Or, guideless, stray where dismal groans resound, 45
And forked lightnings quiver on the ground?
Or did sad fiends thy unhous'd spirit meet,
And with shrill yellings the poor trembler greet
To the dark world? Describe that scene of woe
Which thou hast felt, and may I never know!" 50
"Thou'lt know, indeed," it answers with a groan,
"The pangs of death too sure shall be thy own;
Pains yet unfelt must seize thy every part,
And Death's cold horrors hover round thy heart;
Thy dying eyes fix'd on some darling friend, 55
While strong convulsions their wild orbs extend;
One gasp, and deep eternity in view,
The soul shoots forth, and groans a last adieu.
I dare no more—but Oh! too curious maid,
Seek not to pierce th' impenetrable shade 60
Which

AUTHOR'S OWN DEATH. 19

Which wraps futurity ; thou 'rt sure to die ;
Rest there, nor farther search, nor question why ;
Scan not Omnipotence—of that beware ;
Oft the too curious eye is dimm'd by blank despair.”

Farewel, poor Ghost ! ye horrors of the night, 65
Begone, nor more my shudd'ring foul affright ;
The question unresolv'd I soon shall know,
Then let me haste from this sad scene of woe.

Henceforth, vain Pleasure, I renounce thy joy,
Enchanting Fair, who tempt'ft but to destroy ; 70
Ye thoughtless maids who transient dreams pursue,
No more my moments must be lost with you ;
No more my soul in empty mirth shall share,
Or fondly relish pleasures ting'd with care.

And thou, all-merciful ! omniscient Power ! 75

O teach me to redeem each mis-spent hour ;

In youth the mind's best gifts most strongly shine,

Ah ! let them not too suddenly decline !

In mercy add a few remaining years,

The grave shall lose its sting, my soul shall lose its
fears. 80

To a FRIEND,

ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

TH O' blooming shepherds hail this day
With love, the subject of each lay,
Yet friendship tunes my artless song,
To thee the grateful themes belong.

STREPHON, I never will repine, 5
Tho' destin'd not thy Valentine ;
O'er friendship's nobler heights we'll rove,
Nor heed the soft'ning voice of love.

Strangers to Passion's tyrant reign,
Careless, we'll range the happier plain, 10
Where all those calmer joys we'll prove,
Which wait sublime platonic love.

22 ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

Yet I'll allow a future day,
When friendship must at last give way;
When thou, forgetful, shalt resign
The maid who wrote this Valentine.

Think not, my friend, I dream of *love*,
That with some happier maid thou'lt prove ;
 Friendship alone is my design
 In this officious Valentine.

Yet, when that victor God shall reign;
And conquer'd Friendship quits the plain,
This gentle whisperer captive take,
'T will all thy former kindness wake.

But if its pleadings you deny, 25
And fain wou'd have remembrance die,
Then to devouring flames consign
My too ill-fated Valentine.

Another

Another. VALENTINE.

TO ANOTHER PERSON.

SAY, gentle Shepherd, shall this day,
Propitious to my amorous lay,
Infuse thro' all thy vital frame
The tender, trembling, thrilling flame?

This day prefers the lover's prayers, 5
This day the yielding fair one hears;
Shall blooming STREPHON then repine
At being hail'd a Valentine?

O ! turn thine eyes, and view yon dove,
He'll charm thy every sense to love ; 10
While, from the bending spray, his mate
Shall love-inspired notes repeat.

Then, whilst thy eager charming eyes
Run o'er these lines, may love arise
Within thy breast to equal mine, 15
Nor read in vain my Valentine.

My powerless pen despairs to name
What raptures wait a mutual flame ;
Then be thy softer wishes mine,
I'll bless the day of Valentine. 20

To Mrs. V——N.

SEQUESTER'D from the busy whirl of man,
Permit soft Fancy in the vale to stray ;

In dark obscurity my life began,
Where Science scorn'd to cheer the dreary way.

Bright sentiment, if unimprov'd, must die, 5
And great ideas, unassisted, fall ;
On Learning's wing we pierce th' empyreal sky ;
But Nature's untaught efforts are but small.

Pardon, bright fair ! my hapless fate deplore,
Nor scorn the grateful, tho' unletter'd line ; 10
The Eastern slave's permitted to adore,
When in bright Sol he sees a Godhead shine.

Heaven

Heaven spurns him not, but spares the untaught
mind,
Who ne'er religion's nobler truths has prov'd;
Thus, in thy bosom, where each virtue's join'd, 15
Let Pity plead where Reason can't approve.

To cheer the gloom of solitude's lone hour,
In this sad bosom desert made by woe,
May busy memory's ever-pleasing power,
In grateful vision still your form bestow. 20

Belov'd idea, on my heart imprest,
Which time or anguish never shall efface,
Till Death shall sternly bid its motion rest,
And in its stead his barbed dart shall place.

Not valued less, with gratitude refin'd, 25
Shall my warm heart your honour'd partner share;
With joy I'll own how great, how good his mind,
And hail each heavenly virtue planted there.

O!

O! had there stepp'd before offended Heaven,
 But ten so perfect for a guilty race, 30
 The dread, tremendous word had ne'er been given,
 Nor streaming fires have purg'd the blasted place.

How different those who waste the thoughtless hour,
 And, jocund, dance to Folly's trifling lay!
 Death, mask'd, oft shares the ball and festive bower,
 And beckons, unawares, the soul away. 36

Aghast she views the dark and dismal vale,
 Where ghosts of long-departed Pleasures roam;
 Sad comforts! where their poor expedients fail,
 Say, what pleas'd guide shall waft the trembler home?

O, Misery! readier than the pitying eye 41
 Of Heaven, why do thy terrors round me wait?
 Avaunt! my spirits mount with extacy,
 For V——'s bright virtues speak a happier fate.

Then

Then may not I with humblest hope aspire, 45
 At distance follow where they boldly stray ?
 Ah, no ! I want that strong, celestial fire,
 Which, eagle-like, dares the Meridian ray.

Capacious virtues fill th' extensive mind,
 That mind which this low world could ne'er contain ;
 O'er peopled orbs it wanders unconfin'd ; 51
 Yet sounds of woe oft lure it back again :

And fix'd, like NIOBE, o'er the rueful scene
 Of human mis'ry the mild spirit stands ;
 No more the bosom boasts a state serene, 55
 But melts, distress'd by Pity's soft commands.

Dissolv'd in woe, it scorns the gay parade
 Of dazzling pride, and with the mourner mourns ;
 Flies with pale Mis'ry to the dreary shade,
 And brings it back by soft, yet swift returns. 60

Rais'd

Rais'd as I am to sweet domestic joy
By bounteous V——n, will she the line refuse?
You who, like Heaven, would save and not destroy,
Say, will you scorn the poor unpolish'd Muse?

Oft when the frugal meal salutes my eyes, 65
Big rapture heaves my late desponding breast;
I see your form in every blessing rise,
It smiles content, and bids my sorrows rest.

Hope, lovely phantom! is, and shall be mine,
She hovers round, amidst this waste of woe; 70
Points my once cheerless soul to views sublime,
From Earth's sad scene, and Mis'ry's wreck below.

Pour down, great God! thy choicest blessings here,
Such virtues merit thy peculiar love;
O! make their beauteous progeny thy care, 75
And lift them late to all thy joys above!

A

F R A G M E N T.

—MY soul is out of tune,
 No harmony reigns here, 'tis discord all :
 Be dumb, sweet Choristers, I heed you not ;
 Then why thus swell your liquid throats, to cheer
 A wretch undone, for ever lost to joy, 5
 And mark'd for ruin ? Seek yon leafy grove,
 Indulgent bliss there waits you ; shun this spot
 Drear, joyless, vacant, as my wasted soul,
 Disrob'd of all her bliss : here heave, my heart,
 Here sigh thy woes away ; unheard the groan, 10
 Unseen the falling tear ; in this lone wild

A F R A G M E N T.

31

No busy fool invades thy hoarded griefs,
And smiles in ignorance at what he feels not.
Yet, yet indulge not, list'ning winds may catch
Coherent sighs, and waft them far away, 15
Where levity holds high the senseless roar
Of laughter, and pale woe, abash'd, retires.
Or, thou'd my woes be to the winds diffus'd,
No longer mine, once past the quiv'ring lip;
Like flying atoms in the fightless air, 20
Some might descend on the gay, grinning herd;
But few, how few, wou'd reach the feeling mind !

Officious Truth ! unwelcome guest to most,
Yet I will own thee, and bid Hope good night,
Fond, soothing flatterer ! Nineteen years are past, 25
Since first I listen'd to her pleasing lore ;
Ah, me ! how bright she painted future scenes,
And sweetly spoke of blessings yet unborn !

Now,

Now, fond Deceiver, where's the promis'd good?

But, Oh! thou'rt lovely, and I'll ne'er accuse 30

Or hate thee, tho' we never meet again.

With thee, Despair, must I then tread the path

Of tedious life, nor cast one look behind,

On all the piles of blifs gay Hope had rais'd? 34

But Heaven thought otherwise—O, generous world!

Thou who so frankly hold'st th' embitter'd draught,

Accept my furly thanks, and few are due

Where little is bestow'd. The reasoner raves,

Lifts the hard eye, and with long-winded speech,

And self-applauding dialect, condemns 40

My mind, thus straying from the trodden path:

I heed you not, nor have I time to spin

The thread of argument; yet fain wou'd know

The ready road to rest. Teach me, ye wise,

You who have trod the endless, endless whirl 45

Of

Of measureless conjecture, still upheld
By brilliant Fancy's rapture-giving wing :
O you ! whose spirits rove beyond yon orbs,
To find the realms of rest, for such there are,
To prove a home when the sad soul shall need it. 50
Imagination wanders, while the eye
Seems far extended, tho' the senseless balls
Distinguish nought, but, every sense call'd in,
Is buried in the dusky, deep recess
Of meditation. What's the grand result ? 55
Ye studious sages, where's the fix'd abode ?
Where's that eternal home, beyond the grave ?
Oh ! deign to tell a fellow-wretch like me,
Unwilling to be nothing ; are not you ?
Else why this search—and where's the great success ? 60
Say, have you found it ? can you teach the road
Which thither leads ? Ah, no ! th' accounts brought
home

Differ so far, millions of Heavens are form'd ;
Each vain philosopher, by pride misled,
Presents you a futurity his own ; 65
By that secur'd, the self-sufficient sage,
Indifferent, views the group of anxious souls
Searching the path to rest ; if his they miss,
He swears no other way can e'er be found,
And then consigns them o'er to endless woe. 70

Oh ! narrow notion of a God supreme !
Oh ! barbarous portrait of a God all love !
I'll think no more. Ye deep-distracting doubts,
Bewilder not my soul ; for see, the page
Of boundless Mercy, and of Christian Faith, 75
Clears up the doubtful future ; all is peace,
Hope dawns, an earnest of the perfect day.

ON THE
Sudden Death of a FRIEND.

“ **A** PPEAR, thou fightless Minister of Death,
“ Go seek the spot where guiltless joys reside,
“ Seize DELIA’S frame, suspend at once her breath,
“ And from its long-lov’d home the wond’ring soul
divide.

“ Be deaf to all, nor heed the plaintive moan 5
“ Of weeping husband, parent, child, or friend,
“ ’Tis my high will that she attend my throne,
“ Where flow those perfect joys which never shall
“ have end.”

36 ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

So spake th' Omnipotent. The spirit heard,
With azure pinions veil'd he skims the air, 10
The heavenly regions quickly disappear'd,
He, unperceiv'd, alights beside the happy pair.

Amaz'd he view'd this feat of humble love,
Content and joy in every breast elate,
One moment mourn'd his errand from above ; 15
While mid' the cheerful group the thoughtless victim
fate.

With eye askance he aims the deadly blow,
Nor dares to look while he directs the dart ;
No more her cheeks with purple blushes glow,
But all the spirits rush to guard the fainting heart. 20

In vain, in vain ! the heart refuses aid,
An iron slumber seals her heavy eyes ;

She

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND. 37

She sinks in death—th' astonish'd foul, dismay'd,
Bursts thro' the doors of life, and seeks more friendly
skies.

Hail, Spirit, disengag'd from cumbrous clay ! 25
Let not our tears retard thy blissful flight ;
The sigh dissolves in faith ; pursue thy way,
'Till Heaven's full joys shall open on thy ravish'd
sight.

O, THYRSIS ! raise thy low declining head,
Nor sink beneath this mighty weight of woe, 30
Mourn not thy love, nor think thy DELIA dead ;
She lives where boundless joys shall ever, ever flow.

To Mr. R——,

ON HIS

Benevolent Scheme for rescuing Poor
Children from Vice and Misery,

BY PROMOTING

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

O, R——! my timid soul would fain aspire
To rapture such as thine; to the pure zeal
Which fires thy soul in blest Religion's cause.
Say, can I catch one faint, one glimmering spark,
To warm my cheerless bosom? Will the flame 5
Which ever feeds thy fervency of soul,
Illumine mine? Ah, no! on me 'twere lost;
My faculties, my poverty of thought,

Wou'd

TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME, &c. 39

Wou'd ever disappoint the grand design,
And render great commissions all abortive. 10

Vain were the hope to save a ruin'd world !
Ev'n Jesu's sufferings ne'er convinc'd the whole ;
Then shall an atom the fix'd axis move,
And win a world from hell ? Thou greatly dar'st,
Yet limited thy power ; stand forth, ye few ! 15
You who wou'd give a lustre to your name,
And prove the grand impression of JEHOVAH ;
Who weep, like R——, the glory of your God,
Defac'd, demolish'd, beauty trod in dust ;
Leave not the wreck deserted on the beach, 20
Where Ignorance, Vice, and loud-mouth'd Reproba-
tion,
Exulting yell, and wring the melting soul :
O ! freeze, to hear the hoary-headed finner,
With ceaseless profanation, taint the air ;

40 TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME

Grown old in dark stupidity, he treads, 25
Fearless, tho' feeble; on the verge of fate
Sin leaves him not; and innate flames of vice
Still fiercely burn; the fact exists in will:
The last remain of life presents a gloom
Which frights the shrinking soul; lo! back she starts,
Struck with dire horror, loth to hear the sound, 31
The dreadful summons of offended Heaven—
She lingers—the strong blast to atoms rends
The frame which held her.—O! ye better souls,
Ye nobler few, who slumber in your race, 35
Tho' well begun, and forwarded with hope,
Say, will you see a fellow-spirit lost,
Thus swallow'd in the ever-yawning gulf,
That frights the mental eye, and e'en appals
The man who firmest stands, nor lend your aid 40
To save him, as a soul once meant for Heaven?
O, think! the coming hour will soon be yours;

Let

OF PROMOTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS. 41

Let not a form which bears your Maker's image
Defeat the end of being : know 'tis yours,
In heavenly tints to dip the infant soul ; 45
To raise the new idea, lift it high,
Ev'n to JEHOVAH's Throne : the ductile mind,
Pliant as wax, shall wear the mould you give ;
Sharp Gratitude you've call'd to life, shall cut,
In cyphers deep, the now expanded heart ; 50
And, ev'n beyond the chambers of the grave,
The joyous spirit shall your records bear,
To meet your eyes when trembling worlds expire.
What then shall live, or stand in that dread hour,
But acts like these, when panting spirits call 55
For every little test to aid their plea ?
May yours resound, supported in the blast
By grateful Infants, and by ripen'd Man,
To whom you gave perfection. Angels smile,
And songs of glory shake the vault of Heaven. 60
Not

42 TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME

Not to the vain I lift my poor appeal,
Who never yet have dar'd to own a foul,
Or name a Deity with heart-felt joy ;
'Tis to the mind who feels like generous R——,
Whose heart can mourn, whose manly eye can melt, 65
At the dread thought of human souls destroy'd.

What pen, tho' dipp'd in horror's deepest dye,
Can justly paint the poor unletter'd tribe,
Assembled in a group? The florid youth,
Robust, impetuous, ardent in his strength, 70
Lively and bounding as the skipping roe,
The blush of beauty blowing on his cheek ;
Within, a strong epitome of hell ;
There vices rage, and passions wildly roar ;
Strong appetites, which never knew restraint, 75
Scream for indulgence, till the soul distract,
Seizes in haste the draught of poisons mix'd

When

OF PROMOTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS, 43

When sin began, and ruin'd nature fell ;
The dire infusion stronger grows by time ;
And still fermenting, sins on sins arise, 80
In order horrible. Thus ever lost,
The poor benighted soul ne'er hopes to light
On GILEAD's sovereign balm, its worth not known,
Or long misus'd ; ah ! hapless, hapless state,
Where Immortality itself is sick, 85
And hopes annihilation. Dreadful thought !
Poor miserable refuge ! poorer still
The soul who hopes to find it. O, befriend,
Ere 'tis too late, the tender, budding mind,
Now choak'd by ignorance ; cherish the spark, 90
The particle of Godhead, which impels
To good if nourish'd, if o'erwhelm'd must die !

Ye sacred few, who shudder at the sound
Of blasphemy, breath'd from the tender lip

Whose

44 TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME

Whose lisping accent Innocence shou'd guide, 95

Whose heart shou'd white-rob'd Purity adorn :

O, think, how lost the beauteous reprobate

Of twelve or fourteen years, nurs'd up in sin ;

On whose sweet form her bounteous Maker smil'd,

And gave as the grand stroke of fair Creation : 100

Her passions soft and gentle ; pure her thought,

Her soul so Angel-like, it spoke perfection ;

Eyes form'd to bend the stubborn breast of man

To more than human softness ; accents mild

To charm his ear, and soothe his fullen soul, 105

When panting in the iron grasp of woe !

O, she was meant so perfect, fair, and good,

That Angels with unusual ardour gaz'd,

Bless'd the fair form, and hail'd the joyous hour !

But ah ! down, down she sinks, for ever lost, 110

For ever tarnish'd, blasted in the bud ;

The early falsehood points the flowing tongue,

The

OF PROMOTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS. 45

The artful leer deforms the eager eye ;
The smile oft practis'd, deeply to deceive ;
Each soft allurements Heaven so frankly gave, 115
All, all, devoted to eternal shame :
Charming in sin, too oft she meets her fate,
So early, that the most obdurate weeps,
And gives that pity she was form'd to raise.

Awake, ye rich, that sleep ! awake to save ! 120
And infants, yet unborn, in choral song,
Shall bless the hand which form'd a social father,
A father on whose lip instruction hangs,
Who snatches from the burning flame the brand !

The poor illiterate, chill'd by freezing want, 125
Within whose walls pale Penury still sits,
With icy hand impressing every meal,
Cannot divide his slender hard-earn'd mite
Betwixt his bodily and mental wants ;

46 TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME

The soul must go—for hunger loudly pleads, 130
And Nature will be answer'd; thus his race,
Envelop'd, groping, sink in vulgar toils;
To eat and sleep includes the soul's best wish;
And mean deceit, and treacherous, low-phras'd guile,
Fill the vast space for better purpose given. 135

Oppress'd like you, so AMRAM's son once felt,
O'erburthen'd with a gross inconstant race;
Fain wou'd ye to their promis'd CANAAN guide
These wretched wanderers, lead them to their rest,
As nursing fathers bear the sucking babe; 140
Fain wou'd ye to the sheltering hive allure,
And fix the swarm where endless pleasures flow.

* Take off, great GOD! some portion of thy spirit,

* Not wishing to diminish a spirit of Religion, but in allusion
to the Second Chapter of NUMBERS, Verse 17; "And I will
"take off that spirit which is upon thee, and I will put it upon
"them."

Too

OF PROMOTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS. 47

Too much for one weak form ; o'erpower'd he sinks,
Yet glories in the flame ; and fainting thus, 145
Wou'd lift a world to Heaven. Omniscient Power !
Bring forward yet thy seventy elect !
Bid them to thy great mandate fix their seal,
And loudly sound—" Ye chosen, aid my people ;
Guide them, I charge you, thro' the dreary wilds, 150
Support the faint, and tell the lazy-blind,
Who, mole-like, never saw, nor ever wish'd it ;
O, tell them, 'tis in Mercy you are given ;
That unto you I gave extensive souls,
Great faculties, and ample means, to save 155
Souls I thought worth creating. Then rejoice,
That you are thus commission'd ; open'd fair
To *you* the path of glory, while *their* souls
Wander in darkness, and despair to find
Salvation without help. To you I give 160
The means ; then answer well your sacred charge."

Ye

48 TO MR. R——, ON HIS SCHEME, &c.

Ye Heaven-attempting souls, where virtues lie
Listless, inactive, waiting but the call
Of great JEHOVAH, listen to his voice,
A voice ne'er heard in vain; hark! hark! it sounds
From Misery's lowest shed; the accent soft, 166
The humble sigh, the infant's early tear,
The husband's stifled, sympathetic groan,
The mother's feelings, more than ever felt,
Tho' borne in silence and in pensive mood. 170
These are all shades in which the Godhead's seen;
Well felt those woes where great Religion fits
On the house-top, and sheds her heavenly dews
On the poor group;—be't yours to fix her there.
In dress like this, Omniscience softly tries 175
Your friendly doors, and thus disguis'd, oft meets
The stern repulse, and virtue-killing frown.

To

To Mrs. M——S.

PARDON, much honour'd Fair ! this humble lay,
 Nor scorn the tribute Gratitude may pay ;
 No rapturous Muse e'er warm'd my rustic breast,
 Nor dare I own the bright exalted guest :
 Far flies the Muse where radiant Science reigns, 5
 Inspires the soul, and elevates her strains ;
 Then rapture, melody, and sense conspire,
 And PHOEBUS fiercely twangs the sprightly lyre ;
 Far let her fly—if Gratitude be mine,
 Her voice shall match the whole harmonious Nine ; 10
 The full-fraught heart, with fiercer ardors rise,
 And pierce, resistless, thro' yon azure skies ;

E

Nor

Nor pauses short of the Celestial Throne,
 But seeks the ear she's certain is her own;
 There loudly sounds—a voice by Mercy given, 15
 Whilst echoes vibrate thro' the vaults of Heaven,
 There sounds your name, while lift'ning Angels bend
 The well-tun'd harp, and to the tale attend.
 In that great day when mingled nations stand—
 Some with, some dread, JEHOVAH's last command, 20
 Shall not my little ones, with ardour raise,
 Your plaudit high, who prop their infant days;
 Whose voice has call'd them from the depths of woe,
 Suppress'd the sigh, forbad the tear to flow?

Low on the earth, by anguish crush'd, I lay— 25
 I mourn'd the night, nor hail'd the coming day,
 When bright AURORA tipp'd the Eastern skies,
 Hearts blest'd with plenty bade the Goddess rise;
 Not so with me—to Misery resign'd,
 On her cold lap my wretched head reclin'd; 30

Around,

T O M R S. M——S. 51

Around, grim horrors take their ghastly stand,
And Famine executes her dire command,
Nor once relents;—the tear reluctant flows,
Not for my own, but for my infants' woes :
The Stoic's sullen gloom had fill'd my soul, 35
Forbad the sigh, and check'd the tears that roll ;
Ev'n smiling Hope, soft foothers of the mind,
Like MILTON's Guardian Angel, had resign'd
Her charge as lost ; homeward to Heaven she flies,
And grim Despair, and all her furies rise ; 40
O, dismal Fiend ! to thee I give the world,
From all its joys, and shadowy visions hurl'd ;
The contest o'er, eternal worlds are mine,
Where ransom'd spirits taste repose divine.

T O
S T E L L A ;

O N A
Visit to Mrs. M O N T A G U.

U N E Q U A L, lost to the aspiring claim,
 I neither ask, nor own th' immortal name
 Of Friend ; ah, no ! its ardors are too great,
 My soul too narrow, and too low my state ;
 STELLA ! soar on, to nobler objects true, 5
 Pour out your soul with your lov'd MONTAGU ;
 But, ah ! shou'd either have a thought to spare,
 Slight, trivial, neither worth a smile or tear,

Let

Let it be mine;—when glowing raptures rise,
 And each, aspiring, seeks her native skies; 10
 When Fancy wakes the soul to extacy,
 And the rapt mind is touch'd with Deity,
 Quick let me from the hallow'd spot retire,
 Where sacred Genius lights his awful fire,

Crush'd as I am, by Fortune's adverse power, 15
 I hail the joys which wait thy happier hour;
 To hear the music of *her* matchless tongue,
 On which the nameless sweets of wit are hung;
 What bliss the friendship of the wise to share,
 Of soul superior, and of virtues rare! 20
 Where Genius in familiar converse sits,
 Crowns real worth, and blasts pretending Wits;
 Where great ideas, fed by Fancy, glow,
 And soul-expanding notes in rapture flow;
 Where pointed thought in polish'd diction drest, 25
 With every grace assaults the yielding breast;

O, powers of Genius ! even the Miser's heart,
In the sweet transport, bears a transient part ;
He thrills, unconscious whence his pleasures come,
Who ne'er had dreamt of rapture but at home ; 30
But, ah ! the slight impression quickly dies,
Or on the noxious surface floating lies ;
The momentary virtue ne'er was brought
To frame one bounteous deed, one generous thought,
His harden'd spirit only knows to shun 35
The lore of wisdom, and the genial sun
Of warm humanity ; ah ! joyless breast,
Which never hail'd a self-rewarding guest !
Then fly, cold wretch, to thy congenial cell,
And quit the haunts where sweet sensations dwell. 40

How has your bounty cheer'd my humble state,
And chang'd the colour of my gloomy fate !
Still shall your image sooth my penfive soul,
When slow-pac'd moments, big with mischiefs, roll ;

Still

VISIT TO MRS. MONTAGU. 55

Still shall I, eager, wait your wish'd return, 45
From that bright Fair who decks a SHAKESPEARE'S urn
With deathless glories; every ardent prayer
Which Gratitude can waft from souls sincere,
Each warm return to generous bounty due,
Shall warm my heart for you and MONTAGU. 50
Blest pair! O, had not souls like your's been given,
The stupid Atheist well might doubt a Heaven;
Convinc'd, he now deserts his gloomy stand,
Owns MIND the noblest proof of a creating hand.
GALEN'S conversion, by externals wrought, 55
Dropt far beneath sublimity of *Thought*;
But cou'd he those superior wonders find,
Which form and actuate your nobler mind,
How wou'd the Heathen, struck with vast surprise,
Atoms deny, while spirit fill'd his eyes. 60

To the S A M E ;

ON HER

ACCUSING THE AUTHOR OF FLATTERY,

AND OF

Ascribing to the Creature that Praise
which is due only to the Creator.

EXCUSE me, STELLA, sunk in humble state,
With more than needful awe I view the great ;
No glossy diction e'er can aid the thought,
First stamp'd in ignorance, with error fraught.
My friends I've prais'd—they stood in heavenly guise
When first I saw them, and my mental eyes 6
Shall in that heavenly rapture view them still,
For mine's a stubborn and a savage will ;

T O S T E L L A.

57

No customs, manners, or soft arts I boast,
 On my rough soul your nicest rules are lost; 10
 Yet shall unpolish'd gratitude be mine,
 While STELLA deigns to nurse the spark divine.
 A savage pleads—let e'en her errors move,
 And your forgiving spirit melt in love.
 O, cherish gentle Pity's lambent flame, 15
 From Heaven's own bosom the soft pleader came!
 Then deign to bless a soul, who'll ne'er degrade
 Your gift, tho' sharpest miseries invade!
 You I acknowledge, next to bounteous Heaven,
 Like his, your influence cheers where'er 'tis given; 20
 Blest in dispensing! gentle STELLA, hear
 My only, short, but pity-moving prayer,
 That thy great soul may spare the rustic Muse,
 Whom Science ever scorn'd, and errors still abuse.

SOLILOQUY.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

— **W** H A T folly to complain,
 Or throw my woes against the face of Heaven ?
 Ills, self-created, prey upon my soul,
 And rob each coming hour of soften'd Peace.
 What then ? Is Fate to blame ? I chose distress ; 5
 Free will was mine ; I might have still been happy
 From a fore-knowledge of the dire effect,
 And the sad bondage of resistless love.
 I knew the struggles of a wounded mind,
 Not self-indulging, and not prone to vice, 10
 Knew all the terrors of conflicting passion,
 Too stubborn foe, and ever unsubdu'd ;

Yet rashly parley'd with the mighty victor.

Infectious mists upon my senses hang,

More deadly than LETHEAN dews which fall 15

From SOMNUS' bough, on the poor wearied wretch,

Whose woes are fully told!——

The dire contagion creeps thro' all my frame,

Seizes my heart, and drinks my spirit up.

Ah! fatal poison, whither dost thou tend? 20

Tear not my soul with agonizing pains;

There needs no more; the world to me is lost,

And all the whirl of life-unneeded thrift.

I sicken at the Sun, and fly his beams,

Like some sad ghost which loves the moonless night,

And pensive shuns the morn. The deep recess 26

Where dim-ey'd Melancholy silent fits,

Beckoning the poor desponding flighted wretch,

Suits well. 'Tis here I find a gloomy rest;

'Tis here the fool's loud clatter leaves me still, 30

Nor

Nor force unwilling answers to their tale :

But, ah ! this gloom, this lethargy of thought,

Yields not repose ; I sigh the hour away ;

The next rolls on, and leaves me still opprest.

But, oh ! swift-footed Time, thou ceaseless racer, 35

Thou who hast chac'd five thousand years before thee,

With all their great events, and minute trifles,

Haste, with redoubled speed, bring on the hour,

When dark Oblivion's dusky veil shall shroud

Too painful Memory.——

40

ADDRESS

A D D R E S S

T O

F R I E N D S H I P.

FRIENDSHIP! thou noblest ardor of the soul!

Immortal essence! languor's best support!

Chief dignifying proof of glorious man!

Firm cement of the world! endearing tie, !

Which binds the willing soul, and brings along 5

Her chastest, strongest, and sublimest powers!

All else the dregs of spirit. Love's soft flame,

Bewildering, leads th' infatuated soul;

Levels,

62 ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP.

Levels, depresses, wraps in endless mists,
Contracts, dissolves, enervates and enslaves, 10
Relaxes, links, distracts, while Fancy fills
Th' inflaming draught, and aids the calenture.
Intoxicating charm ! yet well refin'd
By Virtue's brightening flame, pure it ascends,
As incense in its grateful circles mounts, 15
Till, mixt and lost, with Thee it boasts thy name.

Thou unfound blessing ! woo'd with eager hope,
As clowns the nightly vapour swift pursue,
And fain wou'd grasp to cheer their lonely way ;
Vain the wide stretch, and vain the shorten'd breath,
For, ah ! the bright delusion onward flies, 21
While the sad swain deceiv'd, now cautious treads
The common beaten track, nor quits it more.

Not unexisting art thou, but so rare,
That delving souls ne'er find thee ; 'tis to thee, 25
When

ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP. 63

When found, if ever found, sweet fugitive,
The noble mind opes all her richest stores;
Thy firm, strong hold suits the courageous breast,
Where stubborn virtues dwell in secret league,
And each conspires to fortify the rest. 30

Ethereal spirits alone may hope to prove
Thy strong, yet soften'd rapture; soften'd more
When penitence succeeds to injury;
When, doubting pardon, the meek, pleading eye
On which the soul had once with pleasure dwelt, 35
Swims in the tear of sorrow and repentance.
The faultless mind with treble pity views
The tarnish'd friend, who feels the sting of shame;
'Tis then too little barely to *forgive*;
Nor can the soul rest on that frigid thought, 40
But rushing swiftly from her Stoic heights,
With all her frozen feelings melted down

By

64 ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP.

By Pity's genial beams, she sinks, distressed,
Shares the contagion, and with lenient hand
Lifts the warm chalice fill'd with consolation. 45

Yet Friendship's name oft decks the crafty lip,
With seeming virtue clothes the ruthless soul;
Grief-soothing notes, well feign'd to look like Truth,
Like an insidious serpent softly creep
To the poor, guileless, unsuspecting heart, 50
Wind round in wily folds, and sinking deep
Explore her sacred treasures, basely heave
Her hoard of woes to an unpitying world;
First soothes, ensnares, exposes, and betrays.
What art thou, fiend, who thus usurp'st the form 55
Of the soft Cherub? Tell me, by what name
The ostentatious call thee, thou who wreck'st
The gloomy peace of sorrow-loving souls?
Why thou art Vanity, ungenerous sprite,

Who

ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP. 65

Who tarnishest the action deem'd so great, 60
And of soul-saving essence. But for thee,
How pure, how bright wou'd THERON's virtues shine;
And, but that *Thou* art incorp'rate with the flame,
Which else wou'd bless where'er its beams illume,
My grateful spirit had recorded here 65
Thy splendid seemings. Long I've known their worth.

O, 'tis the deepest error man can prove,
To fancy joys disinterested can live,
Indissoluble, pure, unmix'd with self;
Why, 'twere to be immortal, 'twere to own 70
No part but spirit in this chilling gloom.

My soul's ambitious, and its utmost stretch
Wou'd be, to own a friend—but that's deny'd.
Now, at this bold avowal, gaze, ye eyes,
Which kindly melted at my woe-fraught tale; 75

66 ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP.

Start back, Benevolence, and shun the charge;
Soft bending Pity, fly the fullen phrase,
Ungrateful as it seems. My abject fate
Excites the willing hand of Charity,
The momentary sigh, the pitying tear, 80
And instantaneous act of bounty bland,
To Misery so kind; yet not to you,
Bounty, or Charity, or Mercy mild,
The pensive thought applies fair Friendship's name;
That name which never yet cou'd dare exist 85
But in equality * * * * *

* * * * *

T O T H E

Honourable H——E W——E,

O N R E A D I N G

The CASTLE of OTRANTO.

December, 1784.

TO praise thee, WALPOLE, asks a pen divine,
And common sense to me is hardly given ;
BIANCA'S Pen now owns the daring line,
And who expects *her* muse should drop from Heaven?
My fluttering tongue, light, ever veering round, 5
On Wisdom's narrow point has never fix'd ;
I dearly love to hear the ceaseless sound,
Where Noise and Nonsense are completely mix'd.

68 ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

The empty tattle, true to female rules,
In which thy happier talents ne'er appear, 10
Is mine, nor mine alone, for mimic fools,
Who boast *thy* sex, BIANCA's foibles wear.

Supreme in prate shall woman ever sit,
While Wisdom smiles to hear the senseless squall ;
Nature, who gave me tongue, deny'd me wit, 15
Folly I worship, and she claims me all.

The drowsy eye, half-closing to the lid,
Stares on OTRANTO's walls ; grim terrors rise,
The horrid helmet strikes my soul unbid,
And with thy CONRAD, lo ! BIANCA dies. 20

Funereal plumes now wave ; ALPHONSO's ghost
Frowns o'er my shoulder ; silence aids the scene,
The taper's flame, in fancy'd blueness lost,
Pale spectres shews, to MANFRED only seen.

Ah !

ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. 69

Ah! MANFRED! thine are bitter draughts of woe, 25

Strong gusts of passion hurl thee on thy fate;

Tho' eager to elude, thou meet'st the blow,

And for RICARDO MANFRED weeps in state.

By all the joys which treasur'd virtues yield,

I feel thy agonies in WALPOLE's line; 30

Love, pride, revenge, by turns maintain the field,

And hourly tortures rend my heart for thine.

Hail, magic pen, that strongly paint'st the soul,

Where fell Ambition holds his wildest roar,

The whirlwind rages to the distant pole, 35

And virtue, stranded, pleads her cause no more.

Where's MANFRED's refuge? WALPOLE, tell me where?

Thy pen to great St. NICHOLAS points the eye;

E'en MANFRED calls to guard ALPHONSO's heir,

Tho' conscious shame oft gives his tongue the lie. 40

70 ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

MATILDA ! ah, how soft thy yielding mind,

When hard obedience cleaves thy timid heart !

How nobly strong, when love and virtue join'd

To melt thy soul and take a lover's part !

Ah, rigid duties, which two souls divide ! 45

Whose iron talons rend the panting breast !

Pluck the dear image from the widow'd side,

Where Love had lull'd its every care to rest.

HYPOLITA ! fond, passive to excess,

Her low submission suits not souls like mine ; 50

BIANCA might have lov'd her MANFRED less,

Not offer'd less at great Religion's shrine.

Implicit Faith, all hail ! Imperial man

Exacts submission ; reason we resign ;

Against our senses we adopt the plan 55

Which Reverence, Fear, and Folly think divine.

But

ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. 71

But be it so, BIANCA ne'er shall prate,
Nor ISABELLA's equal powers reveal;
You MANFREDS boast your power, and prize your state;
We ladies our omnipotence conceal. 60

But, oh! then strange-inventing WALPOLE, guide,
Ah! guide me thro' thy subterranean isles,
Ope the trap-door where all thy powers reside,
And mimic Fancy real woe beguiles.

The kind inventress dries the streaming tear, 65
The deep-resounding groan shall faintly die,
The sigh shall sicken ere it meet the air,
And Sorrow's dismal troop affrighted fly.

Thy jawless skeleton of JOPPA's wood
Stares in my face, and frights my mental eye; 70
Not stiffen'd worse the love-sick FREDERIC stood,
When the dim spectre shriek'd the dismal cry.

72 ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

But whilst the Hermit does my soul affright,

Love dies—Lo ! in yon corner down he kneels ;

I shudder, see the taper sinks in night, 75

He rises, and his fleshless form reveals,

Hide me, thou parent Earth ! see low I fall,

My sins now meet me in the fainting hour ;

Say, do thy Manes for Heaven's vengeance call,

Or can I free thee from an angry power ? 80

STELLA ! if WALPOLE's spectres thus can scare,

Then near that great Magician's walls ne'er tread,

He'll surely conjure many a spirit there,

Till, fear-struck, thou art number'd with the dead,

Oh ! with this noble Sorcerer ne'er converse ; 85

Fly, STELLA, quickly from the magic storm ;

Or, soon he'll close thee in some high-plum'd hearse,

Then raise another Angel in thy form.

Trust

ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. 73

Trust not his art, for should he stop thy breath,

And good ALPHONSO's ghost unbidden rise ; 90

He'd vanish, leave thee in the jaws of death,

And quite forget to close thy aching eyes.

But is BIANCA safe in this flow vale ?

For should his Goblins stretch their dusky wing,

Would they not bruise me for the faucy tale, 95

Would they not pinch me for the truths I sing ?

Yet whisper not I've call'd him names, I fear

His ARIEL would my hapless sprite torment,

He'd cramp my bones, and all my sinews tear,

Should STELLA blab the secret I'd prevent, 100

But hush, ye winds, ye crickets chirp no more,

I'll shrink to bed, nor these sad omens hear ;

An hideous rustling shakes the lattic'd door,

His spirits hover in the sightless air.

Now,

74 ON THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

Now, MORPHEUS, shut each entrance of my mind, 105

Sink, sink, OTRANTO, in this vacant hour;

To thee, oh, balmy God ! I'm all resign'd,

To thee e'en WALPOLE's wand resigns its power.

TO HER GRACE

The Duchess Dowager of PORTLAND.

NATURE! thou active Principle, whose depths
 The curious mind wou'd willingly explore;
 Thou, who in universal order sway'st
 The jarring atoms of a various world!
 The SCEPTIC'S Deity! whose wilder'd soul 5
 Ne'er reach'd, by Faith, thy first stupendous cause.

Immediate emanation of a God!
 O, swell the untaught rapture; bid it rise
 Spontaneous in my bare uncultur'd mind!
 Thou shalt aspire, when Gratitude assists, 10
 To nobler heights than Science ever dar'd.

Then

76 TO THE DUCHESS

Then found with extacy a PORTLAND's name,
 And bid it live beyond the wreck of worlds.
 For her let Fancy pierce the deep abyfs,
 Dart thro' the liquid element, and tread 15
 The shelly pavement, dazzling with the glare
 Of varied hues ; the lively coral here,
 Here the pale pearl ; the lovely vivid green
 Of brilliant onyx, and the sapphire's blue.

The TRITONS, sporting in their oozy grots, 20
 Forget to heave the tempest-loving wave ;
 The huge Leviathan, which late had 'scap'd
 Norwegian toils, and stung by Fear, descends
 More swift than eagles mount meridian heights,
 Feels rapture added to the joy of life, 25
 Whilst NEPTUNE, from his floating couch, thus
 speaks :

“ PORTLAND my deep dominions dares explore,

“ Nor

DOWAGER OF PORTLAND. 77

“ Nor here alone the Naturalist pursues
“ Those hidden gems by vulgar souls ne’er priz’d;
“ For her the bold adventurer shall dare 30
“ The golden serpent in ARABIAN wilds,
“ ASPHALTITES, and the venerable NILE,
“ Pluck the fair apple which GOMORRAH’s flame
“ Has fill’d with fulphur; tread once hallow’d earth
“ Where ancient SION stood; those heights ascend 35
“ Which pious NOAH, oft DEUCALION call’d,
“ First hail’d with grateful joy, and fearless press
“ The CASPIAN wave: for her the rover seeks
“ The scatter’d remnants of a ruin’d world.
“ But that the furge yon planet wou’d o’erwhelm, 40
“ The roots of Ocean wou’d I throw to land,
“ And all my gems shou’d meet her generous eye.
“ —It must not be; great Jove’s indignant frown
“ Wou’d shrink each coward wave beneath his fellow.
“ This boon refus’d, I give a nobler still 45

78 TO THE DUCHESS, &c.

“ In sweet exchange ; magnificently good,

“ Her godlike soul the wanderer shall sooth,

“ Chase the sad gloom from Sorrow's woe-funk eye,

“ And bid each future minute fly in peace.”

Thus spake the GOD, the list'ning furies catch 50

The potent sounds, and waft them to the shore ;

Echo to MANTUAN groves the strain prolong'd ;

But TITYRUS had long forsook the shade ;

And, since his absence, Melody has mourn'd.

On Mrs. MONTAGU.

WH Y boast, O arrogant, imperious man,
 Perfection so exclusive? are thy powers
 Nearer approaching Deity? can'st thou solve
 Questions which high Infinity propounds,
 Soar nobler flights, or dare immortal deeds, 5
 Unknown to woman, if she greatly dares
 To use the powers assign'd her? Active strength,
 The boast of animals, is clearly thine;
 By this upheld, thou think'st the lesson rare
 That female virtues teach; and poor the height 10
 Which female wit obtains. The theme unfolds
 Its ample maze, for MONTAGU befriends

The

The puzzled thought, and, blazing in the eye
 Of boldest Opposition, strait presents
 The soul's best energies, her keenest powers, 15
 Clear, vigorous, enlighten'd ; with firm wing
 Swift she o'ertakes *his* Muse, which spread afar
 Its brightest glories in the days of yore.
 Lo ! where she, mounting, spurns the stedfast earth,
 And, sailing on the cloud of science, bears 20
 The banner of Perfection.—
 Ask GALLIA's mimic sons how strong her powers,
 Whom, flush'd with plunder from her SHAKESPEARE'S
 page,
 She swift detects amid their dark retreats ;
 (Horrid as CACUS in their thievish dens) 25
 Regains the trophies, bears in triumph back
 The pilfer'd glories to a wond'ring world.
 So STELLA boasts, from her the tale I learn'd ;
 With pride she told it, I with rapture heard.

O, MONTAGU !

ON MRS. MONTAGU. 81

O, MONTAGU ! forgive me, if I sing 30

Thy wisdom temper'd with the milder ray

Of soft humanity, and kindness bland :

So wide its influence, that the bright beams

Reach the low vale where mists of ignorance

lodge,

Strike on the innate spark which lay immers'd, 35

Thick clogg'd, and almost quench'd in total night—

On me it fell, and cheer'd my joyless heart.

Unwelcome is the first bright dawn of light

To the dark soul ; impatient, she rejects,

And fain wou'd push the heavenly stranger back ; 40

She loaths the cranny which admits the day ;

Confus'd, afraid of the intruding guest ;

Disturb'd, unwilling to receive the beam,

Which to herself her native darkness shews.

ON MRS. MONTAGU. 83

My ravish'd soul to extacy untaught,
To all the transport the rapt sense can bear ;
But all expir'd, for want of powers to speak ;
All perish'd in the mind as soon as born,
Eras'd more quick than cyphers on the shore, 65
O'er which the cruel waves, unheedful, roll.

Such timid rapture as young * EDWIN seiz'd,
When his lone footsteps on the Sage obtrude,
Whose noble precept charm'd his wond'ring ear,
Such rapture fill'd † LACTILLA's vacant soul, 70
When the bright Moralist, in softness drest,
Opes all the glories of the mental world,
Deigns to direct the infant thought, to prune
The budding sentiment, uprear the stalk
Of feeble fancy, bid idea live, 75
Woo the abstracted spirit from its cares,

* See the Minstrel.

† The Author.

84 ON MRS. MONTAGU.

And gently guide her to the scenes of peace.

Mine was that balm, and mine the grateful heart,

Which breathes its thanks in rough, but timid
 strains.

CLIFTON

CLIFTON HILL.

Written in JANUARY 1785.

IN this lone hour, when angry storms descend,
 And the chill'd soul deplores her distant friend ;
 When all her sprightly fires inactive lie,
 And gloomy objects fill the mental eye ;
 When hoary Winter strides the northern blast, 5
 And FLORA's beauties at his feet are cast ;
 Earth by the grisly tyrant desert made,
 The feather'd warblers quit the leafless shade ;
 Quit those dear scenes where life and love began,
 And, cheerless, seek the savage haunt of man ; 10

How mourns each tenant of the silent grove !

No soft sensation tunes the heart to love ;

No fluttering pulse awakes to Rapture's call ;

No strain responsive aids the water's fall.

The Swain neglects his Nymph, yet knows not why ;

The Nymph, indifferent, mourns the freezing sky ; 16

Alike insensible to soft desire,

She asks no warmth—but from the kitchen fire ;

Love seeks a milder zone ; half sunk in snow,

LACTILLA, shivering, tends her fav'rite cow ; 20

The bleating flocks now ask the bounteous hand,

And crystal streams in frozen fetters stand.

The beauteous red-breast, tender in her frame,

Whose murder marks the fool with treble shame,

Near the low cottage door, in pensive mood, 25

Complains, and mourns her brothers of the wood.

Her song oft wak'd the soul to gentle joys,

All but his ruthless soul whose gun destroys.

For

For this, rough clown, long pains on thee shall wait,
 And freezing want avenge their hapless fate ; 30
 For these fell murders may'st thou change thy kind,
 In outward form as savage as in mind ;
 Go, be a bear of Pythagorean name,
 From man distinguish'd by thy hideous frame.

Tho' flow and pensive now the moments roll, 35
 Successive months shall from our torpid soul
 Hurry these scenes again ; the laughing hours
 Advancing swift, shall strew spontaneous flowers ;
 The early-peeping snowdrop, crocus mild,
 And modest violet, grace the secret wild ; 40
 Pale primrose, daisy, maypole-decking sweet,
 And purple hyacinth together meet :
 All Nature's sweets in joyous circle move,
 And wake the frozen soul again to love.

The ruddy swain now stalks along the vale, 45
 And snuffs fresh ardour from the flying gale ;
 The landscape rushes on his untaught mind,
 Strong raptures rise, but raptures undefin'd ;
 He louder whistles, stretches o'er the green,
 By screaming milk-maids, not unheeded, seen ; 50
 The downcast look ne'er fixes on the swain,
 They dread his eye, retire, and gaze again.
 'Tis mighty Love—Ye blooming maids, beware,
 Nor the lone thicket with a lover dare.
 No high romantic rules of honour bind 55
 The timid virgin of the rural kind ;
 No conquest of the passions e'er was taught,
 No meed e'er given them for the vanquish'd thought.
 To sacrifice, to govern, to restrain,
 Or to extinguish, or to hug the pain, 60
 Was never theirs ; instead, the fear of shame
 Proves a strong bulwark, and secures their fame ;

Shielded

Shielded by this, they flout, reject, deny,
With mock disdain put the fond lover by ;
Unreal scorn, stern looks, affected pride, 65
Awe the poor swain, and save the trembling bride.

As o'er the upland hills I take my way,
My eyes in transport boundless scenes survey :
Here the neat * dome where sacred raptures rise,
From whence the contrite groan shall pierce the skies ;
Where sin-struck souls bend low in humble prayer, 71
And waft that sigh which ne'er is lost in air.

Ah ! sacred turf ! here a fond Parent lies,
How my soul melts while dreadful scenes arise !
The past ! Ah ! shield me, Mercy ! from that thought,
My aching brain now whirls, with horror fraught. 76

* CLIFTON Church. In this church-yard the Author's Mother was buried.

Dead !

Dead ! can it be ? 'twas here we frequent stray'd,
 And these sad records mournfully survey'd.
 I mark'd the verse, the skulls her eye invite,
 Whilst my young bosom shudder'd with affright ! 80
 My heart recoil'd, and shun'd the loathsome view ;
 " Start not, my child, each human thought sub-
 due,"

She calmly said ; " this fate shall once be thine,
 My woes pronounce that it shall first be mine."
 Abash'd, I caught the awful truths she sung, 85
 And on her firm resolves one moment hung ;
 Vain boast—my bulwark tumbles to the deep,
 Amaz'd—alone I climb the craggy steep ;
 My shrieking soul deserted, fullen views
 The depths below, and Hope's fond strains refuse ; 90
 I listen'd not—She louder struck the lyre,
 And love divine, and moral truths conspire.

The proud * Cræsean crew, light, cruel, vain,
 Whose deeds have never swell'd the Muse's strain,
 Whose bosoms others sorrows ne'er assail, 95
 Who hear, unheeding, Misery's bitter tale,
 Here call for satire, would the verse avail. }
 Rest, impious race!—The Muse pursues her flight,
 Breathes purer air on VINCENT's rugged height;
 Here nibbling flocks of scanty herbage gain 100
 A meal penurious from the barren plain;
 Crop the low niggard bush; and, patient, try
 The distant walk, and every hillock nigh:
 Some bask, some bound, nor terrors ever know,
 Save from the human form, their only foe. 105
 Ye bleating innocents! dispel your fears,
 My woe-struck soul in all your troubles shares;

* It is supposed this word is derived, though not very legitimately, from CROESUS.

'Tis but LACTILLA—fly not from the green :
 Long have I shar'd with you this guiltless scene,
 'Tis mine to wander o'er the dewy lawn, 110
 And mark the pallid streak of early dawn ;
 Lo ! the grey dusk that fill'd the vacant space,
 Now fleets, and infant light pursues the chace ;
 From the hill top it seeks the valley low ;
 Inflam'd, the cheeks of morn with blushes glow ; 115
 Behold it 'whelm'd in a bright flood of day,
 It strives no more, but to the God gives way,

Ye silent, solemn *, strong, stupendous heights,
 Whose terror-striking frown the school-boy frights
 From the young daw; whilst in your rugged breast 120
 The chattering brood, secured by Horror, rest,
 Say, Muse, what arm the low'ring brothers cleft,
 And the calm stream in this low cradle left ?

* St. VINCENT'S rocks, between which flows the River
 Avon.

CLIFTON HILL. 93

Coëval with Creation they look down,
And, funder'd, still retain their native frown. 125
Beneath those heights, lo ! balmy springs * arise,
To which pale Beauty's faded image flies ;
Their kindly powers life's genial heat restore,
The tardy pulse, whose throbs were almost o'er,
Here beats a livelier tune. The breezy air, 130
To the wild hills invites the languid fair :
Fear not the western gale, thou tim'rous maid,
Nor dread its blast shall thy soft form invade ;
Tho' cool and strong the quick'ning breezes blow,
And meet thy panting breath, 'twill quickly grow 135
More strong ; then drink the odoriferous draught,
With unseen particles of health 'tis fraught.
Sit not within the threshold of Despair,
Nor plead a weakness fatal to the fair ;

* The Hot Wells.

Soft term for INDOLENCE, politely given, 140
By which we win no joy from earth or heaven.
Foul Fiend ! thou bane of health, fair Virtue's bane,
Death of true pleasure, source of real pain !
Keen exercise shall brace the fainting soul,
And bid her slacken'd powers more vigorous roll. 145

Blame not my rustic lay, nor think me rude,
If I avow Conceit's the grand prelude
To dire disease and death. Your high-born maid,
Whom fashion guides, in youth's first bloom shall
fade ;

She seeks the cause, th' effect would fain elude, 150
By Death's o'erstretching stride too close pursu'd,
She faints within his icy grasp, yet stares,
And wonders why the Tyrant yet appears—
Abrupt—so soon—Thine, Fashion, is the crime,
Fell Dissipation does the work of time. 155

How

CLIFTON HILL. 95

How thickly cloth'd, yon * rock of scanty foil,
Its lovely verdure scorns the hand of Toil.
Here the deep green, and here the lively plays,
The ruffet birch, and ever-blooming bays;
The vengeful black-thorn, of wild beauties proud, 160
Blooms beauteous in the gloomy-chequer'd crowd:
The barren elm, the useful feeding oak,
Whose hamadryad ne'er should feel the stroke
Of axe relentless, 'till twice fifty years
Have crown'd her woodland joys, and fruitful
cares. 165

The pois'nous reptiles here their mischiefs bring,
And thro' the helpless sleeper dart the sting;
The toad envenom'd, hating human eyes,
Here springs to light, lives long, and aged dies.

* LEIGH Wood.

The harmless snail, slow-journeying, creeps away, 170

Sucks the young dew, but shuns the bolder day.

(Alas ! if transmigration should prevail,

I fear LACTILLA's soul must house in snail.)

The long-nosed mouse, the woodland rat is here,

The fightless mole, with nicely-pointed ear ; 175

The timid rabbit hails th' impervious gloom,

Eludes the dog's keen scent, and shuns her doom.

Various the tenants of this tangled wood,

Who skulk all day, all night review the flood,

Chew the wash'd weed driven by the beating wave, 180

Or feast on dreadful food, which hop'd a milder

grave.

Hail, useful channel ! Commerce spreads her wings,

From either pole her various treasure brings ;

Wafted by thee, the mariner long stray'd,

Clasps the fond parent, and the fighting maid ; 185

Joy

Joy tunes the cry ; the rocks rebound the roar ;
 The deep vibration quivers 'long the shore ;
 The merchant hears, and hails the peeping mast,
 The wave-drench'd sailor scorns all peril past ;
 Now love and joy the noisy crew invite, 190
 And clumsy music crowns the rough delight.

Yours be the vulgar dissonance, while I
 Cross the low stream, and stretch the ardent eye
 O'er Nature's wilds ; 'tis peace, 'tis joy serene,
 The thought as pure as calm the vernal scene. 195
 Ah, lovely meads ! my bosom lighter grows,
 Shakes off her huge oppressive weight of woes,
 And swells in guiltless rapture ; ever hail,
 The tufted grove, and the low-winding vale !

Low not, ye herds, your lusty Masters bring 200
 The crop of Summer ; and the genial Spring

H

Feels

Feels for your wants, and softens Winter's rage,
 The hoarded hay-stack shall your woes assuage;
 Woes summ'd in one alone, 'tis Nature's call,
 That secret voice which fills creation all. 205

Beneath this stack * LOUISA's dwelling rose,
 Here the fair Maniac bore three Winters snows.
 Here long she shiver'd, stiffening in the blast,
 The lightnings round their livid horrors cast;
 The thunders roar, while rushing torrents pour, 210
 And add new woes to bleak affliction's hour;
 The heavens lour dismal while the storm descends,
 No Mother's bosom the soft maid befriends;

* The beautiful unfortunate LOUISA, fugitive Foreigner, lived three years in a state of distraction under this hay-stack, without going into a house. She once confessed, in a lucid interval, that she had escaped from a Convent, in which she had been confined by her father, on refusing a marriage of his proposing, her affections being enaged to another man.

But, frighten'd, o'er the wilds she swiftly flies,
 And drench'd with rains, the roofless hay-stack tries.
 The morn was fair, and gentle — fought 216
 These lonely woodlands, friends to sober Thought;
 With Solitude, the slow-pac'd maid is seen
 Tread the dark grove, and unfrequented green,
 Well — knew their lurkings; PHOEBUS shone, 220
 While, musing, she pursued the track alone.
 O, thou kind friend! whom here I dare not name,
 Who to LOUISA's shed of misery came,
 Lur'd by the tale, sigh'd o'er her beauteous form,
 And gently drew her from the beating storm, 225
 Stand forth—defend, for well thou canst, the cause
 Of Heaven, and justify its rigid laws;
 Yet own that human laws are harshly given,
 When they extend beyond the will of Heaven.
 Say, can thy pen for that hard duty plead, 230
 By which the meek and helpless maid's decreed

To dire seclusion? Snatch'd from guiltless joys,
 To where corroding grief the frame destroys;
 Monastic glooms, which active virtue cramp,
 Where horrid silence chills the vital lamp; 235
 Slowly and faint the languid pulses beat,
 And the chill'd heart forgets its genial heat;
 The dim sunk eye, with hopeless glance, explores
 The solemn aisles, and death-denouncing doors,
 Ne'er to be pass'd again.—Now heaves the sigh, 240
 Now unavailing sorrows fill the eye:
 Fancy once more brings back the long-lost youth
 To the fond soul, in all the charms of Truth;
 She welcomes the lov'd image; busy Thought
 Pourtrays the past, with guiltless pleasures fraught;
 'Tis momentary bliss, 'tis rapture high, 246
 The heart o'erflows, and all is extacy.
 MEMORY! I charge thee yet preserve the shade,
 Ah! let not yet the glittering colours fade!

Forbear

CLIFTON HILL, 101

Forbear the cruel future yet to view, 250

When the sad soul must bid a long adieu,

E'en to its fancied bliss—Ah! turn not yet

Thou wretched bankrupt, that must soon forget

This farewell draught of joy: lo! Fancy dies,

E'en the thin phantom of past pleasure flies. 255

Thought sinks in real woe; too poor to give

Her present bliss, she bids the future live;

The spirit soon quits that fond clasp, for see,

The future offers finish'd misery.

Hope quite extinct, lo! frantic thro' the aisles 260

She raves, while SUPERSTITION grimly smiles.

Th' exhausted mourner mopes, then wildly stalks

Round the drear dome, and seeks the darkest walks.

The glance distracted each sad sister meets,

The sorrow-speaking eyes in silence greets 265

Each death-devoted maid; LOUISA here

Runs thro' each various shape of sad despair;

Now

Now swells with gusts of hope, now sick'ning dies;
 Alternate thoughts of death and life arise
 Within her panting soul; the firm resolve, 270
 The new desire, in stronger fears dissolve.
 She starts—then seiz'd the moment of her fate,
 Quits the lone cloyster and the horrid grate,
 Whilst wilder horrors to receive her wait;
 Muffled, on Freedom's happy plains they stand, 275
 And eager seize her not reluctant hand;
 Too late to these mild shores the mourner came,
 For now the guilt of flight o'erwhelms her frame:
 Her broken vows in wild disorder roll,
 And stick like serpents in her trembling soul; 280
 THOUGHT, what art thou? of thee she boasts no
 more,
 O'erwhelm'd, thou dy'st amid the wilder roar
 Of lawless anarchy, which sweeps the soul,
 Whilst her drown'd faculties like pebbles roll,
 Unloos'd,

C L I F T O N H I L L. 103

Unloos'd, uptorn, by whirlwinds of despair, 285

Each well-taught moral now dissolves in air;

Dishevel'd, lo! her beauteous tresses fly,

And the wild glance now fills the staring eye;

The balls, fierce glaring in their orbits move,

Bright spheres, where beam'd the sparkling fires of

Love, 290

Now roam for objects which once fill'd her mind,

Ah! long-lost objects they must never find.

Ill-starr'd LOUISA! Memory, 'tis a strain,

Which fills my soul with sympathetic pain.

Remembrance, hence, give thy vain struggles o'er, 295

Nor swell the line with forms that live no more.

T H E E N D.

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