THE

LIFE

AND

POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL COWPER.

BY WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

"Obversatur oculis ille vir, quo neminem ætas nostra graviorem, sanctiorem, subtiliorem denique tulit: quem ego quum ex admiratione diligere cœpissem, quod evenire contra solet, magis admiratus sum, postquam penitus inspexi. Inspexi enim penitus: nihil a me ille secretum, non joculare, non serium, non triste, non lætum."

PLINII EPIST. Lib. iv. Ep. 17.

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OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

APPENDIX,

THE

LIFE OF COWPER.

PART THE THIRD.

Οι αρετης εφιεμενοι παντες ετι και νυν διατελουσι παντων μαλιστα ποθουντες εκεινον, ως ωφελιμωταλον ονται προς αρετης επιμελειαν.

XENOPHON.

THE active and powerful mind of Cowper wanted no long interval of rest after finishing the work of five laborious years. On the contrary, he very soon began to feel that regular hours of mental exertion were essentially requisite to his comfort and welfare.

That extraordinary proficient in the knowledge of human nature, Lord Bacon, has inserted in his list of articles conducive to health, (for his own use) one article, that may appear, at first sight, little suited to such a purpose—"heroic desires!" If we understand by this expression what he probably intended, a constant inclination and care to employ our faculties fervently and steadily on some grand object of laudable pursuit, perhaps the whole *Materia Medica* could have furnished him with nothing so likely to promote the preservation of health; especially in a frame distinguished by nerves of the most delicate and dangerous sensibility.

Cowper was himself aware of this truth, and he was looking deliberately around him for some new literary object of magnitude and importance, when his thoughts were directed to Milton, by an unexpected application from the literary merchant with whom he had corresponded, occasionally, for some years; and with whom his acquaintance, though confined to letters of business, had ripened into a cordial esteem.

The great author of the Rambler (intimately acquainted with all the troubles that are too apt to attend the votaries of literature) has said, "that a bookseller is the only Mæcenas of the modern world." Without assenting to all the eulogy and all the satire implied in this remarkable sentiment, we may take a pleasure in ob-

serving, that in the class of men so magnificently and sportively commended, there are several individuals, each of whom a writer of the most delicate manners and exalted mind may justly esteem as a pleasing associate, and as a liberal friend.

In this light Cowper regarded his bookseller, Mr. Johnson, to whom he had literally given the two volumes of his poems, with that modest and generous simplicity of spirit which formed a striking part of his character. He entertained no presumptuous ideas of their pecuniary value; and when the just applause of the world had sufficiently proved it, he nobly declined the idea of resuming a gift, which the probity of his merchant would have allowed him to recall. He was, however, so pleased by this, and by subsequent proofs of liberality in the conduct of Mr. Johnson, that on being solicited by him to embark in the adventure of preparing a magnificent edition of Milton, he readily entered into the project; and began those admirable translations from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton, which I have formerly mentioned in print, and to which I hope to render more justice, by a plan of devoting them to the purpose of raising a monument to their author: a plan upon which I shall apply to the favour of the public in the close of these volumes.

As it is to Milton that I am in a great measure indebted for what I must ever regard as a signal blessing, the friendship of Cowper, the reader will pardon me for dwelling a little on the circumstances that produced it: circumstances which often lead me to repeat those sweet verses of my friend on the casual original of our most valuable attachments:

> Mysterious are his ways, whose power
> Brings forth that unexpected hour,
> When minds, that never met before,
> Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
> It is th' allotment of the skies,
> The hand of the supremely wise,
> That guides and governs our affections,
> And plans and orders our connections.

These charming verses strike with peculiar force on my heart, when I recollect that it was an idle endeavour to make us enemies which gave rise to our intimacy, and that I was providentially conducted to Weston at a season when my presence there afforded peculiar comfort to my affectionate friend, under the pressure of a domestic affliction, which threatened to overwhelm his very tender spirits.

The entreaty of many persons, whom I wished to oblige, had engaged me to write a life of Milton, before I had the slightest suspicion that my work could interfere with the projects of any man; but I was soon surprised and concerned in hearing that I was represented in a news-paper, as an antagonist of Cowper.

I immediately wrote to him on the subject, and our correspondence soon endeared us to each other in no common degree. The series of his letters to me I value not only as memorials of a most dear and honourable friendship, but as exquisite examples of epistolary excellence. My pride might assuredly be gratified by inserting them all, as I have been requested to do, in this publication; but, I trust, I am influenced by a proper sense of duty towards my dear departed friend, in withholding them, at present, from the eye of the public. The truth is, I feel that the extreme sensibility of my affectionate correspondent led him, very frequently, to speak of me in such terms of tender partiality, that the world must not be expected to forgive him for so over-rating even the merit of a friend, till that friend is sharing with him the hallowed rest of the grave. In the mean time my readers, I hope, will approve my confining myself to such a selection from them, as appears to me necessary for the completion of this narrative; which I seize every opportunity of embellishing with numerous letters to his other correspondents.

It is time to resume the series of such letters; and in doing so I embrace, with a melancholy gratification, an opportunity of paying tender respect to the memory of a scholar and a poet, who, in 1791, solicited and obtained the regard of Cowper, and saw him, for the first time, at Eartham, in the following year.—I speak of the late professor of poetry, the Reverend James Hurdis; a man whose death must be lamented as peculiarly unseasonable, did not piety suggest to the persons most deeply afflicted by a loss so little expected, that it is irrational and irreligious to repine at those decrees of heaven which summon to early beatitude the most deserving of its servants. As this exemplary divine was tenderly idolized by several accomplished sisters, it may be hoped that his collected works will be republished by some member of his family, with a memorial of the learned, elegant, and moral writer, adapted to the extent and variety of his merit. My intercourse with him was brief indeed, but terminated with expressions of kindness, when every kind syllable derives an affecting power, from the approach of death. I had applied to him, requesting the sight of letters that I knew he had been long in the habit of receiving from Cowper: my application, to my surprise and concern, found him sinking into a fatal illness; but he kindly intimated to a beloved

sister a wish to comply with my request. To the fidelity of her affection towards a deserving brother I am indebted for the papers which I wished to see; and from which I have made such a selection as I deem most consistent with the regard I owe to both the departed poets.—Their reciprocal esteem will reflect honour on both; and it is particularly pleasing to observe the candid and liberal spirit with which Cowper attended to the wishes and encouraged the exertions of a young and modest writer, who was justly ambitious of his applause.

The date of his first letter to the author of the Village Curate appears to claim an earlier place in this work; but a variety of circumstances conspired to fix it here.

LETTER I.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS,

Weston, March 6, 1791.

SIR,

I have always entertained, and have occasionally avowed a great degree of respect for the abilities of the unknown author of the Village Curate—unknown at that time, but now well known, and not to me only, but to many. For before I was favoured with your obliging letter I knew your name, your place of abode, your profession, and that you had four sisters; all which I learned neither from our bookseller, nor from any of his connections: you will perceive, therefore, that you are no longer an author incognito. The writer, indeed, of many passages that have fallen from your pen could not long continue so. Let genius, true genius, conceal itself where it may, we may say of it, as the young man in Terence of his beautiful mistress—"*diu latere non potest.*"

I am obliged to you for your kind offers of service, and will not say that I shall not be troublesome to you hereafter; but at present I have no need to be so. I have, within these two days, given the very last stroke of my pen to my long translation, and what will be my next career I know not. At any rate, we shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only; for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door, however, will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with natural disposition, to draw a circle round me which I cannot pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immoveable: in which case, should you choose at any time to move Weston-

ward, you will always find me happy to receive you. And in the mean time I remain, with much respect, your most obedient servant, critic, and friend,

W. C.

P. S. I wish to know what you mean to do with Sir Thomas.* For though I expressed doubts about his theatrical possibilities, I think him a very respectable person, and, with some improvement, well worthy of being introduced to the public.

LETTER II.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, June 13, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ought to have thanked you for your agreeable and entertaining letter much sooner; but I have many correspondents who will not be said, nay; and have been obliged, of late, to give my last attentions to Homer: the very last indeed, for yesterday I dispatched to town, after revising them carefully, the proof-sheets of subscribers' names; among which I took special notice of yours, and am much obliged to you for it. We have contrived, or rather my bookseller and printer have contrived, (for they have never waited a moment for me) to publish as critically at the wrong time, as if my whole interest and success had depended on it. March, April, and May, said Johnson to me in a letter that I received from him in February, are the best months for publication. *Therefore*, now it is determined that Homer shall come out on the first of July, that is to say, exactly at the moment when, except a few lawyers, not a creature will be left in town who will ever care one farthing about him. To which of these two friends of mine I am indebted for this management, I know not. It does not please, but I would be a philosopher as well as a poet, and therefore make no complaint or grumble at all about it. You, I presume, have had dealings with them both—how did they manage for you? And if as they have for me, how did you behave under it? Some who love me complain that I am too passive; and I should be glad of an opportunity to justify myself by your example. The fact is, should I thunder ever so loud, no efforts of that sort will avail me now; therefore, like a good economist of my bolts, I choose to reserve them for more profitable occasions.

I am glad to find that your amusements have been so similar to mine, for in this instance, too, I seemed to have need of somebody to

* Sir Thomas More, a Tragedy.

keep me in countenance, especially in my attention and attachment to animals. All the notice that we lords of the creation vouchsafe to bestow on the creatures, is generally to abuse them; it is well, therefore, that here and there a man should be found a little womanish, or perhaps a little childish in this matter, who will make some amends, by kissing and coaxing, and laying them in one's bosom. You remember the little ewe lamb mentioned by the Prophet Nathan: the Prophet, perhaps, invented the tale for the sake of its application to David's conscience; but it is more probable that God inspired him with it for that purpose. If he did, it amounts to a proof that he does not overlook, but, on the contrary, much notices such little partialities and kindnesses to his *dumb* creatures, as we, because we articulate, are pleased to call them.

Your sisters are fitter to judge than I, whether assembly-rooms are the places, of all others, in which the ladies may be studied to most advantage. I am an old fellow, but I had once my dancing days, as you have now; yet I could never find that I learned half so much of a woman's real character by dancing with her, as by conversing with her at home, where I could observe her behaviour at the table, at the fire-side, and in all the trying circumstances of domestic life. We are all good when we are pleased, but she is the good woman who wants not a fiddle to sweeten her. If I am wrong, the young ladies will set me right: in the mean time I will not teaze you with graver arguments on the subject, especially as I have a hope, that years, and the study of the scripture, and His Spirit whose word it is, will, in due time, bring you to my way of thinking. I am not one of those sages who require that young men should be as old as themselves, before they have had time to be so.

With my love to your fair sisters, I remain, dear Sir, yours truly, W. C.

LETTER III.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, August 9, 1791.

My dear Sir,

I never make a correspondent wait for an answer through idleness or want of proper respect for him; but if I am silent, it is because I am busy, or not well, or because I stay till something occur that may make my letter at least a little better than mere blank paper. I therefore write speedily in reply

to yours, being, at present, neither much occupied, nor at all indisposed, nor forbidden by a dearth of materials.

I wish always, when I have a new piece in hand, to be as secret as you, and there was a time when I could be so. Then I lived the life of a solitary, was not visited by a single neighbour, because I had none with whom I could associate; nor ever had an inmate. This was when I dwelt at Olney; but since I have removed to Weston the case is different. Here I am visited by all around me, and study in a room exposed to all manner of inroads. It is on the ground floor, the room in which we dine, and in which I am sure to be found by all who seek me. They find me generally at my desk, and with my work, whatever it be, before me, unless perhaps I have conjured it into its hiding-place before they have had time to enter. This, however, is not always the case, and, consequently, sooner or later, I cannot fail to be detected. Possibly you, who, I suppose, have a snug study, would find it impracticable to attend to any thing closely in an apartment exposed as mine; but use has made it familiar to me, and so familiar, that neither servants going and coming disconcert me; nor even if a lady, with an oblique glance of her eye, catches two or three lines of my MSS. do I feel myself inclined to blush, though naturally the shyest of mankind.

You did well, I believe, to cashier the subject of which you give me a recital. It certainly wants those *agreements* which are necessary to the success of any subject in verse. It is a curious story, and so far as the poor young lady was concerned, a very affecting one; but there is a coarseness in the character of the hero that would have spoiled all. In fact, I find it myself a much easier matter to write than to get a convenient theme to write on.

I am obliged to you for comparing me, as you go, both with Pope and with Homer. It is impossible, in any other way of management, to know whether the translation be well executed or not, and if well, in what degree. It was in the course of such a process that I first became dissatisfied with Pope. More than thirty years since, and when I was a young templar, I accompanied him with his original, line by line, through both poems. A fellow student of mine, a person of fine classic taste, joined himself with me in the labour. We were neither of us, as you may imagine, very diligent in our proper business.

I shall be glad if my Reviewers, whosoever they may be, will be at the pains to read me as you do; I want no praise that I am not entitled to, but of that to which I am entitled I should be loth to lose a little, having worked hard to earn it.

I would heartily second the Bishop of Salisbury, in recommend-

ing to you a close pursuit of your Hebrew studies, were it not that I wish you to publish what I may understand. Do both, and I shall be satisfied.

Your remarks, if I may but receive them soon enough to serve me in case of a new edition, will be extremely welcome.

W. C.

LETTER IV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

Weston, August 9, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

The little that I have heard about Homer myself has been equally, or more flattering than Dr. ——'s intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not studied the old Grecian, and how to dress him, so long and so intensely to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes, and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many different plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice, for other guide I have none, nor wish for another.

God bless you, my dearest Johnny.

W. C.

LETTER V.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

The Lodge, Sept. 14, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Whoever reviews me will, in fact, have a laborious task of it, in the performance of which he ought to move leisurely, and to exercise much critical discernment. In the mean time, my courage is kept up by the arrival of such testimonies in my favour, as give me the greatest pleasure; coming from quarters the most respectable. I have reason, therefore, to hope, that our periodical judges will not be very adverse to me, and that perhaps they may even favour me. If one man of taste and letters is pleased, another man, so qualified, can hardly be displeased; and if critics of a different description grumble, they will not, however, materially hurt me.

You, who know how necessary it is to me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement, and that I have not refused it. A Milton that is to rival,

and, if possible, to exceed in splendour Boydell's Shakspeare, is in contempletion, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in.

W. C.

LETTER VI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

Weston, Oct. 31, 1791.

MY DEAR JOHNNY,

Your kind and affectionate letter well deserves my thanks, and should have had them long ago, had I not been obliged lately to give my attention to a mountain of unanswered letters, which I have just now reduced to a mole-hill: yours lay at the bottom, and I have at last worked my way down to it.

It gives me great pleasure that you have found a house to your minds. May you all three be happier in it than the happiest that ever occupied it before you! But my chief delight of all is to learn that you and Kitty are so completely cured of your long and threatening maladies. I always thought highly of Dr. Kerr, but his extraordinary success in your two instances has even inspired me with an affection for him.

My eyes are much better than when I wrote last, though seldom perfectly well many days together. At this season of the year I catch perpetual colds, and shall continue to do so till I have got the better of that tenderness of habit with which the summer never fails to affect me.

I am glad that you have heard well of my work in your country. Sufficient proofs have reached me, from various quarters, that I have not ploughed the field of Troy in vain.

Were you here, I would gratify you with an enumeration of particulars; but since you are not, it must content you to be told that I have every reason to be satisfied.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, in her letter to cousin Balls, made mention of my new engagement. I have just entered on it, and therefore can, at present, say little about it.

It is a very creditable one in itself, and may I but acquit myself of it with sufficiency, it will do me honour. The commentator's part, however, is a new one to me, and one that I little thought to appear in.

Remember your promise that I shall see you in the spring.

The Hall has been full of company ever since you went, and at present my Catharina is there singing and playing like an angel.

W. C.

LETTER VII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esquire.

Nov. 14, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have waited and wished for your opinion with the feelings that belong to the value I have for it, and am very happy to find it so favourable. In my table-drawer I treasure up a bundle of suffrages, sent me by those of whose approbation I was most ambitious, and shall presently insert yours among them.

I know not why we should quarrel with compound epithets: it is certain, at least, they are as agreeable to the genius of our language as to that of the Greek, which is sufficiently proved by their being admitted into our common and colloquial dialect. Black-eyed, nut-brown, crook-shank'd, hump-back'd, are all compound epithets, and, together with a thousand other such, are used continually, even by those who profess a dislike to such combinations in poetry. Why, then, do they treat with so much familiarity a thing that they say disgusts them? I doubt if they could give this question a reasonable answer; unless they should answer it by confessing themselves unreasonable.

I have made a considerable progress in the translation of Milton's Latin poems. I give them, as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven, and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will altogether, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves, and cannot fail to please, but by the fault of their translator.

W. C.

LETTER VIII.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Dec. 10, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell you the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find

another Homer, I shall promise, I believe, and vow, when I have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and, consequently, I am happy, and feel myself honourably employed whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis*, a pastoral, in my judgment, equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat.*

I was charmed with your friendly offer to be my advocate with the public: should I want one, I know not where I could find a better. The reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine grows more and more civil. Should he continue to sweeten at this rate, as he proceeds, I know not what will become of all the little modesty I have left. I have availed myself of some of his strictures, for I wish to learn from every body. W. C.

LETTER IX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Weston, Dec. 21, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It grieves me, after having indulged a little hope that I might see you in the holidays, to be obliged to disappoint myself. The occasion, too, is such as will ensure me your sympathy.

On Saturday last, while I was at my desk near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fire-side opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!" I turned and saw her actually falling, together with her chair, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended too with some other very, very alarming symptoms. At present, however, she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems in all respects better.

She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them as long as she wants them, which will probably be, at the best, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but at present I hold up bravely.

W. C.

LETTER X.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Feb. 21, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

My obligations to you, on the score of your kind and friendly remarks, demanded from me a much more expeditious acknowledgment of the numerous pacquets that contained them; but I have been hindered by many causes, each of which you would admit as a sufficient apology, but none of which I will mention, lest I should give too much of my paper to the subject. My acknowledgments are likewise due to your fair sister, who has transcribed so many sheets in so neat a hand, and with so much accuracy.

At present I have no leisure for Homer, but shall certainly find leisure to examine him, with a reference to your strictures, before I send him a second time to the printer. This I am at present unwilling to do, choosing rather to wait, if that may be, till I shall have undergone the discipline of all the reviewers; none of whom have yet taken me in hand, the Gentleman's Magazine excepted. By several of his remarks I have been benefited, and shall no doubt be benefited by the remarks of all.

Milton at present engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall then proceed immediately to deliberate upon, and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust, at least, that this anxiety will cease, when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But, after all, I seem to fear more the labour to which it calls me, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labours of versifying I have no objection, but to the labours of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case, I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so with almost all the commentators that have ever existed.

I have expected, but not wondered that I have not received, Sir Thomas More, and the other MSS. you promised me; because my silence has been such, considering how loudly I was called upon to write, that you must have concluded me either dead or dying, and did not choose, perhaps, to trust them to executors.

W. C.

LETTER XI.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, March* 2, 1792.

I have this moment finished a comparison of your remarks with my text, and feel so sensibly my obligations to your great accuracy and kindness, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of expressing them immediately. I only wish that, instead of revising the two first books of the Iliad, you could have found leisure to revise the whole two poems, sensible how much my work would have benefited.

I have not always adopted your lines, though often, perhaps, at least, as good as my own; because there will and must be dissimilarity of manner between two so accustomed to the pen as we are. But I have left few passages go unamended which you seemed to think exceptionable; and this not at all from complaisance: for in such a cause I would not sacrifice an iota on that principle, but on clear conviction.

I have as yet heard nothing from Johnson about the two MSS. you announce, but feel ashamed that I should want your letter to remind me of your obliging offer to inscribe Sir Thomas More to me, should you resolve to publish him. Of my consent to such a measure you need not doubt. I am covetous of respect and honour from all such as you.

Tame hare, at present, I have none. But to make amends, I have a beautiful little spaniel called Beau, to whom I will give the kiss your sister Sally intended for the former. Unless she should command me to bestow it elsewhere, it shall attend on her directions.

I am going to take a last dinner with a most agreeable family, who have been my only neighbours ever since I have lived at Weston. On Monday they go to London, and in the summer to an estate in Oxfordshire, which is to be their home in future. The occasion is not at all a pleasant one to me, nor does it leave me spirits to add more than that I am, dear Sir, most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER XII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

Weston, March 11, 1792.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

You talk of primroses that you pulled on Candlemas day; but what think you of me, who heard a Night-

ingale on New-year's day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune: good, indeed ; for if it was at all an omen, it could not be an unfavourable one. The winter, however, is now making himself amends, and seems the more peevish for having been encroached on at so undue a season. Nothing less than a large slice out of the spring will satisfy him.

Lady Hesketh left us yesterday. She intended, indeed, to have left us four days sooner: but in the evening before the day fixed for her departure, snow enough fell to occasion just so much delay of it.

We have faint hopes that in the month of May we shall see her again. I know that you have had a letter from her, and you will no doubt have the grace not to make her wait long for an answer.

We expect Mr. Rose on Tuesday; but he stays with us only till the Saturday following. With him I shall have some conferences on the subject of Homer, respecting a new edition I mean, and some perhaps on the subject of Milton; on him I have not yet begun to comment, or even fix the time when I shall.

Forget not your promised visit!

W. C.*

TO THE NIGHTINGALE,

Which the Author heard sing on New-Year's Day, 1792.

Whence is it, that, amaz'd, I hear,
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practis'd in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

* *Note by the Editor.*—I annex to this letter the stanzas that Cowper composed on the wonderful incident here mentioned.

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome, then! for many a long
And joyous year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make ev'n January charm,
And ev'ry season Spring.

LETTER XIII.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, March 23, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I have read your play carefully, and with great pleasure: it seems now to be a performance that cannot fail to do you much credit. Yet, unless my memory deceives me, the scene between Cecilia and Heron in the garden has lost something that pleased me much when I saw it first; and I am not sure that you have not likewise obliterated an account of Sir Thomas's execution, that I found very pathetic. It would be strange if, in these two particulars, I should seem to miss what never existed: you will presently know whether I am as good at remembering what I never saw, as I am at forgetting what I have seen. But if I am right, I cannot help recommending the omitted passages to your re-consideration. If the play were designed for representation, I should be apt to think Cecilia's first speech rather too long, and should prefer to have it broken into dialogue, by an interposition now and then from one of her sisters. But since it is designed, as I understand, for the closet only, that objection seems of no importance; at no rate, however, would I expunge it, because it is both prettily imagined, and elegantly written.

I have read your *cursory remarks*, and am much pleased both with the style and the argument. Whether the latter be new or not I am not competent to judge: if it be, you are entitled to much praise for the invention of it. Where other data are wanting to ascertain the time when an author of many pieces wrote each in particular, there can be no better criterion by which to determine

the point, than the more or less proficiency manifested in the composition. Of this proficiency, where it appears, and of those plays in which it appears not, you seem to me to have judged well and truly; and, consequently, I approve of your arrangement.

I attended, as you desired me, in reading the character of Cecilia, to the hint you gave me concerning your sister Sally, and give you joy of such a sister. This, however, not exclusively of the rest, for though they may not all be Cecilias, I have a strong persuasion that they are all very amiable.

W. C.

LETTER XIV.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 25, 1792.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Mr. Rose's longer stay than he at first intended was the occasion of the longer delay of my answer to your note, as you may both have perceived by the date thereof, and learned from his information. It was a daily trouble to me to see it lying in the window-seat, while I knew you were in expectation of its arrival. By this time I presume you have seen him, and have seen likewise Mr. Hayley's friendly letter and complimentary sonnet, as well as the letter of the honest Quaker; all of which, at least the two former, I shall be glad to receive again at a fair opportunity. Mr. Hayley's letter slept six weeks in Johnson's custody. It was necessary I should answer it without delay, and accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things, how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long; especially on account of the distress that I know it must have occasioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn that, in the long interval of my non-correspondence, he had suffered anxiety and mortification enough; so much that I dare say he had made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What, indeed, could he imagine less, than that I meant, by such an obstinate silence, to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship; in short, that I considered him as a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him. He is now, however, convinced that I love him, as indeed I do; and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power.

I have likewise a very pleasing letter from Mr. Park, which I wish you were here to read; and a very pleasing poem that came inclosed in it for my revisal, written when he was only twenty years of age, yet wonderfully well written, though wanting some correction.

To Mr. Hurdis I return Sir Thomas More to-morrow, having revised it a second time. He is now a very respectable figure, and will do my friend, who gives him to the public this spring, considerable credit.

W. C.

LETTER XV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

March 30, 1792.

My mornings, ever since you went, have been given to my correspondents: this morning I have already written a long letter to Mr. Park, giving my opinion of his poem, which is a favourable one. I forget whether I showed it to you when you were here, and even whether I had then received it. He has genius and delicate taste; and if he were not an engraver, might be one of our first hands in poetry.

W. C.

LETTER XVI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Weston, April 5, 1792.

You talk, my dear friend, as John Bunyan says, like one who has the egg-shell still upon his head. You talk of the mighty favours that you have received from me, and forget entirely those for which I am indebted to you; but though you forget them, I shall not, nor ever think that I have requited you, so long as any opportunity presents itself of rendering you the smallest service: small, indeed, is all that I can ever hope to render.

You now perceive, and sensibly, that not without reason I complained, as I used to do, of those tiresome rogues the printers. Bless yourself that you have not two thick quartos to bring forth, as I had. My vexation was always much increased by this reflection; they are every day, and all day long, employed in printing for somebody, and why not for me? This was adding mortification to disappointment, so that I often lost all patience.

The suffrage of Doctor Robertson makes more than amends for the scurvy jest passed upon me by the wag unknown. I re-

gard him not; nor, except for about two moments after I first heard of his doings, have I ever regarded him. I have somewhere a secret enemy; I know not for what cause he should be so; but he, I imagine, supposes that he has a cause: it is well, however, to have but one; and I will take all the care I can not to increase the number.

I have begun my notes, and am playing the commentator manfully. The worst of it is that I am anticipated in almost all my opportunities to shine by those who have gone before me.

W. C.

LETTER XVII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, April 6, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days: in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed, they are apt soon to terminate. But, as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart toward you, that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event, a propitious omen.

* *

Horace says somewhere, though I may quote it amiss, perhaps, for I have a terrible memory,

Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
Consentit astrum.——

* * * Our *stars consent*, at least have had an influence somewhat similar in another and more important article.——* * *

It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I may hope to see you at Weston; for as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered in the light of impossibilities. Come then, my friend, and be as welcome, as the country people say here, as the flowers in May. I am happy, as I say, in the expectation; but the fear, or rather the consciousness that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes it a trembling kind of happiness, and a doubtful.

After that privacy which I have mentioned above, I went to Huntingdon: soon after my arrival there I took up my quarters

at the house of the Reverend Mr. Unwin; I lived with him while he lived, and ever since his death have lived with his widow. Her, therefore, you will find mistress of the house; and I judge of you amiss, or you will find her just such as you would wish. To me she has been often a nurse, and invariably the kindest friend, through a thousand adversities that I have had to grapple with in the course of almost thirty years. I thought it better to introduce her to you thus, than to present her to you at your coming, quite a stranger.

Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for, with you for an interpreter, I shall be afraid of none of them. And, in truth, if you think that you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also; for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided*, being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes, as

No mighty store!
His own works neatly bound, and little more!

You shall know how this has come to pass hereafter.

Tell me, my friend, are your letters in your own hand writing? If so, I am in pain for your eyes, lest, by such frequent demands upon them, I should hurt them. I had rather write you three letters for one, much as I prize your letters, than *that* should happen. And now, for the present, adieu—I am going to accompany Milton into the lake of fire and brimstone, having just begun my annotations.

W. C.

LETTER XVIII.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, April 8, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your entertaining and pleasant letter, resembling in that respect, all that I receive from you, deserved a more expeditious answer, and should have had what it so well deserved, had it not reached me at a time when, deeply in debt to all my correspondents, I had letters to write without number; like autumnal leaves that strew the brooks—in *Vallombrosa*; the unanswered farrago lay before me. If I quote at all, you must expect me henceforth to quote none but Milton, since, for a long time to come, I shall be occupied with him only.

I was much pleased with the extract you gave me from your sister Eliza's letter: she writes very elegantly, and (if I might say

it without seeming to flatter you) I should say much in the manner of her brother. It is well for your sister Sally, that gloomy Dis is already a married man; else, perhaps, finding her, as he found Proserpine, studying Botany in the fields, he might transport her to his own flowerless abode, where all her hopes of improvement in that science would be at an end for ever.

What letter of the 10th of December is that which you say you have not yet answered? Consider, it is April now, and I never remember any thing that I write half so long. But perhaps it relates to Calchas, for I do remember that you have not yet furnished me with the secret history of him and his family, which I demanded from you. Adieu. Yours most sincerely,

W. C.

I rejoice that you are so well with the learned Bishop of Sarum, and well remember how he ferreted the vermin Lauder out of all his hidings, when I was a boy at Westminster.

I have not yet studied with your last remarks before me, but hope soon to find an opportunity.

LETTER XIX.

To Lady THROCKMORTON.

MY DEAR LADY FROG, *April* 16, 1792.

I thank you for your letter, as sweet as it was short, and as sweet as good news could make it. You encourage a hope that has made me happy ever since I have entertained it; and if my wishes can hasten the event, it will not be long suspended. As to your jealousy, I mind it not, or only to be pleased with it. I shall say no more on the subject at present than this, that of all ladies living, a certain lady, whom I need not name, would be the lady of my choice for a certain gentleman, were the whole sex admitted to my election.

What a delightful anecdote is that which you tell me of a young lady detected in the very act of stealing our Catharina's praises? Is it possible that she can survive the shame, the mortification of such a discovery? Can she ever see the same company again, or any company that she can suppose, by the remotest possibility, may have heard the tidings? If she can, she must have an assurance equal to her vanity. A lady in London stole my song on the Broken Rose, or rather would have stolen and have passed it for her own. But she, too, was unfortunate in her attempt; for there happened to be a female cousin of mine in company, who knew that I had written it. It is very flattering to a poet's pride, that the ladies should thus hazard every thing for the sake of appropriating

his verses. I may say with Milton, "that I am fallen *on evil tongues and evil days*," being not only plundered of that which belongs to me, but being charged with that which does not. Thus it seems (and I have learned it from more quarters than one) that a report is, and has been somewhat current in this and the neighbouring counties, that though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the slave trade in the Task, I am, in reality, a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account. Not knowing how I could better, or more effectually refute the scandal, I have this morning sent a copy to the Northampton paper, prefaced by a short letter to the printer, specifying the occasion. The verses are in honour of Mr. Wilberforce, and sufficiently expressive of my present sentiments on the subject. You are a wicked fair one for disappointing us of our expected visit, and therefore out of mere spite I will not insert them. I have been very ill these ten days, and for the same spite's sake will not tell you what has ailed me. But lest you should die of a fright, I will have the mercy to tell you that I am recovering.

Mrs. G—— and her little ones are gone, but your brother is still here. He told me that he had some expectations of Sir John at Weston; if he comes, I shall most heartily rejoice once more to see him at a table so many years his own.* W. C.

SONNET,

To WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esquire.

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee, by cruel men and impious call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose th' enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slav'ry's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain!
Thou hast achiev'd a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's Senate to thy glorious cause:
Hope smiles, Joy springs, and though cold Caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near,
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenc'd with British laws.
Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above!

* *Note by the Editor.*—The following Sonnet, not printed in the collected works of Cowper, is the poem that he alluded to in this letter.

LETTER XX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 5, 1792.

A January Storm.

MY DEAREST COZ,

I rejoice, as thou reasonably supposest me to do, in the matrimonial news communicated in your last. Not that it was altogether news to me, for twice I had received broad hints of it from Lady Frog, by letter, and several times *viva voce* while she was here. But she enjoined *me* secrecy as well as *you*, and you know that all secrets are safe with me; safer far than the winds in the bags of Æolus. I know not, in fact, the lady whom it would give me more pleasure to call Mrs. Courtney, than the lady in question; partly because I know her, but especially because I know her to be all that I can wish in a neighbour.

I have often observed that there is a regular alternation of good and evil in the lot of men, so that a favourable incident may be considered as the harbinger of an unfavourable one, and *vice versa*. Dr. Madan's experience witnesses the truth of this observation. One day he gets a broken head, and the next a mitre to heal it. I rejoice that he has met with so effectual a cure, though my joy is not unmingled with concern; for till now I had some hope of seeing him; but since I live in the north, and his episcopal call is in the west, that is a gratification, I suppose, which I must no longer look for.

My sonnet, which I sent you, was printed in the Northampton paper last week; and this week it produced me a complimentary one in the same paper, which served to convince me, at least, by the matter of it, that my own was not published without occasion, and that it had answered its purpose.

My correspondence with Hayley proceeds briskly, and is very affectionate on both sides. I expect him here in about a fortnight, and wish heartily, with Mrs. Unwin, that you would give him a meeting. I have promised him, indeed, that he shall find us alone, but you are one of the family.

I wish much to print the following lines in one of the daily papers. Lord S's. vindication of the poor culprit, in the affair of Cheit-sing, has confirmed me in the belief that he has been injuriously treated, and I think it an act merely of justice to take a little notice of him.

To WARREN HASTINGS, Esquire.

By an old School-fellow of his at Westminster.

Hastings! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
While young, humane, conversable and kind;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle *then*,
Now grown a villain, and the *worst* of men:
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the BEST.

If you will take the pains to send them to thy news-monger, I hope thou wilt do well. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XXI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

May 20, 1792.

MY DEAREST OF ALL JOHNNYS,

I am not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves, at least, that you attempt and wish to do it; and these are good symptoms. Woe to those who enter on the ministry of the gospel without having previously asked, at least, from God, a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself; because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is, therefore, matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, and such it is to Mrs. Unwin. She is, I thank God, tolerably well, and loves you. As to the time of your journey hither, the sooner after June the better; till then we shall have company.

I forget not my debts to your dear sister, and your aunt Balls. Greet them both with a brother's kiss, and place it to my account. I will write to them when Milton, and a thousand other engagements, will give me leave. Mr. Hayley is here on a visit. We have formed a friendship that, I trust, will last for life, and render us an edifying example to all future poets.

Adieu: lose no time in coming after the time mentioned.

W. C.

The reader is informed, by the close of the last letter, that I was, at this time, the guest of Cowper. Our meeting, so singularly produced, was a source of reciprocal delight: we looked cheerfully forward to the unclouded enjoyment of many social and literary hours.

My host, though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life, as friendship could wish him to be; and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by the age of seventy-two, discovered a benevolent alertness of character, that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself. I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady, who, having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health and renown of the poet, whom she had the happiness to preserve.

It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching and more satisfactory point of view.—Their tender attention to each other, their simple devout gratitude for the mercies which they had experienced together, and their constant, but unaffected propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend, the deep sense which they incessantly felt of their mutual obligations to each other, afforded me very singular gratification; which my reader will conceive the more forcibly, when he has perused the following exquisite sonnet, addressed by Cowper to Mrs. Unwin.

SONNET.

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings;
Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd they drew!
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
And undebas'd by praise of meaner things!
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth, with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
Verse, that immortalizes whom it sings!

But thou hast little need: there is a book
By seraphs writ, with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look;
A chronicle of actions just and bright!

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

The delight that I derived from a perfect view of the virtues, the talents, and the present domestic enjoyments of Cowper, was suddenly overcast by the darkest and most painful anxiety.

After passing our mornings in social study, we usually walked out together at noon. In returning from one of our rambles, around the pleasant village of Weston, we were met by Mr. Greatheed, an accomplished minister of the gospel, who resides at Newport-Pagnel, and whom Cowper described to me in terms of cordial esteem.

He came forth to meet us as we drew near the house, and it was soon visible from his countenance and manner, that he had ill news to impart. After the most tender preparation that humanity could devise, he acquainted Cowper that Mrs. Unwin was under the immediate pressure of a paralytic attack.

My agitated friend rushed to the sight of the sufferer. He returned to me in a state that alarmed me in the highest degree for his faculties. His first speech to me was wild in the extreme. My answer would appear little less so, but it was addressed to the predominant fancy of my unhappy friend; and, with the blessing of heaven, it produced an instantaneous calm in his troubled mind.

From that moment he rested on my friendship with such mild and cheerful confidence, that his affectionate spirit regarded me as sent providentially to support him in a season of the severest affliction.

A very fortunate incident enabled me to cheer him by a little show of medical assistance, in a form that was highly beneficial to his compassionate mind, whatever its real influence might be on the palsied limbs of our interesting patient.

Having formerly provided myself with an electrical apparatus, for the purpose of applying it medicinally to counteract a continual tendency to inflammation in the eyes, I had used it occasionally, for several years, in trying to relieve various maladies in my rustic neighbours; often, indeed, with no success, but now and then with the happiest effect. I wished to try this powerful, though uncertain remedy on the present occasion; and inquired most

eagerly if the village of Weston could produce an electrical machine.—It was hardly to be expected; but it so happened, that a worthy inhabitant of Weston, a man whom Cowper regarded for uncommon gentleness of manners, and for an ingenious mind, possessed exactly such an apparatus as we wanted, which he had partly constructed himself.

This good man, Mr. Socket, was absent from the village, but his wife, for whose relief the apparatus had been originally formed, most readily lent it to her suffering neighbour. With this seasonable aid, seconded by medicines probably more efficacious, from a physician (of consummate skill and benevolence, united to the most fascinating manners) whom I was then so happy as to reckon in the list of my living friends, Mrs. Unwin was gradually restored.

But the progress of her recovery, and its influence on the tender spirits of Cowper, will sufficiently appear in the following letters.—I shall have a mournful pleasure in adding to these a few verses, in which the gratitude of Cowper has celebrated, most tenderly, the kindness of the late Dr. Austin, the physician to whom I have alluded, and whose memory is most deservedly dear to me. The extreme tenderness of Cowper is, indeed, very forcibly displayed in that generous excess of praise with which he speaks of my services on his sudden affliction.

LETTER XXII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 24, 1792.

I wish with all my heart, my dearest coz. that I had not ill news for the subject of the present letter. My friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, and of which you were yourself a witness. Gregson would not allow that first stroke to be paralytic, but this he acknowledges to be so; and with respect to the former, I never had myself any doubt that it was; but this has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck: it is with difficulty that she opens her eyes, and she cannot keep them open; the muscles necessary to the purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving powers, from place to place, and the use of her right hand and arm, she has entirely lost them.

It has happened well, that, of all men living, the man most qualified to assist and comfort me is here, though till within these few days I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley—

Hayley, who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When he returns to town, as he must, alas, too soon, he will pay his respects to you.

I will not conclude without adding that our poor patient is beginning, I hope, to recover from this stroke also; but her amendment is slow, as must be expected at her time of life, and in such a disorder. I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better.

It was not possible to prevail on Mrs. Unwin to let me send for Dr. Kerr, but Hayley has written to his friend, Dr. Austin, a representation of her case, and we expect his opinion and advice to-morrow. In the mean time, we have borrowed an electrical machine from our neighbour Socket, the effect of which she tried yesterday and the day before, and we think it has been of material service.

She was seized while Hayley and I were walking, and Mr. Greatheed, who called while we were absent, was with her.

I forgot in my last to thank thee for the proposed amendments of thy friend. Whoever he is, make my compliments to him, and thank him. The passages to which he objects have been all altered, and when he shall see them new dressed, I hope he will like them better.

W. C.

LETTER XXIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 26, 1792.

MY DEAREST COZ.

Knowing that you will be anxious to learn how we go on, I write a few lines to inform you that Mrs. Unwin daily recovers a little strength, and a little power of utterance; but she seems strongest, and her speech is more distinct in a morning. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him?

Adieu, my dear sweet Coz. Mrs. Unwin, as plainly as her poor lips can speak, sends her best love, and Hayley threatens in a few days to lay close siege to your affections in person.

W. C.

There is some hope, I find, that the Chancellor may continue in office, and I shall be glad if he does; because we have no single man worthy to succeed him.

I open my letter again to thank you, my dearest cos. for yours just received. Though happy, as you well know, to see *you* at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose; yet once again, I am willing and desirous to believe, we shall be a happy trio at Weston; but, unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure. Farewell—Thou shalt know how we go on.

To Dr. AUSTIN,

Of Cecil Street, London.

Austin! accept a grateful verse from me!
The poet's treasure! no inglorious fee!
Lov'd by the muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in a verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of time aside,
Immortalizing names, which else had died:
And Oh! could I command the glittering wealth,
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompence his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend! I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

W. C.

LETTER XXIV.

To Mrs. BODHAM.

Weston, June 4, 1792.

My dearest Rose,

I am not such an ungrateful and insensible animal as to have neglected you thus long without a reason.

* * * * * * * * * * *

I cannot say that I am sorry that our dear Johnny finds the pulpit door shut against him at present. He is young, and can afford to wait another year: neither is it to be regretted, that his time of preparation for an office of so much importance as that of a minister

of God's word, should have been a little protracted. It is easier to direct the movements of a great army, than to guide a few souls to heaven; the way is narrow, and full of snares, and the guide himself has the most difficulties to encounter. But I trust he will do well. He is single in his views, honest-hearted, and desirous, by prayer and study of the scripture, to qualify himself for the service of his great master, who will suffer no such man to fail for want of his aid and protection. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XXV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 3, 1792.

All's Well.

Which words I place as conspicuously as possible, and prefix them to my letter, to save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moment's anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment still, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows, the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. She walked so well this morning, that she told me at my first visit, she had entirely forgot her illness, and she spoke so distinctly, and had so much her usual countenance, that, had it been possible, she would have made me forget it too.

Returned from my walk, blown to tatters—found two dear things in the study, your letter, and my Mary! She is bravely well, and your beloved epistle does us both good. I found your kind pencil-note in my song-book, as soon as I came down on the morning of your departure; and Mary was vexed to the heart, that the simpletons who watched her supposed her asleep, when she was not, for she learned soon after you were gone, that you would have peeped at her, had you known her to have been awake. I, perhaps, might have had a peep too, and therefore was as vexed as she: but if it please God, we shall make ourselves large amends for all lost peeps by and by at Eartham.

W. C.

LETTER XXVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 5, 1792.

Yesterday was a noble day with us—speech almost perfect—eyes open almost the whole day, without

any effort to keep them so; and the step wonderfully improved. But the night has been almost a sleepless one, owing partly, I believe, to her having had as much sleep again as usual the night before: for even when she is in tolerable health, she hardly ever sleeps well two nights together. I found her, accordingly, a little out of spirits this morning, but still insisting on it that she is better. Indeed, she always tells me so, and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then, at least, for then she will be best of all. She is now (the clock has just struck eleven) endeavouring, I believe, to get a little sleep, for which reason I do not yet let her know that I have received your letter.

Can I ever honour you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not: I am, however, so sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have, in short, a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here; and though I believe that if any man living can do me good, you will, I cannot yet persuade myself, that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter; you are yourself a good which I can never value enough, and whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back as you. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble.

I rose this morning wrapt round with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears; but if I see Mary's amendment a little advanced, when she rises, I shall be better.

I have just been with her again. Except that she is fatigued for want of sleep, she seems as well as yesterday. The post brings me a letter from Hurdis, who is broken-hearted for a dying sister. Had we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we, and our friends, escape them but a single day.

W. C.

LETTER XXVII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 7, 1792.

Of what materials can you suppose me made, if, after all the rapid proofs that you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually? But you must permit me, nevertheless, to be

melancholy now and then; or if you will not, I must be so without your permission; for that sable thread is so intermixed with the very thread of my existence as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content, therefore, let me sigh and groan, but always be sure that I love you. You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in this rhapsody about myself, and my melancholy, had my present mood been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. So in fact she does, and has performed several little feats to-day; such as either she could not perform at all, or very feebly, while you were with us.

I shall be glad if you have seen Johnny, as I call him, my Norfolk cousin; he is a sweet lad, but as shy as a bird. It costs him always two or three days to open his mouth before a stranger; but when he does, he is sure to please by the innocent cheerfulness of his conversation. His sister, too, is one of my idols, for the resemblance she bears to my mother.

Mary and you have all my thoughts; and how should it be otherwise? She looks well, is better, and loves you dearly.

Adieu, my brother. W. C.

LETTER XXVIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 10, 1792.

I do, indeed, anxiously wish that every thing you do may prosper; and should I at last prosper by your means, shall taste double sweetness in prosperity for that reason.

I rose this morning, as I usually do, with a mind all in sables. In this mood I presented myself to Mary's bed-side, whom I found, though after many hours lying awake, yet cheerful, and not to be affected with my desponding humour. It is a great blessing to us both, that poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness that nothing shakes. She is now in the study, and is certainly, in some degree, better than she was yesterday; but how to measure that little I know not, except by saying that it is just perceptible.

I am glad that you have seen my Johnny of Norfolk, because I know it will be a comfort to you to have seen your successor. He arrived, to my great joy, yesterday; and not having bound himself to any particular time of going, will, I hope, stay long with us. You are now once more snug in your retreat; and I give you joy of your return to it, after the bustle in which you have lived since you left Weston. Weston mourns your absence, and will mourn it

till she sees you again. What is to become of Milton I know not: I do nothing but scribble to you, and seem to have no relish for any other employment. I have, however, in pursuit of your idea, to compliment Darwin, put a few stanza's together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another.

I am now going to walk with Johnny, much cheered since I began writing to you, and by Mary's looks and good spirits.

W. C.

To Dr. DARWIN,

Author of the BOTANIC GARDEN.

Two poets (poets, by report,
Not oft so well agree)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth,
By labours of their own.

We, therefore, pleas'd, extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete;
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learn'd as it is sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;
Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would, they must, at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of Friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundic'd eye:

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

LETTER XXIX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

June 19, 1792.

* * * Thus have I filled a whole page to my dear William of Eartham, and have not said a syllable yet about my Mary—a sure sign that she goes on well. Be it known to you, that we have these four days discarded our sedan with two elbows. Here is no more carrying, or being carried, but she walks up stairs boldly, with one hand upon the balustrade, and the other under my arm, and in like manner she comes down in a morning. Still I confess she is feeble, and misses much of her former strength. The weather, too, is sadly against her; it deprives her of many a good turn in the orchard, and fifty times I have wished this very day, that Dr. Darwin's scheme of giving rudders and sails to the Ice-islands, that spoil all our summers, were actually put in practice. So should we have gentle airs instead of churlish blasts, and those everlasting sources of bad weather being once navigated into the southern hemisphere, my Mary would recover as fast again. We are both of your mind respecting the journey to Eartham, and think that July, if by that time she have strength for the journey, will be better than August. We shall have more long days before us, and then we shall want as much for our return as for our going forth. This, however, must be left to the Giver of all good. If our visit to you be according to his will, he will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it; and I thus speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary is actually one, and would not set her foot over the threshold to save her life, unless she had, or thought she had, God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of every thing; afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you.

W. C.

LETTER XXX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 27, 1792.

Well then—let us talk about this journey to Eartham. You wish me to settle the time of it, and I wish with all my heart to be able to do so, living in hopes, meanwhile, that I shall be able to do it soon. But some little time must necessarily intervene. Our Mary must be able to walk alone, to cut her own

food, and to feed herself, and to wear her own shoes, for at present she wears mine. All things considered, my friend and brother, you will see the expediency of waiting a little before we set off to Eartham: we mean, indeed, before that day arrives, to make a trial of the strength of her head, how far it may be able to bear the motion of a carriage, a motion that it has not felt these seven years. I grieve that we are thus circumstanced, and that we cannot gratify ourselves in a delightful and innocent project without all these precautions; but when we have leaf-gold to handle, we must do it tenderly.

I thank you, my brother, both for presenting my authorship to your friend Guy, and for the excellent verses with which you have inscribed your present. There are none neater or better turned: with what shall I requite you? I have nothing to send you but a gimcrack, which I have prepared for my bride and bridegroom neighbours, who are expected to-morrow. You saw in my book a poem, entitled Catharina, and which concluded with a wish that we had her for a neighbour: this, therefore, is called

CATHARINA:

THE SECOND PART.

On her Marriage to GEORGE COURTENEY, *Esquire.*

Believe it or not, as you choose,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.

I did but express a desire,
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire;
And lo! she is actually come.

And such prophecy some may despise;
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approv'd in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.

'Twas a wish, that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all;
But less to our grief could we view
Catharina the queen of the hall.

And therefore, I wish'd as I did,
And therefore, this union of hands
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry, Amen, to the bands.

Since, therefore, I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again.

With one I have made her a wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life,
How soon I can make her a mother.

W. C.

LETTER XXXI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, July 4, 1792.

I know not how you proceed in your life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters to you, and the nuptial song I inserted in my last, I have literally done nothing since I saw you: nothing, I mean, in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavouring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well, and had rather carry this point completely than be the most famous editor of Milton that the world has ever seen or shall see.

Your humorous descant upon my art of wishing made us merry, and consequently did good to us both. I sent my wish to the Hall yesterday. They are excellent neighbours, and so friendly to me that I wished to gratify them. When I went to pay my first visit, George flew into the court to meet me, and when I entered the parlour, Catharina sprang into my arms.

W. C.

LETTER XXXII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, July 15, 1792.

The progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road of recovery. I cannot, indeed, say that she moves, but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not, therefore, at present, what to say about this long-postponed journey. The utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment is this; you know that you are dear to us both; true it is that you are so, and equally true that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty we will fly to Eartham. I have been but once within the Hall door since the Courteneys came home, much as I have been pressed to dine there, and have hardly escaped giving a little offence by declining it. But though I should offend all the world by my obstinacy in this instance, I would not leave my poor Mary alone. Johnny serves me as a representative, and him I send without scruple. As to the affair of Milton, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since to tell him that the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continuing, and being likely to continue, I know not when I should be able to proceed. The translations, I said, were finished, except the revisal of a part.

God bless your dear little boy and poet! I thank him for exercising his dawning genius upon me, and shall be still happier to thank him in person.

Abbot is painting me so true,
That, trust me you would stare,
And hardly know, at the first view,
If I were here, or there.

I have sat twice; and the few who have seen his copy of me are much struck with the resemblance. He is a sober, quiet man, which, considering that I must have him at least a week longer for an inmate, is a great comfort to me.

My Mary sends you her best love. She can walk now, leaning on my arm only, and her speech is certainly much improved. I long to see you. Why cannot you and dear Tom spend the remainder of the summer with us? We might then all set off for Eartham merrily together. But I retract this, conscious that I am unreasonable. It is a wretched world, as[illegible]hat we would, is almost always what we cannot. Adieu. L[illegible]e, and be sure of a return,

W. C.

LETTER XXXIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, July 22, 1792.

This important affair, my dear brother, is at last decided, and we are coming. Wednesday se'nnight, if nothing occur to make a later day necessary, is the day fixed for our journey. Our rate of travelling must depend on Mary's ability to bear it. Our mode of travelling will occupy three days unavoidably, for we shall come in a coach. Abbot finishes my picture to-morrow; on Wednesday he returns to town, and is commissioned to order one down for us, with four steeds to draw it:

——" Hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
" That cannot go but forty miles a day."

Send us our route, for I am as ignorant of it almost as if I were in a strange country.—We shall reach St. Alban's, I suppose, the first day; say where we must finish our second day's journey, and at what inn we may best repose. As to the end of the third day, we know where that will find us; viz. in the arms and under the roof of our beloved Hayley.

General Cowper having heard a rumour of this intended migration, desires to meet me on the road, that we may once more see each other. He lives at Ham, near Kingston. Shall we go through Kingston, or near it? For I would give him as little trouble as possible, though he offers very kindly to come as far as Barnet for that purpose. Nor must I forget Carwardine, who so kindly desired to be informed what way we should go. On what point of the road will it be easiest for him to find us? On all these points you must be my oracle. My friend and brother, we shall overwhelm you with our numbers: this is all the trouble that I have left. My Johnny of Norfolk, happy in the thought of accompanying us, would be broken-hearted to be left behind.

In the midst of all these solicitudes I laugh to think what they are made of, and what an important thing it is for me to travel. Other men steal away from their homes silently, and make no disturbance; but when I move, houses are turned upside down, maids are turned out of their beds, all the counties through which I pass appear to be in an uproar. Surry greets me by the mouth of the General, and Essex by that of Carwardine. How strange does all this seem to a man who has seen no bustle, and made none, for twenty years together!

W. C.

LETTER XXXIV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, July 29, 1792.

Through floods and flames to your retreat
I win my desp'rate way,
And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
Will echo your huzza.

You will wonder at the word *desp'rate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third; but could you have any conception of the fears I have had to bustle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions it happens that as the day approaches my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has, however, opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday, therefore, we set forth.

The terrors that I have spoken of would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well, that, to whatever cause it be owing, whether to constitution or to God's express appointment, I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night-season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and though you may think that there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it, for that reason, an evil less to be lamented. So much for fears and distresses. Soon, I hope, they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham.

Well, this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance. Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it, wagging his tail as he went, and evidently showing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is a half-length, as it is technically but absurdly called; that is to say, it gives all but the foot and ankle. To-morrow it goes to town, and will hang some months at Abbot's, when it will be sent to its due destination in Norfolk.

I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to

have lost—lost to such a degree, that it is even painful to me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again.

Adieu, my dear, dear Hayley; God give us a happy meeting. Mary sends her love—she is in pretty good plight this morning, having slept well, and, for her part, has no fears at all about the journey. Ever yours, W. C.

The affectionate little prayer at the close of the last letter prevailed, and providence conducted these most interesting travellers very safely to my retreat. The delights that I enjoyed in promoting the health and cheerfulness of guests so dear to me; in sharing the high gratification of Cowper's society, with my old sympathetic friend Romney; and in beholding that expressive resemblance of the poet, which forms a frontispiece to this work, grow under the pencil of the friendly artist (agreeably inspired by the mental dignity of his subject); these delights are indeed treasured in my memory, among those prime blessings of mortal existence which still call for our gratitude to heaven, even when they are departed; for even then they still afford us that sweet secondary life which we form to ourselves, from the pleasing contemplation of past hours very happily employed.

It is, however, unnecessary for me to dwell on the memorable period that Cowper passed under my roof, because a few of his letters, written to different friends while he was with me, will sufficiently describe the beneficial effect which the beautiful scenery of Sussex very visibly produced on his health and spirits. I fear not the imputation of vanity for inserting the vivid praise of my friend on the spot I inhabited, for I now inhabit it no more; and if I ever had any such vanity, it must have perished with the darling child for whom I wished to embellish and preserve the scene that Cowper has so highly commended.

The tender partiality which this most feeling friend had conceived for me rendered him not a little partial to whatever engaged his thoughts as mine. Many endearing marks of such partiality occurred during his residence at Eartham; but the one which gratified me most I cannot forbear to mention. I mean the very sweet condescension with which he admitted to his friendship and confidence the child to whom I have alluded, at that time a boy of eleven years, whose rare early talents, and rarer modesty, endeared him so much to Cowper, that he allowed and invited him to criticise his Homer. The good-natured reader will forgive me, if he happens to find a brief specimen of such juvenile criticism in their future correspondence.

Homer was not the immediate object of our attention, while Cowper resided at Eartham. The morning hours that we could bestow upon books were chiefly devoted to a complete revisal and correction of all the translations which my friend had finished from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton; and it was generally our pastime after dinner to amuse ourselves in executing a rapid metrical version of Andreini's Adamo. But the constant care which the delicate health of Mrs. Unwin required, rendered it impossible for us to be very assiduous in study, and perhaps the best of all studies was, to promote and share that most singular and most exemplary tenderness of attention, with which Cowper incessantly laboured to counteract every infirmity, bodily and mental, with which sickness and age had conspired to load this interesting guardian of his afflicted life.

I have myself no language sufficiently strong, or sufficiently tender, to express my just admiration of that angelic, compassionate sensibility, with which Cowper incessantly watched over his aged invalid; but my reader will yet be enabled to form an adequate idea of that sensibility by a copy of his verses, to which it gave rise, when these infirmities grew still more striking, on her return to Weston.

The air of the south infused a little portion of fresh strength into her shattered frame, and to give it all possible efficacy, the boy, whom I have mentioned, and a young associate and fellow student of his, employed themselves regularly twice a day, in drawing this venerable cripple, in a commodious garden-chair, round the airy hill of Eartham. To Cowper, and to me, it was a very pleasing spectacle, to see the benevolent vivacity of blooming youth thus continually labouring for the ease, health, and amusement of disabled age. But of this interesting time I will speak no more, since I have a better record of it to present to my reader in the following letters.

LETTER XXXV.

To the Reverend Mr. GREATHEED.

Eartham, August 6, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Having first thanked you for your affectionate and acceptable letter, I will proceed, as well as I can, to answer your equally affectionate request, that I would send you early news of our arrival at Eartham. Here we are, in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure-grounds that I have ever seen; but

which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say, that they occupy three sides of a hill, which, in Buckinghamshire, might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape, bounded by the sea, and in one part of it by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library, in which I am writing.

It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience than I expected. I began it, indeed, with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degree that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as she might well be, and heard such a variety of noises, both within the house and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently; and when we finished our next day's journey at Ripley, we were both in better condition, both of body and mind, than on the day preceding. At Ripley we found a quiet inn, that housed, as it happened, that night no company but ourselves. There we slept well, and rose perfectly refreshed; and, except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex hills by moon-light, met with little to complain of, till we arrived, about ten o'clock, at Eartham. Here we are as happy as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us. It is almost a paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive. Our host mentions you with great respect, and bids me tell you that he esteems you highly. Mrs. Unwin, who is, I think, in some points, already the better for her excursion, unites with mine her best compliments, both to yourself and Mrs. Greatheed. I have much to see and enjoy before I can be perfectly apprized of all the delights of Eartham, and will therefore now subscribe myself yours, my dear Sir, with great sincerity,

W. C.

LETTER XXXVI.

To Mrs. COURTENEY.

Eartham, August 12, 1792.

My dearest Catharina,

Though I have travelled far, nothing did I see in my travels that surprised me half so agreeably as your kind letter; for high as my opinion is of your good-nature, I had no hopes of hearing from you till I should have written first—a pleasure which I intended to allow myself the first opportunity.

After three days confinement in a coach, and suffering as we went all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, we found ourselves late in the evening at the door of our friend Hayley. In every other respect the journey was extremely pleasant. At the Mitre, in Barnet, where we lodged the first evening, we found our friend Mr. Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery Lane to meet us; and at Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much valued friend, General Cowper, whom I had not seen in thirty years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. Mrs. Unwin, on whose account I had a thousand fears before we set out, suffered as little from fatigue as myself, and begins, I hope, already to feel some beneficial effects from the air of Eartham, and the exercise that she takes in one of the most delightful pleasure-grounds in the world. They occupy three sides of a hill, lofty enough to command a view of the sea, which skirts the horizon to a length of many miles, with the Isle of Wight at the end of it. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and inclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.

But think not, my dear Catharina, that amidst all these beauties I shall lose the remembrance of the peaceful, but less splendid, Weston. Your precincts will be as dear to me as ever, when I return; though when that day will arrive I know not, our host being determined, as I plainly see, to keep us as long as possible. Give my best love to your husband. Thank him most kindly for his attention to the old Bard of Greece, and pardon me that I do not send you now an epitaph for Fop. I am not sufficiently recollected to compose even a bagatelle at present; but in due time you shall receive it.

Hayley, who will some time or other, I hope, see you at Weston, is already prepared to love you both, and being passionately fond of music, longs much to hear you.

W. C.

LETTER XXXVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Eartham, August 14, 1792.

Romney is here. It would add much to my happiness if you were of the party. I have prepared Hayley to think highly, that is, justly of you, and the time I hope will come when you will supersede all need of my recommendation.

Mrs. Unwin gathers strength. I have indeed great hopes, from the air and exercise which this fine season affords her opportunity to use, that ere we return she will be herself again.

W. C.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Eartham, August 18, 1792.

Wishes in this world are generally vain, and in the next we shall make none. Every day I wish you were of our party, knowing how happy you would be in a place where we have nothing to do but enjoy beautiful scenery, and converse agreeably.

Mrs. Unwin's health continues to improve; and even I, who was well when I came, find myself still better. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XXXIX.

To Mrs. COURTENEY.

Eartham, August 25, 1792.

Without waiting for an answer to my last, I send my dear Catharina the epitaph she desired, composed, as well as I could compose it, in a place where every object, being still new to me, distracts my attention, and makes me as aukward at verse as if I had never dealt in it. Here it is.

EPITAPH ON FOP:

A Dog belonging to Lady THROCKMORTON.

Though once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one, whose bones some honour claim;
No sycophant, although of spaniel race!
And though no hound, a martyr to the chace!
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice!
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice.
This record of his fate exulting view:
He died, worn out with vain pursuit of you.

"Yes!" the indignant shade of Fop replies,
"And, worn with vain pursuit, Man also dies."

I am here, as I told you in my last, delightfully situated, and in the enjoyment of all that the most friendly hospitality can impart; yet do I neither forget Weston, nor my friends at Weston: on the contrary, I have, at length, though much and kindly pressed to make a longer stay, determined on the day of our departure. On the seventeenth day of September we shall leave Eartham. Four days will be necessary to bring us home again; for I am under a promise to General Cowper to dine with him on the way, which cannot be done comfortably, either to him or to ourselves, unless we sleep that night at Kingston.

The air of this place has been, I believe, beneficial to us both: I indeed was in tolerable health before I set out, but have acquired, since I came, both a better appetite, and a knack of sleeping almost as much in a single night as formerly in two. Whether double quantities of that article will be favourable to me as a poet, time must show. About myself, however, I care little, being made of materials so tough as not to threaten me even now, at the end of so many *lustrums*, with any thing like a speedy dissolution. My chief concern has been about Mrs. Unwin, and my chief comfort at this moment is, that she likewise has received, I hope, considerable benefit by the journey.

Tell my dear George that I begin to long to behold him again, and did it not savour of ingratitude to the friend under whose roof I am so happy at present, should be impatient to find myself once more under yours.

Adieu, my dear Catharina. I have nothing to add in the way of news, except that Romney has drawn me in crayons, by the suffrage of all here, extremely like.

W. C.

LETTER XL.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Eartham, August 26, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your kind but very affecting letter found me not at Weston, to which place it was directed, but in a bower of my friend Hayley's garden, at Eartham, where I was sitting with Mrs. Unwin. We both knew, the moment we saw it, from whom it came, and observing a red seal, both comforted ourselves that all was well at Burwash; but we soon felt that we were called not to rejoice, but to mourn with you: we do indeed sincerely mourn with you; and if it will afford you any consolation to know it, you may be assured that every eye here has testified what our

hearts have suffered for you. Your loss is great, and your disposition, I perceive, such as exposes you to feel the whole weight of it. I will not add to your sorrow, by a vain attempt to assuage it: your own good sense, and the piety of your principles, will, of course, suggest to you the most powerful motives of acquiescence in the will of God. You will be sure to recollect that the stroke, severe as it is, is not the stroke of an enemy, but of a father; and will find, I trust, hereafter, that, like a father, he has done you good by it. Thousands have been able to say, and myself as loud as any of them, it has been good for me that I was afflicted; but time is necessary to work us to this persuasion, and in due time it shall be yours. Mr. Hayley, who tenderly sympathises with you, has enjoined me to send you as pressing an invitation as I can frame, to join me at this place. I have every motive to wish your consent; both your benefit and my own, which, I believe, would be abundantly answered by your coming, ought to make me eloquent in such a cause. Here you will find silence and retirement in perfection, when you would seek them, and here such company as, I have no doubt, would suit you; all cheerful, but not noisy; and all alike disposed to love you. You and I seem to have here a fair opportunity of meeting. It were a pity we should be in the same county and not come together. I am here till the seventeenth of September, an interval that will afford you time to make the necessary arrangements, and to gratify me at last with an interview, which I have long desired. Let me hear from you soon, that I may have double pleasure, the pleasure of expecting, as well as that of seeing you.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, though still a sufferer by her last illness, is much better, and has received considerable benefit by the air of Eartham. She adds to mine her affectionate compliments, and joins me and Hayley in this invitation.

Mr. Romney is here, and a young man a cousin of mine. I tell you who we are, that you may not be afraid of us.

Adieu—May the Comforter of all the afflicted who seek him be yours. God bless you.

W. C.

LETTER XLI.

To Lady HESKETH.

Eartham, August 26, 1792.

I know not how it is, my dearest coz. but in a new scene, and surrounded by strange objects, I find my powers of thinking dissipated to a degree that makes it difficult to

me even to write a letter, and even a letter to you; but such a letter as I can, I will, and have the fairest chance to succeed this morning; Hayley, and Romney, and Hayley's son, and Beau, being all gone together to the sea for bathing. The sea, you must know, is nine miles off; so that unless stupidity prevent, I shall have opportunity to write not only to you, but to poor Hurdis also, who is broken-hearted for the loss of his favourite sister, lately dead; and whose letter, giving an account of it, which I received yesterday, drew tears from the eyes of all our party. My only comfort respecting even yourself is, that you write in good spirits, and assure me that you are in a state of recovery; otherwise I should mourn not only for Hurdis, but for myself, lest a certain event should reduce me, and in a short time too, to a situation as distressing as his; for though nature designed you only for my cousin, you have had a sister's place in my affections ever since I knew you. The reason is, I suppose, that having no sister, the daughter of my own mother, I thought it proper to have one, the daughter of yours. Certain it is that I can by no means afford to lose you, and that unless you will be upon honour with me, to give me always a true account of yourself, at least when we are not together, I shall always be unhappy, because always suspicious that you deceive me.

Now for ourselves. I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite, and a double portion of sleep, be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here, and could I be translated to paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. So much for myself. Mrs. Unwin is evidently the better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before this last attack; still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking: but she is able to use more exercise than she could at home, and moves with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me, but when I see those who are dearer to me than myself distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years may place me. I wish her and you to die before me, indeed, but not till I am more likely to follow immediately. Enough of this.

Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all here, with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible.

The seventeenth of September is the day on which I intend to leave Eartham. We shall then have been six weeks resident here; a holiday time long enough for a man who has much to do. And now farewell.

W. C.

P. S. Hayley, whose love for me seems to be truly that of a brother, has given me his picture, drawn by Romney about fifteen years ago; an admirable likeness.

LETTER XLII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Eartham, Sept. 9, 1792.

My dearest Coz.

I determine, if possible, to send you one more letter, or, at least, something like one, before we leave Eartham. But I am, in truth, so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, that, like the man in the fable, who could leap well no where but at Rhodes, I seem incapable of writing at all, except at Weston. This is, as I have already told you, a delightful place; more beautiful scenery I have never beheld, nor expect to behold; but the charms of it, uncommon as they are, have not in the least alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better; it has an air of snug concealment, in which a disposition like mine feels itself peculiarly gratified: whereas, here I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains, a wildness, in short, that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would soon convince me that mere change of place can avail me little. Accordingly, I have not looked out for a house in Sussex, nor shall.

The intended day of our departure continues to be the seventeenth. I hope to re-conduct Mrs. Unwin to the Lodge with her health considerably mended; but it is in the article of speech chiefly, and in her powers of walking, that she is sensible of much improvement. Her sight and her hand still fail her, so that she can neither read nor work: mortifying circumstances both, to her, who is never willingly idle.

On the eighteenth I propose to dine with the General, and to rest that night at Kingston. But the pleasure I shall have in the interview will hardly be greater than the pain I shall feel at the end of it, for we shall part probably to meet no more.

Johnny, I know, has told you that Mr. Hurdis is here. Distressed by the loss of his sister, he has renounced the place where

she died for ever, and is about to enter on a new course of life at Oxford. You would admire him much. He is gentle in his manners, and delicate in his person, resembling our poor friend Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have ever seen. But he has not, at least he has not at present, his vivacity.

I have corresponded since I came here with Mrs. Courteney, and had yesterday a very kind letter from her.

Adieu, my dear; may God bless you. Write to me as soon as you can after the twentieth; I shall then be at Weston, and indulging myself in the hope that I shall ere long see you there also.

W. C.

The reader will perceive from the last letter, that Cowper, amused as he was with the scenery of Sussex, began to feel the powerful attraction of home. Indeed, the infirm state of Mrs. Unwin, and the declining season of the year, rendered it highly desirable for the tender travellers to be restored to their own fire-side by the time they proposed.

Their departure from Eartham was a scene of affectionate anxiety; and a perfect contrast to the gaiety of their arrival. The kindness of Cowper relieved my solicitude concerning their journey, by the following letter from Kingston. I insert it as a pleasing memorial of that peculiar tenderness of heart, which conspired with his most admirable talents to render him the most interesting of men. From an ardent, and, I hope, a laudable desire to display this endearing characteristic of my friend, I shall add a collection of extracts from his letters to me, rather more copious than I at first intended.

LETTER XLIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

The Sun, at Kingston, Sept. 18, 1792.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

With no sinister accident to retard or terrify us, we find ourselves, at a quarter before one, arrived safe at Kingston. I left you with a heavy heart, and with a heavy heart took leave of our dear Tom, at the bottom of the Chalk-hill. But soon after this last separation, my troubles gushed from my eyes, and then I was better.

We must now prepare for our visit to the General. I add no more, therefore, than our dearest remembrances and prayers that God may bless you and yours, and reward you an hundred-fold

for all your kindness. Tell Tom I shall always hold him dear for his affectionate attentions to Mrs. Unwin. From her heart the memory of him can never be erased. Johnny loves you all, and has his share in all these acknowledgments. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XLIV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Sept. 21, 1792.

MY DEAR HAYLEY,

Chaos himself, even the chaos of Milton, is not surrounded with more confusion, nor has a mind more completely in a hubbub than I experience at the present moment. At our first arrival, after a long absence, we find a hundred orders to servants necessary, a thousand things to be restored to their proper places, and an endless variety of minutiæ to be adjusted; which, though individually of little importance, are most momentous in the aggregate. In these circumstances I find myself so indisposed to writing, that, save to yourself, I would on no account attempt it; but to you I will give such a recital as I can, of all that has passed since I sent you that short note from Kingston; knowing that if it be a perplexed recital, you will consider the cause, and pardon it. I will begin with a remark, in which I am inclined to think you will agree with me, that there is sometimes more true heroism passing in a corner, and on occasions that make no noise in the world, than has often been exercised by those whom that world esteems her greatest heroes, and on occasions the most illustrious; I hope so at least, for all the heroism I have to boast, and all the opportunities I have of displaying any, are of a private nature. After writing the note I immediately began to prepare for my appointed visit to Ham; but the struggles that I had with my own spirit, labouring as I did under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried my point against myself with a heart riven asunder. I have reasons for all this anxiety, which I cannot relate now. The visit, however, passed off well, and we returned in the dark to Kingston. I, with a lighter heart than I had known since my departure from Eartham, and Mary too, for she had suffered hardly less than myself, and chiefly on my account. That night we rested well in our inn, and at twenty minutes after eight next morning set off for London; exactly at ten we reached Mr. Rose's door: we drank a dish of chocolate with him, and proceeded, Mr. Rose riding with us as

far as St. Alban's. From this time we met with no impediment. In the dark, and in a storm, at eight at night we found ourselves at our own back door. Mrs. Unwin was very near slipping out of the chair in which she was taken from the chaise, but at last was landed safe. We all have had a good night, and are all well this morning. God bless you my dearest brother.

W. C.

LETTER XLV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Oct. 2, 1792.

MY DEAR HAYLEY,

A bad night, succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect on my spirits, that, if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day, for I shall not entertain you much. Yet your letter, though containing no very pleasant tidings, has afforded me some relief. It tells me, indeed, that you have been dispirited yourself, and that poor little Tom, the faithful squire of my Mary, has been seriously indisposed. All this grieves me; but then there is a warmth of heart and a kindness in it that do me good. I will endeavour not to repay you in notes of sorrow and despondence, though all my sprightly chords seem broken. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were: the approach of winter is, perhaps, the cause, and if it is, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come.

Yesterday was a day of assignation with myself, the day of which I said some days before it came, when that day comes I will begin my dissertations. Accordingly, when it came I prepared to do so; filled a letter-case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink-bottle; but partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly, however, from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me, and it has had that effect to such a degree, that I know not when I shall find courage to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain, since, at present, I cannot well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification.

W. C.

LETTER XLVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Oct. 13, 1792.

I began a letter to you yesterday, my dearest brother, and proceeded through two sides of the sheet; but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that, looking it over this morning, I determined not to send it.

I have risen, though not in good spirits, yet in better than I generally do of late, and therefore will not address you in the melancholy tone that belongs to my worst feelings.

I began to be restless about your portrait, and to say, how long shall I have to wait for it? I wished it here for many reasons: the sight of it will be a comfort to me, for I not only love, but am proud of you, as of a conquest made in my old age. Johnny goes to town on Monday, on purpose to call on Romney, to whom he shall give all proper information concerning its conveyance hither. The name of a man whom I esteem as I do Romney, ought not to be unmusical in my ears, but his name will be so till I shall have paid him a debt justly due to him, by doing such poetical honours to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the muse is still as obdurate and as coy as ever.

Your kind postscript is just arrived, and gives me great pleasure. When I cannot see you myself, it seems some comfort, however, that you have been seen by another known to me, and who will tell me, in a few days, that he has seen you. Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them; but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless. But no more of this at present.

Your verses to Austin are as sweet as the honey that they accompany; kind, friendly, witty, and elegant: when shall I be able to do the like! Perhaps when my Mary, like your little Tom, shall cease to be an invalid, I may recover a power, at least, to do something. I sincerely rejoice in the dear little man's restoration. My Mary continues, I hope, to mend a little.

W. C.

LETTER XLVII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

Weston, Oct. 19, 1792.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

You are too useful when you are here not to be missed on a hundred occasions daily, and too much domesticated with us not to be regretted always. I hope, therefore, that your month or six weeks will not be like many that I have known, capable of being drawn out into any length whatever, and productive of nothing but disappointment.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have composed the better half of a sonnet to Romney; yet even this ought to bear an earlier date, for I began to be haunted with a desire to do it long before we came out of Sussex, and have daily attempted it ever since.

It would be well for the reading part of the world, if the writing part were, many of them, as dull as I am. Yet even this small produce, which my sterile intellect has hardly yielded at last, may serve to convince you that in point of spirits I am not worse. In fact, I am a little better. The powders and the laudanum together have, for the present at least, abated the fever that consumes them; and in measure as the fever abates, I acquire a less discouraging view of things, and with it a little power to exert myself.

In the evenings I read Baker's Chronicle to Mrs. Unwin, having no other history, and hope in time to be as well versed in it, as his admirer Sir Roger de Coverly.

W. C.

LETTER XLVIII.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

Weston, Oct. 22, 1792.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Here am I with I know now not how many letters to answer, and no time to do it in. I exhort you, therefore, to set a proper value on this, as proving your priority in my attentions, though, in other respects, likely to be of little value.

You do well to sit for your picture, and give very sufficient reasons for doing it. You will also, I doubt not, take care that when future generations shall look at it, some spectator or other shall say, this is the picture of a good man, and a useful one.

And now God bless you, my dear Johnny. I proceed pretty much at the old rate; rising cheerless and distressed in the morning, and brightening a little as the day goes on. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XLIX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, October 28, 1792.

Nothing done, my dearest brother, nor likely to be done at present; yet I purpose, in a day or two, to make another attempt, to which, however, I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man who, having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not, indeed, like such a man, injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do, and nothing done, is a burthen that I am not able to bear. Milton, especially, is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with such continual reproaches for neglecting him: I will therefore begin; I will do my best; and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have made already; a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me. I shall rejoice to see those new samples of your biography which you give me to expect.

Allons! courage!—Here comes something, however; produced after a gestation as long as that of a pregnant woman. It is the debt long unpaid; the compliment due to Romney; and if it has your approbation, I will send it, or you may send it for me. I must premise, however, that I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why, but I said to myself, it shall not be a sonnet: accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so.

To GEORGE ROMNEY, Esquire.

Romney! expert infallible to trace,
On chart or canvass, not the form alone,
And 'semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face:

With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so pencil'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well, I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks, what sorrow could'st thou see,
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

LETTER L.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Nov.* 9, 1792.

I wish that I were as industrious, and as much occupied as you, though in a different way; but it is not so with me. Mrs. Unwin's great debility (who is not yet able to move without assistance) is of itself a hinderance such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work and read, and fill up her time as usual, (all which is at present entirely out of her power) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I cannot sit with my pen in my hand, and my books before me, while she is, in effect, in solitude, silent and looking at the fire. To this hinderance that other has been added, of which you are already aware, a want of spirits, such I have never known, when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances is known only to Him, who, as he will, disposes of us all. I may yet be able, perhaps, to prepare the first book of the Paradise Lost for the press before it will be wanted; and Johnson himself seems to think there will be no haste for the second. But poetry is my favourite employment, and all my poetical operations are, in the mean time, suspended; for while a work to which I have bound myself remains unaccomplished, I can do nothing else.

Johnson's plan of prefixing my phiz to the new edition of my poems is by no means a pleasant one to me; and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham, in which I assured him that my objections to it would not be easily surmounted. But if you judge that it may really have an effect in advancing the sale, I would not be so squeamish as to suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail in me to his disadvantage. Somebody told an author, I forget whom,

that there was more vanity in refusing his picture than in granting it, on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel all the force of the argument, but it shall content me that he did.

I do most sincerely rejoice in the success of your publication, and have no doubt that my prophecy concerning your success in greater matters will be fulfilled. We are naturally pleased when our friends approve what we approve ourselves; how much then must I be pleased when you speak so kindly of Johnny! I know him to be all that you think him, and love him entirely.

Adieu. We expect you at Christmas, and shall therefore rejoice when Christmas comes. Let nothing interfere.

Ever yours, W. C.

LETTER LI.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, *Weston, Nov.* 20, 1792.

I give you many thanks for your rhymes, and for your verses without rhyme; for your poetical dialogue between wood and stone; between Homer's head and the head of Samuel; kindly intended, I know well, for my amusement, and that amused me much.

The successor of the clerk defunct, for whom I used to write mortuary verses, arrived here this morning, with a recommendatory letter from Joe Rye, and an humble petition of his own, intreating me to assist him as I had assisted his predecessor. I have undertaken the service, although with no little reluctance, being involved in many arrears on other subjects, and having very little dependance at present on my ability to write at all. I proceed exactly as when you were here—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday; if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and "*forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.*"

The fever on my spirits has harrassed me much, and I have never had so good a night nor so quiet a rising, since you went, as on this very morning—a relief that I account particularly seasonable and propitious; because I had, in my intentions, devoted this morning to you, and could not have fulfilled those intentions had I been as spiritless as I generally am.

I am glad that Johnson is in no haste for Milton, for I seem myself not likely to address myself presently to that concern, with any prospect of success; yet something now and then, like a secret whisper, encourages and assures me that it will yet be done.

W. C.

LETTER LII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Nov. 22, 1792.

How shall I thank you enough for the interest you take in my future Miltonic labours, and the assistance you promise me in the performance of them? I will some time or other, if I live, and live a poet, acknowledge your friendship in some of my best verse; the most suitable return one poet can make to another: in the mean time I love you, and am sensible of all your kindness. You wish me warm in my work, and I ardently wish the same; but when I shall be so, God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a few days, has gathered about me again, with as black a cloud as ever: the consequence is absolute incapacity to begin.

I was for some years Dirge-writer to the town of Northampton, being employed by the clerk of the principal parish there to furnish him with an annual copy of verses proper to be printed at the foot of his bill of mortality. But the clerk died, and hearing nothing for two years from his successor, I well hoped that I was out of my office. The other morning, however, Sam announced the new clerk: he came to solicit the same service as I had rendered to his predecessor, and I reluctantly complied; doubtful, indeed, whether I was capable. I have, however, achieved that labour, and I have done nothing more.—I am just sent for up to Mary, dear Mary! Adieu. She is as well as when I left you—I would I could say better. Remember us both affectionately to your sweet boy, and trust me for being most truly yours,

W. C.

LETTER LIII.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esquire.

Weston, Dec. 16, 1792.

My dear Friend,

We differ so little that it is pity we should not agree. The possibility of restoring our diseased Government is, I think, the only point on which we are not of one mind. If you are right, and it cannot be touched in the medical way without danger of absolute ruin to the Constitution, keep the Doctors at a distance, say I—and let us live as long as we can. But perhaps physicians might be found of skill sufficient for the purpose, were they but as willing as able. Who are they? Not those honest blunderers the mob, but our governors themselves.

As it is in the power of any individual to be honest if he will, any body of men are, as it seems to me, equally possessed of the same option. For I can never persuade myself to think the world so constituted by the Author of it, and human society, which is his ordinance, so shabby a business, that the buying and selling of votes and consciences should be essential to its existence. As to multiplied representation, I know not that I foresee any great advantage likely to arise from that. Provided there be but a reasonable number of reasonable heads laid together for the good of the nation, the end may as well be answered by five hundred as it would be by a thousand, and perhaps better. But then they should be honest as well as wise; and in order that they may be so, they should put it out of their own power to be otherwise. This they might certainly do if they would, and would they do it, I am not convinced that any great mischief would ensue. You say, "somebody must have influence;" but I see no necessity for it. Let integrity of intention and a due share of ability be supposed, and the influence will be in its right place; it will all center in the zeal and good of the nation. That will influence their debates and decisions, and nothing else ought to do it. You will say, perhaps, that wise men, and honest men, as they are supposed, are yet liable to be split into almost as many differences of opinion as there are individuals; but I rather think not. It is observed of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, that each always approved and seconded the plans and views of the other; and the reason given for it is, that they were men of equal ability. The same cause that could make two unanimous would make twenty so, and would at least secure a majority among as many hundreds.

As to the reformation of the church, I want none, unless by a better provision for the inferior clergy; and if that could be brought about by emaciating a little some of our too corpulent dignitaries, I should be well contented.

The dissenters, I think, catholics and others, have all a right to the privileges of all other Englishmen, because to deprive them is persecution, and persecution on any account, but especially on a religious one, is an abomination. But, after all, *Valeat Respublica*; I love my country, I love my king, and I wish peace and prosperity to Old England. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER LIV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Dec. 26, 1792.

That I may not be silent till my silence alarms you, I snatch a moment to tell you that, although *toujours triste*, I am not worse than usual; but my opportunities of writing are *paucified*, as perhaps Dr. Johnson would have dared to say, and the few that I have are shortened by company.

Give my love to dear Tom, and thank him for his very apposite extract, which I should be happy, indeed, to turn to any account. How often do I wish, in the course of every day, that I could be employed once more in poetry; and how often, of course, that this Miltonic trap had never caught me! The year ninety-two shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the weeks that I spent at Eartham; and such it has been principally, because being engaged to Milton, I felt myself no longer free for any other engagement. That ill-fated work, impracticable in itself, has made every thing else impracticable.

* * * * I am very Pindaric, and obliged to be so by the hurry of the hour. My friends are come down to breakfast. Adieu. W. C.

LETTER LV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Jan. 20, 1793.

My dearest Brother,

Now I know that you are safe, I treat you, as you see, with a philosophical indifference, not acknowledging your kind and immediate answer to anxious inquiries, till it suits my own convenience. I have learned, however, from my late solicitude, that not only you, but yours, interest me to a degree that, should any thing happen to either of you, would be very inconsistent with my peace. Sometimes I thought that you were extremely ill, and once or twice that you were dead. As often some tragedy reached my ear concerning little Tom. "Oh *vanæ mentes hominum!*" How liable are we to a thousand impositions, and how indebted to honest old Time, who never fails to undeceive us! Whatever you had in prospect, you acted kindly by me not to make me partaker of your expectations; for I have a spirit, if not so sanguine as yours, yet that would have waited for your coming with anxious impatience, and have been dismally mortified by the

disappointment. Had you come, and come without notice too, you would not have surprised us more than (as the matter was managed) we were surprised at the arrival of your picture. It reached us in the evening, after the shutters were closed, at a time when a chaise might actually have brought you without giving us the least previous intimation. Then it was that Samuel, with his cheerful countenance, appeared at the study door, and with a voice as cheerful as his looks, exclaimed, "Mr. Hayley is come, Madam!" We both started, and in the same moment cried, "Mr. Hayley come! And where is he?" The next moment corrected our mistake, and finding Mary's voice grow suddenly tremulous, I turned, and saw her weeping.

I do nothing, notwithstanding all your exhortations: my idleness is proof against them all, or, to speak more truly, my difficulties are so. Something indeed I do. I play at push-pin with Homer every morning before breakfast, fingering and polishing, as Paris did his armour. I have lately had a letter from Dublin on that subject, which has pleased me. W. C.

LETTER LVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Jan. 29, 1793.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY,

I truly sympathize with you under your weight of sorrow for the loss of our good Samaritan. But be not broken-hearted, my friend! Remember, the loss of those we love is the condition on which we live ourselves; and that he who chooses his friends wisely from among the excellent of the earth, has a sure ground to hope, concerning them, when they die, that a merciful God has made them far happier than they could be here; and that we shall join them soon again. This is solid comfort, could we but avail ourselves of it; but I confess the difficulty of doing so. Sorrow is like the deaf adder, "that hears not the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely;" and I feel so much myself for the death of Austin, that my own chief consolation is, that I had never seen him. Live yourself, I beseech you, for I have seen so much of you, that I can by no means spare you; and I will live as long as it shall please God to permit me: I know you set some value on me, therefore let that promise comfort you; and give us not reason to say, like David's servants,—"We know that it would have pleased thee more if all we had died, than this one, for whom thou art inconsolable." You have still Romney, and Barwardine, and Guy, and me, my poor Mary, and I know not

how many beside; as many, I suppose, as ever had an opportunity of spending a day with you. He who has the most friends must necessarily lose the most, and he whose friends are numerous as yours, may the better spare a part of them. It is a changing, transient scene: yet a little while, and this poor dream of life will be over with all of us. The living, and they who live unhappy—they are indeed subjects of sorrow. Adieu, my beloved friend. Ever yours. W. C.

LETTER LVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Weston, Feb. 5, 1793.

In this last revisal of my work (the Homer) I have made a number of small improvements, and am now more convinced than ever, having exercised a cooler judgment upon it than before I could, that the translation will make its way. There must be time for the conquest of vehement and long-rooted prejudice; but without much self-partiality, I believe that the conquest will be made, and am certain that I should be of the same opinion, were the work another man's. I shall soon have finished the Odyssey, and when I have, will send the corrected copy of both to Johnson. Adieu. W. C.

LETTER LVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, Feb. 10, 1793.

My pens are all split, and my ink-glass is dry;
Neither wit, common sense, nor ideas have I.

In vain has it been that I have made several attempts to write since I left Sussex: unless more comfortable days arrive than I have the confidence to look for, there is an end of all writing with me. I have no spirits. When the Rose came, I was obliged to prepare for his coming by a nightly dose of laudanum—twelve drops suffice; but without them I am devoured by melancholy.

Apropos of the Rose! His wife, in her political notions, is the exact counterpart of yourself—loyal in the extreme. Therefore, if you find her thus inclined, when you become acquainted with her, you must not place her resemblance of yourself to the account of her admiration of you, for she is your likeness ready made. In fact, we are all of one mind about government matters, and notwithstanding your opinion, the Rose is himself a whig, and I am

a whig, and you, my dear, are a tory, and all the tories now-a-days call all the whigs republicans. How the deuce you came to be a tory is best known to yourself: you have to answer for this novelty to the shades of your ancestors, who were always whigs ever since we had any. Adieu. W. C.

LETTER LIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Feb. 17, 1793.

I have read the critique of my work in the Analytical Review, and am happy to have fallen into the hands of a critic, rigorous enough indeed, but a scholar, and a man of sense, and who does not deliberately intend me mischief. I am better pleased, indeed, that he censures some things, than I should have been with unmixt commendation; for his censure (to use the new diplomatic term) will accredit his praises. In his particular remarks he is for the most part right, and I shall be the better for them; but in his general ones I think he asserts too largely, and more than he could prove. With respect to inversions in particular, I know that they do not abound. Once they did, and I had Milton's example for it, not disapproved by Addison. But on ———'s remonstrance against them, I expunged the most, and in my new edition shall have fewer still. I know that they give dignity, and am sorry to part with them; but, to parody an old proverb, he who lives in the year ninety-three, must do as in the year ninety-three is done by others. The same remark I have to make on his censure of inharmonious lines. I know them to be much fewer than he asserts, and not more in number than I accounted indispensibly necessary to a due variation of cadence. I have, however, now, in conformity with modern taste (over-much delicate in my mind) given to the far greater number of them a flow as smooth as oil. A few I retain, and will, in compliment to my own judgment. He thinks me too faithful to compound epithets in the introductory lines, and I know his reason. He fears lest the English reader should blame Homer, whom he idolizes, though hardly more than I, for such constant repetition. But them I shall not alter. They are necessary to a just representation of the original. In the affair of Outis, I shall throw him flat on his back, by an unanswerable argument, which I shall give in a note, and with which I am furnished by Mrs. Unwin. So much for hypercriticism, which has run away with all my paper. This critic, by the way, is ———: I know him by infallible indications.

W. C.

LETTER LX.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, Feb. 23, 1793.

My eyes, which have long been much inflamed, will hardly serve me for Homer, and oblige me to make all my letters short. You have obliged me much, by sending me so speedily the remainder of your notes. I have begun with them again, and find them, as before, very much to the purpose. More to the purpose they could not have been, had you been poetry professor already. I rejoice sincerely in the prospect you have of that office, which, whatever may be your own thoughts of the matter, I am sure you will fill with great sufficiency. Would that my interest and power to serve you were greater! One string to my bow I have, and one only, which shall not be idle for want of my exertions. I thank you, likewise, for your very entertaining notices and remarks in the natural way. The hurry in which I write would not suffer me to send you many in return, had I many to send, but only two or three present themselves.

Frogs will feed on worms. I saw a frog gathering into his gullet an earth-worm as long as himself: it cost him time and labour, but at last he succeeded.

Mrs. Unwin and I, crossing a brook, saw from the foot-bridge somewhat at the bottom of the water, which had the appearance of a flower. Observing attentively, we found that it consisted of a circular assemblage of minnows; their heads all met in a center, and their tails diverging at equal distances, and being elevated above their heads, gave them the appearance of a flower half blown. One was longer than the rest, and as often as a straggler came in sight, he quitted his place to pursue him, and having driven him away, he returned to it again, no other minnow offering to take it in his absence. This we saw him do several times. The object that had attached them all was a dead minnow, which they seemed to be devouring.

After a very rainy day, I saw on one of the flower borders what seemed a long hair, but it had a waving twining motion. Considering more nearly, I found it alive, and endued with spontaneity, but could not discover at the ends of it either head or tail, or any distinction of parts. I carried it into the house, when the air of a warm room dried and killed it presently.

W. C.

LETTER LXI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, Feb. 24, 1793.

Your letter, so full of kindness, and so exactly in unison with my own feelings for you, should have had, as it deserved to have, an earlier answer, had I not been perpetually tormented with inflamed eyes, which are a sad hinderance to me in every thing. But, to make amends, if I do not send you an early answer, I send you at least a speedy one, being obliged to write as fast as my pen can trot, that I may shorten the time of poring upon paper as much as possible. Homer, too, has been another hinderance, for always when I can see, which is only during about two hours in a morning, and not at all by candle light, I devote myself to him, being in haste to send him a second time to the press, that nothing may stand in the way of Milton. By the way, where are my dear Tom's remarks, which I long to have, and must have soon, or they will come too late?

Oh you rogue, what would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had about a week since? I dreamed that, being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure, which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father; such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years: my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive: my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him: I did so, and he received me with a complaisance, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his Paradise Lost, as every man must who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a school-boy. He answered me by a smile, and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "well, you for your part will do well also." At last, recollecting his great age, (for I understood him to be two hundred years old) I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking. I took my leave, and he took his with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?

How truly I rejoice that you have recovered Guy: that man won my heart the moment I saw him: give my love to him, and tell him I am truly glad he is alive again.

There is much sweetness in those lines from the Sonneteer of Avon, and not a little in dear Tom's; an earnest, I trust, of good things to come.

With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself, my dear brother, ever yours, LIPPUS.

LETTER LXII.

To Mr. THOMAS HAYLEY.

Weston, March 14, 1793.

MY DEAR LITTLE CRITIC,

I thank you heartily for your observations, on which I set a higher value, because they have instructed me as much, and have entertained me more, than all the other strictures of our public judges in these matters. Perhaps I am not much more pleased with *shameless wolf*, &c. than you. But what is to be done, my little man? Coarse as the expressions are, they are no more than equivalent to those of Homer. The invective of the ancients was never tempered with good manners, as your papa can tell you; and my business, you know, is not to be more polite than my author, but to represent him as closely as I can.

Dishonour'd foul I have wiped away, for the reason you give, which is a very just one, and the present reading is this:

> Who had dared dishonour thus
> The life itself, &c.

Your objection to *kindler of the fires of heaven* I had the good fortune to anticipate, and expunged the dirty ambiguity some time since, wondering not a little that I had ever admitted it.

The fault you find with the two first verses of Nestor's speech discovers such a degree of just discernment, that but for your papa's assurance to the contrary, I must have suspected *him* as the author of that remark. Much as I should have respected it, if it had been so, I value it, I assure you, my little friend, still more as yours. In the new edition, the passage will be found thus altered:

> Alas! great sorrow falls on Greece to-day.
> Priam, and Priam's sons, with all in Troy—
> Oh! how will they exult, and in their hearts
> Triumph, once hearing of this broil between
> The prime of Greece, in council, and in arms!

Where the word *reel* suggests to you the idea of a drunken mountain, it performs the service to which I destined it. It is a bold metaphor; but justified by one of the sublimest passages in scripture, compared with the sublimity of which even that of Homer suffers humiliation.

It is God himself, who speaking, I think, by the prophet Isaiah, says,

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."

With equal boldness in the same scripture, the poetry of which was never equalled, mountains are said to skip, to break out into singing, and the fields to clap their hands. I intend, therefore, that my Olympus shall be still tipsy.

The accuracy of your last remark, in which you convicted me of a bull, delights me. A fig for all critics but you! The blockheads could not find it. It shall stand thus:

First spake Polydamas——

Homer was more upon his guard than to commit such a blunder, for he says,

ηϱχ' αγοϱευειν.

And now, my dear little censor, once more accept my thanks. I only regret that your strictures are so few, being just and sensible as they are.

Tell your papa that he shall hear from me soon: accept mine, and my dear invalid's affectionate remembrances. Ever yours,

W. C.*

* *Note by the Editor.*—This letter may be regarded as a remarkable proof of the great poet's indulgent sweetness of temper, in favouring the literary talents of a child. A good-natured reader will hardly blame the parental partiality to a dear departed scholar, which induces me to insert in this note the letter Cowper answered so kindly—a letter that readers, accustomed to contemplate the compositions of childhood, may consider, perhaps, as a curiosity, when they are assured, as they are with perfect truth, that every syllable of the letter, and of the criticisms annexed to it, were the voluntary and uncorrected production of a boy whose age was little more than twelve years.

To WILLIAM COWPER, Esquire.

Eartham, March 4, 1793.

Honoured King of Bards!

Since you deign to demand the observations of an humble and unexperienced servant of yours, on a work of one who is so much his superior, (as he is ever ready to serve you with all his might) behold what you demand! But let the desire you not to censure me for my unskilful, and, perhaps, (as they will undoubtedly appear to you)

LETTER LXIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

MY DEAR BROTHER, *Weston, March* 19, 1793.

I am so busy every morning before breakfast (my only opportunity) stalking and strutting in Homeric stilts, that you ought to account it an instance of marvellous grace and favour that I condescend to write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself, after the fatigue of that distraction, on the pillow of despair; a pillow which has often served me in time of need, and is become, by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient. So reposed, I laugh at the world and say, "yes, you may gape and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if you ever get them."

In Homer you must know I am advanced as far as the fifteenth book of the Iliad, leaving nothing behind me that can reasonably offend the most fastidious; and I design him for public appearance in his new dress as soon as possible, for a reason which any poet may guess, if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket.

You forbid me to tantalize you with an invitation to Weston, and yet invite me to Eartham. No, no; there is no such happiness in store for me at present. Had I rambled at all, I was under promise to all my dear mother's kindred to go to Norfolk, and they are dying to see me: but I have told them that die they must, for I cannot go; and ergo, as you will perceive, can go no where else.

Thanks for Mazarine's epitaph: it is full of witty paradox, and is written with a force and severity which sufficiently bespeak the author. I account it an inestimable curiosity, and shall be happy, when time shall serve, with your aid, to make a good translation of it. But that will be a stubborn business. Adieu. The clock strikes eight—And now for Homer.

W. C.

ridiculous observations; but be so kind as to receive them as a mark of respectful affection from your obedient servant,

THOMAS HAYLEY.

Book.	Line.	
i.	184—195	I cannot reconcile myself to these expressions, viz. "Ah, cloth'd with impudence," &c. and "shameless wolf," and (196) "face of flint."
i.	508—	"Dishonour'd foul" is, in my opinion, an uncleanly expression.
i.	651—	"Reel'd," I think, makes it appear as if Olympus was drunk.
i.	749—	"Kindler of the fires in heaven," I think, makes Jupiter appear too much like a lamp-lighter.
ii.	317 to 319	—These lines are, in my opinion, below the elevated genius of Mr. Cowper's
xviii.	300 to 304	—This appears to me rather Irish, since in line 300 you say "no one sat," and in line 304, "Polydamas rose."

LETTER LXIV.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

The Lodge, March 27, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I must send you a line of congratulation on the event of your transaction with Johnson, since you, I know, partake with me in the pleasure I receive from it. Few of my concerns have been so happily concluded. I am now satisfied with my bookseller, as I have substantial cause to be, and account myself in good hands; a circumstance as pleasant to me as any other part of the business; for I love dearly to be able to confide, with all my heart, in those with whom I am connected, of what kind soever the connection may be.

The question of printing or not printing the alterations seems difficult to decide. If they are not printed, I shall, perhaps, disoblige some purchasers of the first edition; and if they are, many others of them, perhaps a great majority, will never care about them. As far as I have gone I have made a fair copy, and when I have finished the whole, will send them to Johnson, together with the interleaved volumes. He will see, in a few minutes, what it will be best to do, and by his judgment I shall be determined. The opinion to which I most incline is, that they ought to be printed separately, for they are many of them rather long, here and there a whole speech, or a whole simile; and the verbal and lineal variations are so numerous, that altogether, I apprehend, they will give a new air to the work, and, I hope, a much improved one.

I forgot to say in the proper place, that some notes, although but very few, I have added already, and may perhaps see here and there opportunity for a few more. But notes being little wanted, especially by people at all conversant with classical literature, as most readers of Homer are, I am persuaded that, were they numerous, they would be deemed an incumberance. I shall write to Johnson soon, perhaps to-morrow, and then shall say the same thing to him.

In point of health we continue much the same. Our united love, and many thanks for your prosperous negociations, attend yourself and whole family, and especially my little name-sake. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER LXV.

To JOHN JOHNSON, Esquire.

The Lodge, April 11, 1793.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

The long muster-roll of my great and small ancestors, I signed and dated, and sent up to Mr. Blue-mantle, on Monday, according to your desire. Such a pompous affair, drawn out for my sake, reminds me of the old fable of the mountain in parturition and a mouse the produce. Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly, ducal, and royal dust! Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more. But perhaps they did not know that such a one as I should have the honour to be numbered among their descendants. Well, I have a little bookseller that makes me some amends for their deficiency. He has made me a present; an act of liberality which I take every opportunity to blazon, as it well deserves. But you, I suppose, have learned it already from Mr. Rose.

Fear not, my man. You will acquit yourself very well, I dare say, both in standing for your degree, and when you have gained it. A little tremor, and a little shamefacedness in a stripling, like you, are recommendations rather than otherwise; and so they ought to be, being symptoms of an ingenuous mind, rather unfrequent in this age of brass.

What you say of your determined purpose, with God's help, to take up the cross and despise the shame, gives us both real pleasure. In our pedigree is found one, at least, who did it before you. Do you the like; and you will meet him in heaven, as sure as the scripture is the word of God.

The quarrel that the world has with evangelical men and doctrines, they would have with a host of angels in the human form; for it is the quarrel of owls with sunshine, of ignorance with divine illumination.

Adieu, my dear Johnny. We shall expect you with earnest desire at your coming, and receive you with much delight.

W. C.

LETTER LXVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, April 23, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

Better late than never, and better a little than none at all! Had I been at liberty to consult my inclinations,

I would have answered your truly kind and affectionate letter immediately. But I am the busiest man alive, and when this epistle is dispatched, you will be the only one of my correspondents to whom I shall not be indebted. While I write this, my poor Mary sits mute; which I cannot well bear, and which, together with want of time to write much, will have a curtailing effect on my epistle.

My only studying time is still given to Homer, not to correction and amendment of him, for that is all over, but to writing notes. Johnson has expressed a wish for some, that the unlearned may be a little illuminated concerning classical story and the mythology of the ancients; and his behaviour to me has been so liberal that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the old Greek commentators blinds me. But it is no matter: I am the more like Homer.

Ever yours, my dearest Hayley, W. C.

LETTER LXVII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 5, 1793.

My delay to answer your last kind letter, to which likewise you desired a speedy reply, must have seemed rather difficult to explain on any other supposition than that of illness. But illness has not been the cause, although, to say the truth, I cannot boast of having been lately very well. Yet has not this been the cause of my silence, but your own advice, very proper, and earnestly given to me, to proceed in the revisal of Homer. To this it is owing that, instead of giving an hour or two before breakfast to my correspondents, I allot that time entirely to my studies. I have nearly given the last touches to the poetry, and am now busied, far more laboriously, in writing notes at the request of my honest bookseller, transmitted to me in the first instance by you, and afterward repeated by himself. I am, therefore, deep in the old scholia, and have advanced to the latter part of Iliad nine, explaining, as I go, such passages as may be difficult to unlearned readers, and such only; for notes of that kind are the notes that Johnson desired. I find it a more laborious task than the translation was, and shall be heartily glad when it is over. In the mean time, all the letters I receive remain unanswered, or if they receive an answer, it is always a short one. Such this must be. Johnny is here, having flown over London.

Homer, I believe, will make a much more respectable appearance than before. Johnson now thinks it will be right to make a separate impression of the amendments.

W. C.

I breakfast every morning on seven or eight pages of the Greek commentators: for so much I am obliged to read in order to select, perhaps, three or four short notes for the readers of my translation.

Homer is indeed a tie upon me that must not, on any account, be broken till all his demands are satisfied: though I have fancied, while the revisal of the Odyssey was at a distance, that it would ask less labour in the finishing, it is not unlikely that, when I take it actually in hand, I may find myself mistaken. Of this, at least, I am sure, that uneven verse abounds much more in it than it once did in the Iliad. Yet to the latter the critics objected on that account, though to the former never; perhaps because they had not read it. Hereafter they shall not quarrel with me on that score. The Iliad is now all smooth turnpike, and I will take equal care that there shall be no jolts in the Odyssey.

LETTER LXVIII.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 7, 1793.

MY DEAREST COZ.

You have thought me long silent, and so have many others. In fact, I have not for many months written punctually to any but yourself and Hayley. My time, the little I have, is so engrossed with Homer, that I have at this moment a bundle of unanswered letters by me, and letters likely to be so. Thou knowest, I dare say, what it is to have a head, weary with thinking. Mine is so fatigued by breakfast-time, three days out of four, I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever.

I am glad I have convinced thee, at last, that thou art a tory. Your friend's definition of whig and tory may be just, for aught I know, as far as the latter are concerned; but, respecting the former I think him mistaken. There is no *true* whig who wishes all power in the hands of his own party. The division of it, which the lawyers call tripartite, is exactly what he desires; and he would have neither King, Lords nor Commons unequally trusted, or in the smallest degree predominant. Such a whig am I, and such whigs are the true friends of the constitution.

Adieu, my dear: I am dead with weariness.

W. C.

LETTER LXIX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

May 21, 1793.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,

You must either think me extremely idle or extremely busy, that I have made your last very kind letter wait so very long for an answer. The truth, however, is, that I am neither; but have had time enough to have scribbled to you, had I been able to scribble at all. To explain this riddle I must give you a short account of my proceedings.

I rise at six every morning, and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast. The consequence is, that I am so exhausted as not to be able to write when the opportunity offers. You will say, 'Breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you.' I answer, 'Perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study.' This uneasiness, of which I complain, is a proof that I am somewhat stricken in years; and there is no other cause by which I can account for it, since I go early to bed, always between ten and eleven, and seldom fail to sleep well. Certain it is, ten years since I could have done as much, and sixteen years ago did actually much more, without suffering fatigue or any inconvenience from my labours. How insensibly old age steals on, and how often is it actually arrived before we suspect it! Accident alone, some occurrence that suggests a comparison of our former with our present selves, affords the discovery. Well, it is always good to be undeceived, especially on an article of such importance.

There has been a book lately published, entitled, *Man as he is*. I have heard a high character of it, as admirably written, and am informed that, for that reason, and because it inculcates whig principles, it is by many imputed to you. I contradicted this report, assuring my informant that had it been yours I must have known it, for that you have bound yourself to make me your father-confessor on all such wicked occasions, and not to conceal from me even a murder, should you happen to commit one.

I will not trouble you at present to send me any more books with a view to my notes on Homer. I am not without hopes that Sir John Throckmorton, who is expected here from Venice in a short time, may bring me Villoison's edition of the Odyssey. He certainly will, if he found it published, and that alone will be *instar omnium*.

Adieu, my dearest brother. Give my love to Tom, and thank

him for his book, of which I believe I need not have deprived him, intending that my readers shall detect the occult instruction contained in Homer's stories for themselves.

W. C.

LETTER LXX.

To Lady HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 1, 1793.

MY DEAREST COZ.

You will not, you say, come to us now; and you tell us not when you will. These assignations *sine die* are such shadowy things, that I can neither grasp nor get any comfort from them. Know you not that hope is the next best thing to enjoyment? Give us, then, a hope, and a determinate time for that hope to fix on, and we will endeavour to be satisfied.

Johnny is gone to Cambridge, called thither to take his degree, and is much missed by me. He is such an active little fellow in my service that he cannot be otherwise. In three weeks, however, I shall hope to have him again for a fortnight. I have had a letter from him, containing an incident which has given birth to the following.

To A YOUNG FRIEND,

On his arrival at CAMBRIDGE *wet, when no* rain had *fallen there.*

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts, to heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet, when other locks were dry.
Heav'n grant us half the omen! may we see,
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

These are spick and span. Johnny himself has not yet seen them. By the way, he has filled your book completely; and I will give thee a guinea if thou wilt search thy old book for a couple of songs, and two or three other pieces of which I know thou madest copies at the Vickarage, and which I have lost. The songs I know are pretty good, and I would fain recover them.

W. C.

LETTER LXXI.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, June 6, 1793.

My dear Sir,

I seize a passing moment merely to say, that I feel for your distresses and sincerely pity you, and I shall be happy to learn from your next, that your sister's amendment has superseded the necessity you feared, of a journey to London. Your candid account of the effect that your afflictions have both on your spirits and temper, I can perfectly understand, having laboured much in that fire myself, and perhaps more than any man. It is in such a school, however, that we must learn, if we ever truly learn it, the natural depravity of the human heart, and of our own in particular; together with the consequence that necessarily follows such wretched premises—our indispensible need of the atonement, and our inexpressible obligations to him who made it. This reflection cannot escape a thinking mind, looking back on those ebullitions of fretfulness and impatience, to which it has yielded in a season of great affliction.

Having lately had company who left us only on the fourth, I have done nothing—nothing, indeed, since my return from Sussex, except a trifle or two which it was incumbent upon me to write. Milton hangs in doubt; neither spirits nor opportunity suffice me for that labour. I regret continually that I ever suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake it. The most that I hope to effect is a complete revisal of my own Homer. Johnson told my friend, who has just left me, that it will begin to be reviewed in the next Analytical, and that he *hoped* the review of it would not offend me. By this I understand that if I am not offended it will be owing more to my own equanimity than to the mildness of the critic. So be it! He will put an opportunity of victory over myself into my hands, and I will endeavour not to lose it. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER LXXII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, June 20, 1793.

Dear architect of fine *chateaux in air*,
Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!

Oh for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood)
A partnership of literary ware!

But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
To drudge in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequal worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

What remains for me to say on this subject, my dear brother bard, I will say in prose. There are other impediments which I could not comprize within the bounds of a sonnet.

My poor Mary's infirm condition makes it impossible for me, at present, to engage in a work such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently free, nor have I, or can I, by any means, find opportunity: added to which comes a difficulty, which, though you are not at all aware of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding appearance: can you guess it? No, not you: neither, perhaps, will you be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly subsist. If your hair begins to bristle, stroak it down again, for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love for you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you; for I have both in a degree that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have, or ever had. But I am so made up; I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but, on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness, which has been my effectual and almost fatal hinderance on many other important occasions; and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me.——No! I shall neither do, nor attempt any thing of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better—nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature—in concert with any man; I could not, even with my own father or brother, were they now alive. Small game must serve me at present; and till I have done with Homer and Milton, a sonnet, or some such matter must content me. The

utmost that I aspire to, (and heaven knows with how feeble a hope) is to write, at some better opportunity, and when my hands are free, *The four Ages*. Thus I have opened my heart unto thee. W. C.

LETTER LXXIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

MY DEAREST BROTHER, *Weston, July 7*, 1793.

If the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do any thing else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now, a double one; because I am in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance, and to assure you, that if it please God to afford me health, spirits, ability, and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota, *The four Ages*.

You are very kind to humour me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public; and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer; and when Homer is finished at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me. But what shall I do with a multitude of small pieces from which I intended to select the best, and adding them to The four Ages, to have made a volume? Will there be room for them upon your plan? I have re-touched them, and will re-touch them again. Some of them will suggest pretty devices to a designer, and, in short, I have a desire not to lose them.

I am at this moment, with all the imprudence natural to poets, expending nobody knows what, in embellishing my premises, or rather the premises of my neighbour Courteney, which is more poetical still. I have built one summer-house already with the boards of my old study, and am building another, spick and span as they say. I have also a stone-cutter now at work, setting a bust of my dear old Grecian on a pedestal; and beside all this, I meditate still more, that is to be done in the autumn. Your project, therefore, is most opportune; as any project must needs be that has so distinct a tendency to put money into the pocket of one so likely to want it.

Ah brother poet! send me of your shade,
And bid the zephyrs hasten to my aid;
Or, like a worm unearth'd at noon, I go,
Dispatch'd by sunshine, to the shades below.

My poor Mary is as well as the heat will allow her to be, and whether it be cold or sultry, is always affectionately mindful of you and yours. Adieu. W. C.

LETTER LXXIV.

To the Reverend Mr. GREATHEED.

July 23, 1793.

I was not without some expectation of a line from you, my dear sir, though you did not promise me one at your departure; and am happy not to have been disappointed: still happier to learn that you and Mrs. Greatheed are well, and so delightfully situated. Your kind offer to us of sharing with you the house which you at present inhabit, added to the short but lively description of the scenery that surrounds it, want nothing to win our acceptance, should it please God to give Mrs. Unwin a little more strength, and should I be ever master of my time, so as to be able to gratify myself with what would please me most. But many have claims upon us, and some who cannot absolutely be said to have any, would yet complain and think themselves slighted, should we prefer rocks and caves to them. In short, we are called so many ways, that these numerous demands are likely to operate as a *remora*, and to keep us fixt at home. Here we can occasionally have the pleasure of yours and Mrs. Greatheed's company, and to have it here must, I believe, content us. Hayley, in his last letter, gives me reason to expect the pleasure of seeing him and his dear boy Tom in the autumn. He will use all his eloquence to draw us to Eartham again. My cousin Johnny of Norfolk holds me under promise to make my first trip thither, and the very same promise I have hastily made to visit Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, at Bucklands. How to reconcile such clashing promises, and give satisfaction to all, would puzzle me, had I nothing else to do; and therefore, as I say, the result will probably be, that we shall find ourselves obliged to go no where, since we cannot every where.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Wishing you both safe at home again, and to see you as soon as may be here, I remain affectionately yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, July, 24, 1793.

I have been vexed with myself, my dearest brother, and with every thing about me, not excepting even Homer himself, that I have been obliged so long to delay an answer to your last kind letter. If I listen any longer to calls another way, I shall hardly be able to tell you how happy we are in the hope of seeing you in the autumn, before the autumn will have arrived. Thrice welcome will you and your dear boy be to us, and the longer you will afford us your company, the more welcome. I have set up the head of Homer, on a famous fine pedestal, and a very majestic appearance he makes. I am now puzzled about a motto, and wish you to decide for me between two, one of which I have composed myself, a Greek one, as follows:

Εικονα τις ταυτην; κλυτον ανερος ωμ' ολωλεν.
Ουνομα δ' αυτος ανηρ αφθιτον αιεν εχει.

The other is my own translation of a passage in the Odyssey, the original of which I have seen used as a motto to an engraved head of Homer many a time.

The present edition of the lines stands thus:

Him partially the muse,
And dearly lov'd, yet gave him good and ill:
She quench'd his sight, but gave him strains divine.

Tell me, by the way, (if you ever had any speculations on the subject) what is it you suppose Homer to have meant in particular, when he ascribed his blindness to the muse? for that he speaks of himself, under the name of Demodocus, in the eighth book, I believe, is by all admitted. How could the old bard study himself blind, when books were either few, or none at all? And did he write his poems? If neither were the cause, as seems reasonable to imagine, how could he incur his blindness by such means as could be justly imputable to the muse? Would mere thinking blind him? I want to know:

"Call up some spirit from the vasty deep!"

I said to my Sam*—"Sam, build me a shed in the garden, with

* A very affectionate worthy domestic who attended his master into Sussex.

any thing that you can find, and make it rude and rough like one of those at Eartham." "Yes, Sir," says Sam, and straightway laying his own noddle and the carpenter's noddle together, has built me a thing fit for Stow gardens. Is not this vexatious? I threaten to inscribe it thus:

Beware of building! I intended
Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.

But my Mary says I shall break Sam's heart, and the carpenter's too, and will not consent to it. Poor Mary sleeps but ill. How have you lived who cannot bear a sun-beam?

Adieu, my dearest Hayley. W. C.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Lady HESKETH.

Weston, August 11, 1793.

MY DEAREST COZ.

I am glad that my poor and hasty attempts to express some little civility to Miss Fanshaw, and the amiable Count, have your and her approbation. The lines addressed to her were not what I would have made them, but lack of time, a lack which always presses me, would not suffer me to improve them. Many thanks for her letter, which, were my merits less the subject of it, I should, without scruple, say is an excellent one. She writes with the force and accuracy of a person skilled in more languages than are spoken in the present day, as I doubt not that she is. I perfectly approve the theme she recommends to me, but am at present so totally absorbed in Homer, that all I do beside is ill done, being hurried over; and I would not execute ill a subject of her recommending.

I shall watch the walnut-trees with more attention than they who eat them, which I do in some hope, though you do not expressly say so, that when their threshing-time arrives we shall see you here. I am now going to paper my new study, and in a short time it will be fit to inhabit.

Lady Spencer has sent me a present from Rome, by the hands of Sir John Throckmorton—engravings of Odyssey subjects, after figures by Flaxman, a statuary at present resident there, of high repute, and much a friend of Hayley's.

Thou livest, my dear, I acknowledge, in a very fine country, but they have spoiled it by building London in it. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER LXXVII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, August 15, 1793.

Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,
That building and building a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

Besides, my dearest brother, they have not only built for me what I did not want, but have ruined a notable tetrastic by doing so. I had written one which I designed for a hermitage, and it will by no means suit the fine and pompous affair which they have made instead of one. So that, as a poet, I am every way afflicted; made poorer than I need have been, and robbed of my verses. What case can be more deplorable?

You must not suppose me ignorant of what Flaxman has done, or that I have not seen it, or that I am not actually in possession of it, at least of the engravings which you mention. In fact, I have had them more than a fortnight. Lady Dowager Spencer, to whom I inscribed my Odyssey, and who was at Rome when Sir John Throckmorton was there, charged him with them as a present to me, and arriving here lately he executed his commission. Romney, I doubt not, is right in his judgment of them: he is an artist himself, and cannot easily be mistaken; and I take his opinion as an oracle, the rather, because it coincides exactly with my own. The figures are highly classical, antique, and elegant; especially that of Penelope, who, whether she wakes or sleeps, must necessarily charm all beholders.

Your scheme of embellishing my Odyssey with these plates is a kind one, and the fruit of your benevolence to me; but Johnson, I fear, will hardly stake so much money as the cost would amount to, on a work, the fate of which is at present uncertain. Nor could we adorn the Odyssey in this splendid manner, unless we had similar ornaments to bestow on the Iliad. Such, I presume, are not ready, and much time must elapse, even if Flaxman should accede to the plan, before he could possibly prepare them. Happy, indeed, should I be to see a work of mine so nobly accompanied, but should that good fortune ever attend me, it cannot take place till the third or fourth edition shall afford the occasion. This I regret, and I regret too, that you will have seen them before I can have an opportunity to show them to you. Here is six-pence for you if you will abstain from the sight of them while you are in London.

The sculptor?—nameless, though once dear to fame;
But this man bears an everlasting name.*

So I purpose it shall stand; and on the pedestal, when you come, in that form you will find it. The added line from the Odyssey is charming, but the assumption of sonship to Homer seems too daring. Suppose it stood thus:—

Ω; δη παις ω πατερι, και οποτε λησομαι αυτε.

I am not sure that this would be clear of the same objection, and it departs from the text still more.

With my poor Mary's best love, and our united wishes to see you here, I remain, my dearest brother, ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXVIII.

To Mrs. COURTENEY.

Weston, August 20, 1793.

My dearest Catharina is too reasonable, I know, to expect news from me, who live on the outside of the world, and know nothing that passes within it. The best news is, that though you are gone, you are not gone for ever, as once I supposed you were, and said that we should probably meet no more. Some news, however, we have; but then I conclude that you have already received it from the Doctor, and that thought almost deprives me of all courage to relate it. On the evening of the feast, Bob Archer's house affording, I suppose, the best room for the purpose, all the lads and lasses who felt themselves disposed to dance, assembled there. Long time they danced, at least long time they did something a little like it, when at last the company having retired, the fiddler asked Bob for a lodging. Bob replied that his beds were all full of his own family, but if he chose it he would show him a hay-cock, where he might sleep as sound as in any bed whatever. So forth they went together, and when they reached the place, the fiddler knocked down Bob and demanded his money. But happily for Bob, though he might be knocked down, and actually was so, yet he could not possibly be robbed, having nothing. The fiddler, therefore, having amused himself with kicking and beating him as he lay, as long as he saw good, left him, and has never been heard of since, nor inquired after indeed, being no doubt the last man in the world whom Bob wishes to see again.

* A translation of Cowper's Greek verses on his bust of Homer.

By a letter from Hayley to-day, I learn that Flaxman, to whom we are indebted for those Odyssey figures which Lady Frog brought over, has almost finished a set for the Iliad also. I should be glad to embellish my Homer with them, but neither my bookseller nor I shall probably choose to risque so expensive an ornament on a work, whose reception with the public is at present doubtful.

Adieu, my dearest Catharina. Give my best love to your husband. Come home as soon as you can, and accept our united very best wishes. W. C.

LETTER LXXIX.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

The Lodge, August 22, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I rejoice that you have had so pleasant an excursion, and have beheld so many beautiful scenes. Except the delightful upway, I have seen them all. I have lived much at Southampton, have slept and caught a sore-throat at Lyndhurst, and have swam in the bay of Weymouth. It will give us great pleasure to see you here, should your business give you an opportunity to finish your excursions of this season with one to Weston.

As for my going on, it is much as usual. I rise at six; an industrious and wholesome practice from which I have never swerved since March. I breakfast generally about eleven—have given all the intermediate time to my old delightful bard. Villoisson no longer keeps me company. I therefore now jog along with Clarke and Barnes at my elbow, and from the excellent annotations of the former select such as I think likely to be useful, or that recommend themselves by the amusement they may afford; of which sorts there are not a few. Barnes also affords me some of both kinds, but not so many, his notes being chiefly paraphrastical or grammatical. My only fear is lest, between them both, I should make my work too voluminous. W. C.

LETTER LXXX.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire,

Weston, August 27, 1793.

I thank you, my dear brother, for consulting the Gibbonian oracle on the question concerning Homer's muse, and his blindness. I proposed it likewise to my little neighbour Buchanan, who gave me precisely the same answer. I felt

an insatiable thirst to learn something new concerning him, and, despairing of information from others, was willing to hope that I had stumbled on matter unnoticed by the commentators, and might, perhaps, acquire a little intelligence from himself. But the great and the little oracle together have extinguished that hope, and I despair now of making any curious discoveries about him.

Since Flaxman (which I did not know till your letter told me so) has been at work for the Iliad, as well as the Odyssey, it seems a great pity that the engravings should not be bound up with some Homer or other; and, as I said before, I should have been too proud to have bound them up in mine. But there is an objection, at least such it seems to me, that threatens to disqualify them for such a use; namely, the shape and size of them, which are such that no book of the usual form could possibly receive them, save in a folded state, which, I apprehend, would be to murder them.

The monument of Lord Mansfield, for which you say he is engaged, will, I dare say, prove a noble effort of genius. Statuaries, as I have heard an eminent one say, do not much trouble themselves about a likeness: else I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was at that time wonderfully handsome, and would expound the most mysterious intricacies of the law, or recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause, as long as from hence to Eartham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it. The most abstruse studies, I believe, never cost him any labour.

You say nothing lately of your intended journey our way: yet the year is waning, and the shorter days give you a hint to lose no time unnecessarily.—Lately we had the whole family at the Hall, and now we have nobody. The Throckmortons are gone into Berkshire, and the Courteneys into Yorkshire. They are so pleasant a family, that I heartily wish you to see them; and at the same time wish to see you before they return, which will not be sooner than October. How shall I reconcile these wishes, seemingly opposite? Why, by wishing that you may come soon and stay long. I know no other way of doing it.

My poor Mary is much as usual.—I have set up Homer's head, and inscribed the pedestal; my own Greek at the top, with your translation under it, and

Ὡς ὃη παις ω πατρι, &c.

It makes altogether a very smart and learned appearance.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXI.
To Lady HESKETH.

August 29, 1793.

Your question, at what time your coming to us will be most agreeable, is a knotty one, and such as, had I the wisdom of Solomon, I should be puzzled to answer. I will, therefore, leave it still a question, and refer the time of your journey Weston-ward entirely to your own election; adding this one limitation, however, that I do not wish to see you exactly at present, on account of the unfinished state of my study, the wainscot of which still smells of paint, and which is not yet papered. But to return: as I have insinuated, thy pleasant company is the thing which I always wish, and as much at one time as at another. I believe, if I examine myself minutely, since I despair of ever having it in the height of summer, which, for your sake, I should desire most, the depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible to me. For then it is that, in general, I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January. I am sorry, however, that I have departed so far from my first purpose, and am answering a question which I declared myself unable to answer. Choose thy own time, secure of this, that whatever time that be, it will always to us be a welcome one.

I thank you for your pleasant extract of Miss Fanshaw's letter.

> Her pen drops eloquence as sweet
> As any muse's tongue can speak;
> Nor need a scribe, like her, regret
> Her want of Latin or of Greek.

And now, my dear, adieu! I have done more than I expected, and begin to feel myself exhausted with so much scribbling at the end of four hours close application to study.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXII.
To the Reverend Mr. JOHNSON.

Weston, Sept. 6, 1793.

My dearest Johnny,

To do a kind thing, and in a kind manner, is a double kindness, and no man is more addicted to both than you, or more skilful in contriving them. Your plan to surprise me agreeably succeeded to admiration. It was only the day

before yesterday that, while we walked after dinner in the orchard, Mrs. Unwin between Sam and me, hearing the Hall-clock, I observed a great difference between that and ours, and began immediately to lament, as I had often done, that there was not a sun-dial in all Weston to ascertain the true time for us. My complaint was long, and lasted till, having turned into the grass walk, we reached the new building at the end of it, where we sat awhile and reposed ourselves. In a few minutes we returned by the way we came, when what think you was my astonishment to see what I had not seen before, though I had passed close by it, a smart sun-dial mounted on a smart stone pedestal! I assure you it seemed the effect of conjuration. I stopped short, and exclaimed, "Why, here is a sun-dial, and upon our own ground! How is this? Tell me, Sam, how came it here? Do you know any thing about it?" At first I really thought (that is to say, as soon as I could think at all) that this fac-totum of mine, Sam Roberts, having often heard me deplore the want of one, had given orders for the supply of that want himself, without my knowledge, and was half pleased and half offended. But he soon exculpated himself by imputing the fact to you. It was brought up to Weston, it seems, about noon: but Andrews stopped the cart at the blacksmith's, whence he sent to inquire if I was gone to my walk. As it happened, I walked not till two o'clock. So there it stood waiting till I should go forth, and was introduced before my return. Fortunately, too, I went out at the church end of the village, and consequently saw nothing of it. How I could possibly pass it without seeing it, when it stood in the walk, I know not; but it is certain that I did: and where I shall fix it now I know as little. It cannot stand between the two gates, the place of your choice, as I understand from Samuel, because the hay-cart must pass that way in the season. But we are now busy in winding the walk all round the orchard, and in so doing shall doubtless stumble at last upon some open spot that will suit it.

There it shall stand while I live, a constant monument of your kindness.

I have this moment finished the twelfth book of the Odyssey, and I read the Iliad to Mrs. Unwin every evening.

The effect of this reading is, that I still spy blemishses, something, at least, that I can mend; so that, after all, the transcript of alterations which you and George have made will not be a perfect one. It would be foolish to forego an opportunity of improvement for such a reason; neither will I. It is ten o'clock, and I must breakfast. Adieu, therefore, my dear Johnny! Remember your appointment to see us in October. Ever yours,

W. C.

LETTER LXXXIII.
To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Sept. 8, 1793.

Non sum quod simulo, my dearest brother! I seem cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creatures. Desirous, however, to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may and must be to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself, and by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality.

So you have seen Flaxman's figures, which I intended you should not have seen till I had spread them before you! How did you dare to look at them? You should have covered your eyes with both hands. I am charmed with Flaxman's Penelope, and though you don't deserve that I should, will send you a few lines, such as they are, with which she inspired me the other day while I was taking my noon-day walk.

> The suitors sinn'd, but with a fair excuse,
> Whom all this elegance might well seduce;
> Nor can our censure on the husband fall,
> Who, for a wife so lovely, slew them all.

I know not that you will meet any body here when we see you in October, unless, perhaps, my Johnny should happen to be with us. If Tom is charmed with the thoughts of coming to Weston, we are equally so with the thoughts of seeing him here. At his years I should hardly hope to make his visit agreeable to him, did not I know that he is of a temper and disposition that must make him happy every where. Give our love to him. If Romney can come with you, we have both room to receive him, and hearts to make him most welcome.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXIV.
To Mrs. COURTENEY.

Sept. 16, 1793.

A thousand thanks, my dearest Catharina, for your pleasant letter; one of the pleasantest that I have received since your departure. You are very good to apologize for your delay, but I had not flattered myself with the hopes of a

speedier answer. Knowing full well your talents for entertaining your friends who are present, I was sure you would with difficulty find half an hour that you could devote to an absent one.

I am glad that you think of your return. Poor Weston is a desolation without you. In the mean time I amuse myself as well as I can, thrumming old Homer's lyre, and turning the premises upside down. Upside down indeed, for so it is literally that I have been dealing with the orchard almost ever since you went, digging and delving it around to make a new walk, which now begins to assume the shape of one, and to look as if, some time or other, it may serve in that capacity. Taking my usual exercise there the other day with Mrs. Unwin, a wide disagreement between your clock and ours occasioned me to complain much, as I have often done, of the want of a dial. Guess my surprise when, at the close of my complaint, I saw one; saw one close at my side, a smart one, glittering in the sun, and mounted on a pedestal of stone. I was astonished. "This," I exclaimed, "is absolute conjuration."—It was a most mysterious affair, but the mystery was at last explained.

This scribble, I presume, will find you just arrived at Bucklands. I would with all my heart, that, since dials can be thus suddenly conjured from one place to another, I could be so too, and could start up before your eyes in the middle of some walk or lawn, where you and Lady Frog are wandering.

While Pitcairne whistles for his family-estate in Fifeshire, he will do well if he will sound a few notes for me. I am originally of the same shire, and a family of my name is still there, to whom, perhaps, he may whistle on my behalf, not altogether in vain. So shall his fife excel all my poetical efforts, which have not yet, and I dare say never will, effectually charm one acre of ground into my possession.

Remember me to Sir John, Lady Frog, and your husband; tell them I love them all. She told me once she was jealous; now, indeed, she seems to have some reason, since to her I have not written, and have written twice to you. But bid her be of good courage; in due time I will give her proof of my constancy.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXV.

To the Reverend Mr. JOHNSON.

My dearest Johnny, *Sept.* 29, 1793.

You have done well to leave off visiting and being visited. Visits are insatiable devourers of time, and

fit only for those who, if they did not that, would do nothing. The worst consequence of such departures from common practice is to be termed a singular sort of a fellow, or an odd-fish; a sort of reproach that a man might be wise enough to contemn, who had not half your understanding.

I look forward with pleasure to October the eleventh, the day which I expect will be *albo notandus lapillo*, on account of your arrival here.

Here you will meet Mr. Rose, who comes on the eighth, and brings with him Mr. Lawrence the painter—you may guess for what purpose. Lawrence returns when he has made his copy of me, but Mr. Rose will remain perhaps as long as you will. Hayley, on the contrary, will come, I suppose, just in time not to see you. Him we expect on the twentieth. I trust however that thou wilt so order thy pastoral matters, as to make thy stay here as long as possible.

Lady Hesketh, in her last letter, inquires very kindly after you; asked me for your address, and purposes soon to write to you. We hope to see her in November: so that after a summer without company, we are likely to have an autumn and winter sociable enough.

LETTER LXXXVI.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

October 5, 1793.

My good intentions towards you, my dearest brother, are continually frustrated; and, which is most provoking, not by such engagements and avocations as have a right to my attention, such as those to my Mary, and to the old bard of Greece, but mere impertinences, such as calls of civility from persons not very interesting to me, and letters from a distance still less interesting, because the writers of them are strangers. A man sent me a long copy of verses, which I could do no less than acknowledge. They were silly enough, and cost me eighteenpence, which was seventeen pence halfpenny farthing more than they were worth. Another sent me, at the same time, a plan, requesting my opinion of it, and that I would lend him my name as editor; a request with which I shall not comply; but I am obliged to tell him so, and one letter is all that I have time to dispatch in a day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes I am not able to write at all. Thus it is that my time perishes, and I can neither give so much of it as I would to you, nor to any other valuable purpose.

On Tuesday we expect company—Mr. Rose and Lawrence the

painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a band-box, and sent to the artist. These, however, will be gone, as I believe I told you, before you arrive, at which time I know not that any body will be here, except my Johnny, whose presence will not at all interfere with our readings. You will not, I believe, find me a very slashing critic. I hardly, indeed, expect to find any thing in your life of Milton that I shall sentence to amputation. How should it be too long? A well written work, sensible and spirited, such as yours was when I saw it, is never so. But, however, we shall see. I promise to spare nothing that I think may be lopped off with advantage.

I began this letter yesterday, but could not finish it till now. I have risen this morning like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ouze and mud of melancholy. For this reason I am not sorry to find myself at the bottom of my paper, for had I more room, perhaps I might fill it all with croaking, and make a heart-ache at Eartham, which I wish to be always cheerful. Adieu. My poor sympathising Mary is of course sad, but always mindful of you.

W. C.

LETTER LXXXVII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Oct. 18, 1793.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,

I have not, at present, much that is necessary to say here, because I shall have the happiness of seeing you so soon: my time, according to custom, is a mere scrap; for which reason such must be my letter also.

You will find here more than I have hitherto given you reason to expect, but none who will not be happy to see you. These, however, stay with us but a short time, and will leave us in full possession of Weston on Wednesday next.

I look forward with joy to your coming, heartily wishing you a pleasant journey, in which my poor Mary joins me. Give our best love to Tom; without whom, after having been taught to look for him, we should feel our pleasure in the interview much diminished.

Læti expectamus et puerumque tium.

W. C.

My second visit to Weston (a scene that I cannot mention without feeling it endeared to me by the pleasures and by the pains of joyous and of mournful remembrance) took place very soon after the date of the last letter. I found Cowper apparently well, and enlivened by the society of his young kinsman from Norfolk, and another of his favourite friends, Mr. Rose. The latter came recently from the seat of Lord Spencer, in Northamptonshire, and commissioned by that accomplished nobleman to invite Cowper and his guests to Althorpe, where my friend Gibbon was to make a visit of considerable continuance.

All the guests of Cowper now recommended it to him, very strongly, to venture on this little excursion to a house whose master he most cordially respected, and whose library alone might be regarded as a magnet of very powerful attraction to every elegant scholar.

I wished to see Cowper and Gibbon personally acquainted, because I perfectly knew the real benevolence of both; for widely as they might differ on one important article, they were both able and worthy to appreciate and enjoy the extraordinary mental powers, and the rare colloquial excellence of each other. But the constitutional shyness of the poet conspired with the present infirm state of Mrs. Unwin to prevent their meeting. He sent Mr. Rose and me to make his apology for declining so honourable an invitation. After a visit to Althorpe, where we had nothing to regret but the absence of Cowper, I returned to devote myself to him, when his younger guests were departed. Our social employment, at this season, he has very cheerfully described in the following letter to Mrs. Courteney.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

To Mrs. COURTENEY.

Weston, Nov. 4, 1793.

I seldom rejoice in a day of soaking rain like this; but in this, my dearest Catharina, I do rejoice sincerely, because it affords me an opportunity of writing to you, which, if fair weather had invited us into the orchard walk at the usual hour, I should not have easily found. I am a most busy man, busy to a degree that sometimes half distracts me; but if complete distraction be occasioned by having the thoughts too much and too long attached to a single point, I am in no danger of it, with such a perpetual whirl are mine whisked about from one subject to another. When two poets meet there are fine doings, I can assure you. My Homer finds work for Hayley, and his Life of

Milton work for me, so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin, in the mean time, sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is constantly rewarded by me, with a "Hush—hold your peace."——Bless yourself, my dear Catharina, that you are not connected with a poet, especially that you have not two to deal with: ladies who have may be bidden, indeed, to hold their peace, but very little peace have they. How should they, in fact, have any, continually enjoined as they are to be silent?

* * * * * * * * * * *

The same fever that has been so epidemic there, has been severely felt here likewise: some have died, and a multitude have been in danger. Two under our own roof have been infected with it, and I am not sure that I have perfectly escaped myself, but I am now well again.

I have persuaded Hayley to stay a week longer, and again my hopes revive that he may yet have an opportunity to know my friends before he returns into Sussex.—I write amidst a chaos of interruptions. Hayley on the hand spouts Greek, and on the other hand Mrs. Unwin continues talking, sometimes to us, and sometimes, because we are both too busy to attend to her, she holds a dialogue with herself. Quere—Is not this a bull? and ought I not, instead of dialogue, to have said soliloquy?

Adieu. With our united love to all your party, and with ardent wishes soon to see you all at Weston, I remain, my dearest Catharina, ever yours,

W. C.

Cowper entreated me, with great kindness, to remain the whole winter at Weston, and engage with him in a regular and complete revisal of his Homer. I wanted not inclination for an office so agreeable; but it struck me that I might render much more essential service to the poet, as I returned through London, by quickening in the minds of his more powerful friends a seasonable attention to his interest and welfare. My fears for him, in every point of view, were alarmed by his present very singular condition. He possessed completely, at this period, all the admirable faculties of his mind, and all the native tenderness of his heart; but there was something indescribable in his appearance, which led me to apprehend that without some signal event in his favour to re-animate his spirits, they would gradually sink into hopeless dejection. The

state of his aged, infirm companion afforded additional ground for increasing solicitude. Her cheerful and beneficent spirit could hardly resist her own accumulated maladies so far as to preserve ability sufficient to watch over the tender health of him whom she had watched and guarded so long. Imbecility of body and mind must gradually render this tender and heroic woman unfit for the charge which she had so laudably sustained. The signs of such imbecility were beginning to be painfully visible: nor can nature present a spectacle more truly pitiable than imbecility in such a shape, eagerly grasping for dominion which it knows not either how to retain or how to relinquish.

I left Weston in November, painfully anxious for the alarming state of my two friends, and I was so unfortunate as to add to their complicated troubles some degree of inquietude for my health. A slight attack of an epidemical fever had rather hastened than retarded my departure; but my indisposition proved more serious than I had supposed it to be; and instead of being able to execute some literary commissions for Cowper in London, with the alacrity which affection suggests, I was obliged to inform him that I was confined by illness. He wrote to me immediately, with the tenderness peculiar to himself, and my reviving health soon enabled me to enliven his apprehensive mind, not only with an account of my recovery, but with intelligence relating to his own literary engagements that had a tendency to relieve his spirits from a considerable part of their present embarrassment and dejection. His next letter to one of his confidential friends contains a very cheerful and just description of his favourite residence.

LETTER LXXXIX.

To JOSEPH HILL, Esquire.

November 5, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In a letter from Lady Hesketh, which I received not long since, she informed me how very pleasantly she had spent some time at Wargrove. We now begin to expect her here, where our charms of situation are, perhaps, not equal to yours, yet by no means contemptible. She told me she had spoken to you in very handsome terms of the country round about us, but not so of our house, and the view before it. The house itself, however, is not unworthy some commendation; small as it is, it is neat, and neater than she is aware of; for my study and the room over it have been repaired and beautified this summer, and little more was wanting to make it an abode sufficiently commo-

dious for a man of my moderate desires. As to the prospect from it, that she misrepresented strangely, as I hope soon to have an opportunity to convince her by ocular demonstration. She told you, I know, of certain cottages opposite to us, or rather she described them as poor houses and hovels, that effectually blind our windows. But none such exist. On the contrary, the opposite object, and the only one, is an orchard, so well planted, and with trees of such growth, that we seem to look into a wood, or rather to be surrounded by one. Thus, placed as we are in the midst of a village, we have none of the disagreeables that belong to such a position; and the village itself is one of the prettiest I know; terminated at one end by the church-tower, seen through trees, and at the other by a very handsome gateway, opening into a fine grove of elms, belonging to our neighbour Courteney. How happy should I be to show it instead of describing it to you!

Adieu, my dear friend. W. C.

LETTER XC.

To the Reverend Mr. HURDIS.

Weston, November 24, 1793.

My dear Sir,

Though my congratulations have been delayed, you have no friend, numerous as your friends are, who has more sincerely rejoiced in your success than I. It was no small mortification to me to find that three of the six whom I had engaged, were not qualified to vote. You have prevailed, however, and by a considerable majority; there is, therefore, no room left for regret. When your short note arrived, which gave me the agreeable news of your victory, our friend of Eartham was with me, and shared largely in the joy that I felt on the occasion. He left me but a few days since, having spent somewhat more than a fortnight here; during which time we employed all our leisure hours in the revisal of his Life of Milton. It is now finished, and a very finished work it is; and one that will do great honour, I am persuaded, to the biographer, and the excellent man, of injured memory, who is the subject of it. As to my own concern with the works of this first of poets, which has long been a matter of burthensome contemplation, I have the happiness to find, at last, that I am at liberty to postpone my labours. While I expected that my commentary would be called for in the ensuing spring, I looked forward to the undertaking with dismay, not seeing a shadow of probability that I should be ready to answer the demand: for this ultimate revisal of my Homer, together with the notes,

occupies completely at present (and will for some time longer) all the little leisure that I have for study—leisure which I gain at this season of the year, by rising long before day-light.

You are now become a nearer neighbour, and as your professorship, I hope, will not engross you wholly, will find an opportunity to give me your company at Weston. Let me hear from you soon; tell me how you like your new office, and whether you perform the duties of it with pleasure to yourself. With much pleasure to others you will, I doubt not, and with equal advantage.

W. C.

LETTER XCI.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

Weston, Nov. 29, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have risen, while the owls are still hooting, to pursue my accustomed labours in the mine of Homer; but before I enter upon them, shall give the first moment of day-light to the purpose of thanking you for your last letter, containing many pleasant articles of intelligence, with nothing to abate the pleasantness of them, except the single circumstance that we are not likely to see you here so soon as I expected. My hope was that the first frost would bring you, and the amiable painter with you: if, however, you are prevented by the business of your respective professions, you are well prevented, and I will endeavour to be patient. When the latter was here, he mentioned, one day, the subject of Diomede's horses driven under the axle of his chariot, by the thunder-bolt which fell at their feet, as a subject he had settled for his pencil. It is certainly a noble one, and therefore worthy of his study and attention. It occurred to me at the moment, but I know not what it was that made me forget it again the next moment, that the horses of Achilles flying over the foss, with Patroclus and Automedon in the chariot, would be a good companion for it. Should you happen to recollect this when you next see him, you may submit it, if you please, to his consideration. I stumbled yesterday on another subject, which reminded me of said excellent artist, as likely to afford a fine opportunity to the expression that he could give to it. It is found in the shooting-match, in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, between Mariones and Teucer. The former cuts the string with which the dove is tied to the mast-head, and sets her at liberty; the latter, standing at his side, in all the eagerness of emulation, points an arrow at the mark with his right hand, while, with his left, he snatches the bow from his com-

petitor. He is a fine poetical figure: but Mr. Lawrence himself must judge whether or not he promises as well for the canvass.

He does great honour to my physiognomy by his intention to get it engraved; and though I think I foresee that this *private publication* will grow, in time, into a publication of absolute publicity, I find it impossible to be dissatisfied with any thing that seems eligible both to him and you. To say the truth, when a man has once turned his mind inside out, for the inspection of all who choose to inspect it, to make a secret of his face seems but little better than a self-contradiction. At the same time, however, I shall be best pleased if it be kept, according to your intentions, as a rarity.

I have lost Hayley, and begin to be uneasy at not hearing from him: tell me about him when you write.

I should be happy to have a work of mine embellished by Lawrence, and made a companion for a work of Hayley's. It is an event to which I look forward with the utmost complacence. I cannot tell you what a relief I feel it, not to be pressed for Milton.

W. C.

LETTER XCII.

To SAMUEL ROSE, Esquire.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *December* 8, 1793.

In my last I forgot to thank you for the box of books, containing also the pamphlets. We have read, that is to say, my cousin has, who reads to us in an evening, the history of Jonathan Wild, and found it highly entertaining. The satire on great men is witty, and, I believe, perfectly just. We have no censure to pass on it, unless that we think the character of Mrs. Hartfree not well sustained; not quite delicate in the latter part of it; and that the constant effect of her charms upon every man who sees her has a sameness in it that is tiresome, and betrays either much carelessness, or idleness, or lack of invention. It is possible, indeed, that the author might intend, by this circumstance, a satirical glance at novelists, whose heroines are generally all bewitching; but it is a fault that he had better have noticed in another manner, and not have exemplified in his own.

The first volume of *Man as he is*, has lain unread in my study window this twelvemonth, and would have been returned unread to its owner, had not my cousin come in good time to save it from that disgrace. We are now reading it, and find it excellent; abounding with wit and just sentiment, and knowledge both of books and men. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XCIII.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

December 8, 1793.

I have waited, and waited impatiently, for a line from you, and am at last determined to send you one, to inquire what is become of you, and why you are silent so much longer than usual.

I want to know many things which only you can tell me, but especially I want to know what has been the issue of your conference with Nichol: has he seen your work? I am impatient for the appearance of it, because impatient to have the spotless credit of the great poet's character, as a man and a citizen, vindicated as it ought to be, and as it never will be again.

It is a great relief to me that my Miltonic labours are suspended. I am now busy in transcribing the alterations of Homer, having finished the whole revisal. I must then write a new preface, which done I shall endeavour immediately to descant on *The four Ages*. Adieu, my dear brother.

W. C.

The reader may now be anxious to learn some particulars of the projected poem, which has been repeatedly mentioned under the title of "*The four Ages;*" a poem to which the mind of Cowper looked eagerly forward, as to a new and highly promising field for his excursive and benevolent fancy. The idea had been suggested to him in the year 1791, by a very amiable clerical neighbour, Mr. Buchanan, who, in the humble curacy of Ravenstone, (a little sequestered village within a distance of an easy walk from Weston) possesses, in a scene of rustic privacy, such extensive scholarship, such gentleness of manners, and such a contemplative dignity of mind, as would certainly raise him to a more suitable, and, indeed, to a conspicuous situation, if the professional success of a divine were the immediate consequence of exemplary merit. This gentleman, who had occasionally enjoyed the gratification of visiting Cowper, suggested to him, with a becoming diffidence, the project of a new poem on the four distinct periods of life, infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. He imparted his ideas to the poet by a letter, in which he observed, with equal modesty and truth, that Cowper was particularly qualified to relish and to do justice to the subject; a subject which he supposed not hitherto treated expressly, as its importance deserves, by any poet, ancient or modern.

Mr. Buchanan added to this letter a brief sketch of contents for the projected composition. This hasty sketch he enlarged by the kind encouragement of Cowper. How cheerfully the poet received the idea, and how liberally he applauded the worthy divine who suggested it, will appear from the following billet, written immediately on the receipt of the more ample sketch.

To the Reverend Mr. BUCHANAN.

Weston, May 11, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to heaven that you would give it that requisite yourself; for he who could make the sketch, cannot but be well qualified to finish. But if you will not, I will, provided always, nevertheless, that God gives me ability; for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions. I am much yours,

W. C.

Your little messenger vanished before I could catch him.

Various impediments rendered it hardly possible for Cowper to devote himself as he wished to do to the immediate prosecution of a plan so promising; yet he cherished the idea for some years in his mind, and was particularly pleased (as the reader may recollect from a passage in one of his letters to me) with a prospect that this intended poem might form a portion of a very ample original confederate work, which we hoped to produce in concert with the united powers of some admirable artists, who were justly dear to us both.

All who delight to accompany the genius of Cowper in animated flights of moral contemplation, will deeply regret that he was precluded, by a variety of trouble, from indulging his ardent imagination in a work that would have afforded him such ample scope for all the sweetness and all the sublimity of his spirit. His felicity of description, and his exquisite sensibility; his experience of life, and his sanctity of character, rendered him singularly fit and worthy to delineate the progress of nature in all the different stages of human existence.

A poem of such extent and diversity, happily completed by such a poet, would be a national treasure of infinite value to the country that gave it birth, and I had fervently hoped that England might receive it from the hand of Cowper.

With a regret proportioned to those hopes I now impart to my readers the minute and imperfect fragment of a project so mighty. Yet even the few verses which Cowper had thrown on paper, as the commencement of such a work, will be read with peculiar interest, if there is truth, as I feel there is, in the following remark of the elder Pliny.

" Suprema opera artificum, imperfectasque Tabulas, in majori " admiratione esse quam perfecta; Quippe in iis lineamenta reli- " qua ipsæque cogitationes artificum spectantur, atque in lenoci- " nio commendationis dolor est:—Manus, cum id agerent extinctæ, " desiderantur."

THE FOUR AGES.

A brief Fragment of an extensive projected Poem.

" I could be well content, allow'd the use
" Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd
" From worn-out follies, now acknowledg'd such,
" To re-commence life's trial, in the hope
" Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"

Thus, while grey evening lull'd the wind, and call'd
Fresh odours from the shrubb'ry at my side,
Taking my lonely winding walk I mus'd,
And held accustom'd conference with my heart;
When, from within it, thus a voice replied.

" Could'st thou in truth? and art thou taught at length
" This wisdom, and but this from all the past?
" Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,
" Time wasted, violated laws, abuse
" Of talents, judgments, mercies, better far
" Than opportunity vouchsaf'd to err
" With less excuse, and haply, worse effect?"

I heard, and acquiesced: Then to and fro
Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,
My grav'lly bounds, from self to human kind
I pass'd, and next consider'd—What is Man?

Knows he his origin?—Can he ascend
By reminiscence to his earliest date?

Slept he in Adam? and in those from him
Through num'rous generations, till he found,
At length, his destin'd moment to be born?
Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?
Deep myst'ries both, which schoolmen must have toil'd
To unriddle, and have left them myst'ries still.

It is an evil incident to man,
And of the worst, that unexplor'd he leaves
Truths useful, and attainable with ease,
To search forbidden deeps, where myst'ry lies
Not to be solv'd, and useless if it might.
Myst'ries are food for Angels; they digest
With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
His manna from the ground, or starve, and die.

It may, in some degree, alleviate the regret which lovers of poetry must feel that this interesting project was never accomplished by Cowper, to be informed that a modern poem on the four Ages of Man was written by M. Werthmuller, a citizen of Zurich, and translated into Latin verse by Dr. Olstrochi, librarian to the Ambrosian library at Milan. This performance gave rise to another German poem on the four Ages of Women, by M. Zacharie, professor of poetry at Brunswick, an elegant little work, that breathes a spirit of tenderness and piety.

The increasing infirmities of Cowper's aged companion, Mrs. Unwin, his filial solicitude to alleviate her sufferings, and the gathering clouds of deeper despondency that began to settle on his mind in the first month of the year 1794, not only rendered it impossible for him to advance in any great original performance, but, to use his own expressive words in the close of his correspondence with his highly valued friend Mr. Rose, made all composition, either of poetry or prose, impracticable. Writing to that friend in January, 1794, he says, "I have just ability enough to transcribe, which is all that I have to do at present: God knows that I write, at this moment, under the pressure of sadness not to be described."

It was a spectacle that might awaken compassion in the sternest of human characters, to see the health, the comfort, and the little fortune of a man so distinguished by intellectual endowments and by moral excellence, perishing most deplorably. A sight so affecting made many friends of Cowper solicitous and importunate that his declining life should be honourably protected by public munifi-

cence. Men of all parties agreed that a pension might be granted to an author of his acknowledged merit with graceful propriety, and we might apply to him, on this topic, the very expressive words which the poet Claudian addresses, on a different occasion, to his favourite hero:

Suffragia Vulgi
Jam tibi detulerant, quidquid mox debuit aula.

It was devoutly to be wished, that the declining spirits of Cowper should be speedily animated and sustained by assistance of this nature, because the growing influence of melancholy not only filled him with distressing ideas of his own fortune, but threatened to rob him of the power to make any kind of exertion in his own behalf. His situation and his merits were perfectly understood, humanely felt, and honourably acknowledged by persons who, while they declared that he ought to receive an immediate public support, seemed to possess both the inclination and the power to ensure it. But such is the difficulty of doing real good, experienced even by the great and the powerful, or so apt are statesmen to forget the pressing exigence of meritorious individuals, in the distractions of official perplexity, that month after month elapsed, in which the intimate friends of Cowper confidently, yet vainly expected to see him happily rescued from some of the darkest evils impending over him, by an honourable provision for life.

Imagination can hardly devise any human condition more truly affecting than the state of the poet at this period. His generous and faithful guardian, Mrs. Unwin, who had preserved him through seasons of the severest calamity, was now, with her faculties and fortune impaired, sinking fast into second childhood. The distress of heart that he felt in beholding the cruel change in a companion so justly dear to him, conspiring with his constitutional melancholy, was gradually undermining the exquisite faculties of his mind. But deprest as he was by these complicated afflictions, Providence was far from deserting this excellent man. His female relation, whose regard he had cultivated as his favourite correspondent, now devoted herself very nobly to the superintendence of a house, whose two interesting inhabitants were rendered, by age and trouble, almost incapable of attending to the ordinary offices of life.

Those only who have lived with the superannuated and the melancholy, can properly appreciate the value of such magnanimous friendship, or perfectly apprehend what personal sufferings it must cost the mortal who exerts it, if that mortal has received from

nature a frame of compassionate sensibility. The lady to whom I allude has felt but two severely, in her own health, the heavy tax that mortality is forced to pay for a resolute perseverance in such painful duty.

The two last of Cowper's letters to me, that breathe a spirit of mental activity and cheerful friendship, were written in the close of the year 1793 and in the beginning of the next. They arose from an incident that it may be proper to relate before I insert the letters.

On my return from Weston I had given an account of the poet to his old friend Lord Thurlow. That learned and powerful critic, in speaking of Cowper's Homer, happened to declare himself not satisfied with his version of Hector's admirable prayer in caressing his child. We both ventured on new translations of the prayer, which I sent immediately to Cowper, and the following letters will prove with what just and manly freedom of spirit he was at this time able to criticise the composition of his friends and his own.

LETTER XCIV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

December 17, 1793.

Oh Jove! and all ye gods! grant this my son
To prove, like me, pre-eminent in Troy!
In valour such, and firmness of command!
Be he extoll'd, when he returns from fight,
As far his Sire's superior! may he slay
His enemy, bring home his gory spoils,
And may his mother's heart o'erflow with joy!

I rose this morning at six o'clock, on purpose to translate this prayer again, and to write to my dear brother. Here you have it, such as it is, not perfectly according to my own liking, but as well as I could make it, and I think better than either your's or Lord Thurlow's. You, with your six lines, have made yourself stiff and ungraceful, and he, with his seven, has produced as good prose as heart can wish, but no poetry at all. A scrupulous attention to the latter has spoiled you both; you have neither the spirit nor the manner of Homer. A portion of both may be found, I believe, in my version, but not so much as I could wish: it is better, however, than the printed one. His Lordship's two first lines I cannot very well understand: he seems to me to give a sense to the original that does not belong to it. Hector, I

apprehend, does not say, "Grant that he may prove himself my son, and be eminent," &c. but, "Grant that this my son may prove eminent;" which is a material difference. In the latter sense I find the simplicity of an ancient; in the former, that is to say, in the notion of a man's proving himself his father's son by similar merit, the finesse and dexterity of a modern. His Lordship, too, makes the man who gives the young hero his commendation the person who returns from battle; whereas Homer makes the young hero himself that person, at least if Clarke is a just interpreter, which I suppose is hardly to be disputed.

If my old friend would look into my preface, he would find a principle laid down there, which, perhaps, it would not be easy to invalidate, and which, properly attended to, would equally secure a translation from stiffness and from wildness. The principle I mean is this: "Close, but not so close as to be servile; free, but not so free as to be licentious." A superstitious fidelity loses the spirit, and a loose deviation the sense of the translated author—a happy moderation, in either case, is the only possible way of preserving both.

Thus have I disciplined you both, and now, if you please, you may both discipline me. I shall not enter my version in my book till it has undergone your strictures at least, and should you write to the noble critic again, you are welcome to submit it to his. We are three aukward fellows indeed, if we cannot amongst us make a tolerable good translation of six lines of Homer. Adieu.

W. C.

LETTER XCV.

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Weston, January 5, 1794.

My dear Hayley,

I have waited, but waited in vain, for a propitious moment when I might give my old friend's objections the consideration they deserve. I shall, at last, be forced to send a vague answer, unworthy to be sent to a person accustomed, like him, to close reasoning and abstruse discussion, for I rise after ill rest, and with a frame of mind perfectly unsuited to the occasion. I sit, too, at the window, for light sake, where I am so cold that my pen slips out of my fingers. First I will give you a translation, de novo, of this untranslatable prayer. It is shaped, as nearly as I could contrive, to his Lordship's ideas, but I have little hope that it will satisfy him.

Grant Jove, and all ye gods, that this, my son,
Be, as myself have been, illustrious here!
A valiant man! and let him reign in Troy!
May all who witness his return from fight
Hereafter, say—He far excels his sire;
And let him bring back gory trophies, stript
From foes slain by him, to his mother's joy.

Imlac, in Rasselas, says, I forget to whom, "You have convinced me that it is impossible to be a poet." In like manner I might say to his Lordship, you have convinced me that it is impossible to be a translator. To be a translator, on his terms at least, is, I am sure, impossible. On his terms I would defy Homer himself, were he alive, to translate the Paradise Lost into Greek. Yet Milton had Homer much in his eye, when he composed that poem: whereas Homer never thought of me or my translation. There are minutiæ in every language, which, transfused into another, will spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is, in fact, unfaithful. Such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, unnatural. To what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose; and of a context, such as no man writing an original work would make use of. Homer is every thing that a poet should be. A translation of Homer so made, will be every thing that a translation of Homer should not be; because it will be written in no language under heaven. It will be English, and it will be Greek, and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he be, (I do not pretend to be that man myself) he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who has drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius, till he has imbibed their colour to the bone, and who, when he is thus dyed through and through, distinguishing between what is essentially Greek, and what may be habited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the latter, as far as the purposes of fine poetry will permit, and no farther. This, I think, may be easily proved. Homer is every where remarkable either for ease, dignity, or energy of expression; for grandeur of conception, and a majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as to make every one of these excellent properties of his absolutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of too close a copy, instead of translating we murder him. Therefore, after all that his Lordship has said, I still hold freedom to be an indispensible. Freedom, I mean, with respect to the expression; freedom so limited, as never to leave behind the *matter;* but at the same time indulged with a

sufficient scope to secure the spirit, and as much as possible of the manner. I say as much as possible, because an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order to be graceful; and for this there is no remedy. Can an ungraceful, aukward translation of Homer be a good one? No: but a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him—will not that be a good one? Yes: allow me but this, and I insist upon it that such a one may be produced on my principles, and can be produced on no other.

I have not had time to criticise his Lordship's other version. You know how little time I have for any thing, and can tell him so.

Adieu, my dear brother. I have now tired both you and myself; and, with the love of the whole trio, remain yours ever,

W. C.

Reading his Lordship's sentiments over again, I am inclined to think, that in all I have said I have only given him back the same in other terms. He disallows both the absolute *free*, and the absolute *close:* so do I; and, if I understand myself, have said so in my preface. He wishes or recommends a medium, though he will not call it so: so do I; only we express it differently. What is it, then, that we dispute about? My head is not good enough to-day to discover.

These letters were followed by such a silence on the part of my invaluable correspondent, as filled me with the severest apprehensions: because I well knew that, while he retained any glimmerings of mental health, his affectionate spirit was eager to unburthen itself to a friend, of whose sympathy, in all his sufferings, he was perfectly assured. The accounts of him with which I was favoured by his amiable relation (who, shocked as she was by the helpless state and deplorable infirmities of Mrs. Unwin, now resided with these piteous invalids,) increased my anxiety for my dejected and silent friend.

Little as the probability appeared that my presence could render him any essential service, I was induced to visit Weston once more, by the following friendly exhortation, in a letter from Cowper's compassionate neighbour, Mr. Greatheed—the clergyman whom Cowper himself had taught me to esteem on our first acquaintance.

From the Reverend Mr. GREATHEED,

To WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esquire.

Newport-Pagnel, April 8, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Lady Hesketh's correspondence acquainted you with the melancholy relapse of our dear friend at Weston; but I am uncertain whether you know that, in the last fortnight, he has refused food of every kind, except now and then a very small piece of toasted bread, dipped generally in water, sometimes mixed with a little wine. This, her Ladyship informs me, was the case till last Saturday, since when he has eat a little at each family meal. He persists in refusing such medicines as are indispensible to his state of body. In such circumstances, his long continuance in life cannot be expected. How devoutly to be wished is the alleviation of his danger and distress! You, dear Sir, who know so well the worth of our beloved and admired friend, sympathize with his affliction, and deprecate his loss, doubtless, in no ordinary degree. You have already most effectually expressed and proved the warmth of your friendship. I cannot think that any thing but your society would have been sufficient, during the infirmity under which his mind has long been oppressed, to have supported him against the shock of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic attack. I am certain that nothing else could have prevailed upon him to undertake the journey to Eartham. You have succeeded where his other friends knew they could not, and where they apprehended no one could. How natural, therefore, nay, how reasonable is it for them to look to you, as most likely to be instrumental, under the blessing of God, for relief in the present distressing and alarming crisis? It is, indeed, scarcely attemptable to ask any person to take such a journey, and involve himself in so melancholy a scene, with an uncertainty of the desired success—increased as the apparent difficulty is by dear Mr. Cowper's aversion to all company, and by poor Mrs. Unwin's mental and bodily infirmities. On these accounts Lady Hesketh dares not ask it of you, rejoiced as she would be at your arrival. Am not I, dear Sir, a very presumptuous person, who, in the face of all opposition, dare do this? I am emboldened by those two powerful supporters, conscience and experience. Was I at Eartham, I would certainly undertake the labour I presume to recommend, for the bare possibility of restoring Mr. Cowper to himself, to his friends, to the public, and to God.

The benevolent wishes of this sincere and fervent advocate for genius and virtue, sinking under calamity, were far from being accomplished by my arrival at Weston. My unhappy friend was too much overwhelmed by his oppressive malady, to show even the least glimmering of satisfaction at the appearance of a guest whom he used to receive with the most lively expressions of affectionate delight.

It is the nature of this tremendous melancholy not only to enshroud and stifle the finest faculties of the mind, but it suspends, and apparently annihilates for a time, the strongest and best-rooted affections of the heart. I had frequent and painful occasion to observe, in this affecting visit to my suffering friend, that he seemed to shrink, at times, from every human creature, except from the gentle voice of my son.

This exception I attributed partly to the peculiar charm which is generally found in the manners of tender ingenuous children, and partly to that uncommon sweetness of character which had inspired Cowper with a degree of parental partiality towards this highly promising youth.

I had hoped, indeed, that his influence, at this season, might be superior to my own, over the dejected spirit of my friend; but though it was so to a considerable degree, our united efforts to cheer and amuse him were utterly frustrated by his calamitous depression.

I may yet hope that my distressing visit to this very dear sufferer was productive of some little good. My presence afforded an opportunity to his excellent relation, Lady Hesketh, who acted at this time as his immediate guardian, to quit her charge for a few days, that she might have a personal conference concerning him with the eminent Dr. Willis. A friendly letter from Lord Thurlow to that celebrated physician had requested his attention to the highly interesting sufferer. Dr. Willis prescribed for Cowper, and saw him at Weston; but not with that success and felicity which made his medical skill, on another most awful occasion, the source of national delight and exultation.

Indeed, the extraordinary state of Cowper appeared to abound with circumstances very unfavourable to his mental relief. The daily sight of a being reduced to such deplorable imbecility as now overwhelmed Mrs. Unwin was, in itself, sufficient to plunge a tender spirit in extreme melancholy; yet to separate two friends so long accustomed to minister, with the purest and most vigilant benevolence, to the infirmities of each other, was a measure so pregnant with complicated distraction, that it could not be advised or attempted. It remained only to palliate the sufferings of each,

in their present most pitiable condition, and to trust in the mercy of that God who had supported them together through periods of very dark affliction, though not so doubly deplorable as the present.

I had formerly regarded Weston as a scene that exhibited human nature in a most delightful point of view: I had applauded there no common triumphs of genius and of friendship. The contrast that I now contemplated has often led me to repeat (with such feelings as those only who have surveyed a contrast so deplorable can perfectly conceive) the following pathetic exclamation in the Sampson Agonistes of Milton:

"God of our Fathers, what is man!
* * * * * * *
"Since such as Thou hast solemnly elected,
"With gifts and graces eminently adorned;
* * * * * * *
"Yet towards these thus dignified, Thou oft,
"Amidst their height of noon,
"Changest thy count'nance, and thy hand, with no regard
"Of highest favours past
"From Thee on them, or them to Thee of service.
* * * * * * * *
"So deal not with this once thy glorious champion!
"What do I beg? How hast thou dealt already!
"Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
"His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end!"

In the spirit of this prayer every being sympathized who had enjoyed a personal acquaintance with Cowper in his happier days, or felt the beneficent influence of his unclouded mind. But, for reasons inscrutable to human apprehension, it was the will of Heaven that this admirable and meritorious invalid should pass through a length of sufferings, on which I am very far from being disposed to detain the attention of my reader:

"Animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit."

I shall therefore only say, that although it has been my lot to be acquainted with affliction in a variety of shapes, I hardly ever felt the anguish of sympathy with an afflicted friend in a severer degree than during the few weeks that I passed with Cowper at this season of his sufferings. The pain that I endured from this sympathy was, I believe, very visible in my features, and it obtained

for me, from his excellent, accomplished neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Courteney, the most delicate and endearing attention; kindness so peculiarly consoling, that I can never cease to remember, and to speak of it with gratitude, while the faculty of memory remains to me.

Indeed, as my own health had been much shattered by a series of troubles, it would probably have sunk utterly under the pressure of this distressing scene, had not some comforts of a very soothing nature been providentially blended with the calamities of my friend.

It was on the twenty-third of April, 1794, in one of those melancholy mornings when his compassionate relation, Lady Hesketh, and myself, were watching together over this dejected sufferer, that a letter from Lord Spencer arrived at Weston, to announce the intended grant of such a pension from his Majesty to Cowper, as would ensure an honourable competence for the residue of his life. This intelligence produced in the friends of the poet very lively emotions of delight, yet blended with pain almost as powerful; for it was painful, in no trifling degree, to reflect, that these desirable smiles of good fortune could not impart even a faint glimmering of joy to the dejected invalid.

His friends, however, had the animating hope, that a day would arrive when they might see him receive, with a cheerful and joyful gratitude, this royal recompence for merit universally acknowledged. They knew that, when he recovered his suspended faculties, he must be particularly pleased to find himself chiefly indebted for his good fortune to the active benevolence of that nobleman who, though not personally acquainted with Cowper, stood, of all his noble friends, the highest in his esteem.

Indeed, it is a justice due to the great to declare, that many of them concurred in promoting, on this occasion, the interest of the poet; and they spoke of him with a truth, and liberality of praise, that did honour both to him and to themselves. It is not often that Majesty has opportunities of granting a reward for literary merit, where the individual who receives it has so clear and unquestionable a title, both to royal munificence and to popular affection. But the heart and spirit of Cowper were eminently loyal and patriotic. He has spoken occasionally of his sovereign in verse, with personal regard, but without a shadow of servility: and his poetry abounds with eloquent and just descriptions of that double duty which an Englishman owes to the crown and to the people.

Perhaps no poet has more clearly and forcibly delineated the respective duties that belong both to subjects and to sovereigns: I allude to an admirable passage on this topic in the fifth book of

the Task. It is time to return to the sufferer at Weston. He was unhappily disabled from feeling the favour he received, but an annuity of three hundred a year was graciously secured to him, and rendered payable to his friend Mr. Rose, as the trustee of Cowper.

After devoting a few weeks to Weston, I was under a painful necessity of forcing myself away from my unhappy friend, who, though he appeared to take no pleasure in my society, expressed extreme reluctance to let me depart. I hardly ever endured an hour more dreadfully distressing than the hour in which I left him. Yet the anguish of it would have been greatly increased, had I been conscious that he was destined to years of this dark depression, and that I should see him no more. I still hoped, from the native vigour of his frame, that, as he had formerly struggled through longer fits of this oppressive malady, his darkened mind would yet emerge from this calamitous eclipse, and shine forth again with new lustre. These hopes were considerably increased at a subsequent period; but, alas! they were delusive: for, although he recovered sufficient command of his faculties to write a few occasional poems, and to retouch his Homer, yet the prospect of his perfect recovery was never realized. I had beheld the poet of unrivalled genius, the sympathetic friend, and the delightful companion, for the last time; and I must now relate the gloomy residue of his life, not from my own personal observation, but from the faithful account of his young kinsman of Norfolk, who devoted himself to the care of this beloved sufferer, and persevered to the last in that delicate and awful charge.

From this time, when I left my unhappy friend at Weston, in the spring of the year 1794, he remained there, under the tender vigilance of his affectionate relation, Lady Hesketh, till the latter end of July, 1795; a long season of the darkest depression, in which the best medical advice, and the influence of time, appeared equally unable to lighten that afflictive burthen which pressed incessantly on his spirits.

At this period it became absolutely necessary to make a great and painful exertion, for the mental relief of the various sufferers at Weston. Mrs. Unwin was sinking very fast into second childhood; the health of Lady Hesketh was much impaired; and the dejection of Cowper was so severe, that a change of scene was considered as essential to the preservation of his life.

Under circumstances so deplorable, his kinsman at Norfolk most tenderly and generously undertook to conduct the two venerable invalids from Buckinghamshire into Norfolk, and so to regulate their future lives, that every possible expedient might be tried for the recovery of his revered relation.

It is hardly possible for friendship to undertake a charge more delicate and arduous, or to sustain all the pains that must necessarily attend it, with a more constant exertion of gentle fortitude and affectionate fidelity.

The local attachment of Cowper to his favourite village of Weston was strong in no common degree, and rendered his migration from it, though an event of medical necessity, yet a scene of peculiar sufferings. Those who knew his passionate attachment to that pleasant village, how deeply he lamented his absence from it, and how little he gained by a change of situation, though considered as important to the revival of his health, can hardly help regretting that he did not close his days in that favourite scene, and find, at last, according to the wish that he tenderly expresses in the conclusion of the Task,

"A safe retreat
"Beneath the turf that he had often trod."

But painful and unprofitable as it proved in a medical point of view, his removal from Weston was very properly considered, by his relations, as an act of imperious duty. He quitted it with affectionate reluctance; and perhaps I cannot more forcibly express both the regard of Cowper, and my own regard for that endearing scene, than by introducing, at this time, when we are taking leave of Weston for ever, a little poem, that I believe to be the last original work which he produced in that beloved abode. The poem describes not his residence, but the increasing infirmities of that aged companion who had so long contributed to his domestic comfort. I question if any language on earth can exhibit a specimen of verse more exquisitely tender.

To MARY.

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast—
Ah, would that this might be the last,
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

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Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disus'd, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly would'st fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part;
And all thy threads, with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet, gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now, at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill;
In wint'ry age to feel no chill,
With me, is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

On Tuesday the twenty-eighth of July, 1795, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin removed, under the care and guidance of Mr. Johnson, from Weston to North-Tuddenham, in Norfolk, by a journey of three days, passing through Cambridge without stopping there. In the evening of the first day they rested at the village of Eaton, near St. Neot's. Cowper walked, with his young kinsman, in the church-yard, by moon-light, and spoke of the poet Thomson with more composure of mind than he had discovered for many months.

This conversation was almost his last glimmering of cheerfulness.

At North-Tuddenham the travellers were accommodated with a commodious, untenanted parsonage-house, by the kindness of the Reverend Leonard Shelford. Here they resided till the nineteenth of August. It was the considerate intention of Mr. Johnson not to remove the two invalids immediately to his own house in the town of East-Dereham, lest the situation, in a market-place, should be distressing to the tender spirits of Cowper.

In their new temporary residence they were received by Miss Johnson and Miss Perowne: and here I am irresistibly led to remark the kindness of Providence towards Cowper, in his darkest seasons of calamity, by supplying him with attendants peculiarly suited to the exigences of mental dejection.

Miss Perowne is one of those excellent beings whom nature seems to have formed expressly for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of the afflicted: tenderly vigilant in providing for the wants of sickness, and resolutely firm in administering such relief as the most intelligent compassion can supply. Cowper speedily observed and felt the invaluable virtues of his new attendant; and, during the last years of his life, he honoured her so far as to prefer her personal assistance to that of every individual around him.

Severe as his depressive malady appeared at this period, he was still able to bear considerable exercise; and before he left Tuddenham, he walked, with Mr. Johnson, to the neighbouring village of

Mattishall, on a visit to his cousin, Mrs. Bodham. On surveying his own portrait by Abbot, in the house of that lady, he clasped his hands in a paroxysm of pain, and uttered a vehement wish, that his present sensations might be such as they were when that picture was painted. In August, 1795, Mr. Johnson conducted his two invalids to Mundsley, a village on the Norfolk coast, in the hope that a situation by the sea-side might prove salutary and amusing to Cowper. They continued to reside there till October, but without any apparent benefit to the health of the interesting sufferer.

He had long relinquished epistolary intercourse with his most intimate friends, but his tender solicitude to hear some tidings of his favourite Weston induced him, in September, to write a letter to Mr. Buchanan. It shows the severity of his depression, but shows, also, that faint gleams of pleasure could occasionally break through the settled darkness of melancholy.

He begins with a poetical quotation:

'To interpose a little ease,
'Let my frail thoughts dally with false surmise!'

"I will forget, for a moment, that to whomsoever I may address myself, a letter from me can no otherwise be welcome than as a curiosity. To you, Sir, I address this, urged to it by extreme penury of employment, and the desire I feel to learn something of what is doing, and has been done, at Weston (my beloved Weston!) since I left it.

"The coldness of these blasts, even in the hottest days, has been such, that, added to the irritation of the salt-spray with which they are always charged, they have occasioned me an inflammation in the eye-lids, which threatened, a few days since, to confine me entirely; but, by absenting myself as much as possible from the beach, and guarding my face with an umbrella, that inconvenience is, in some degree, abated. My chamber commands a very near view of the ocean, and the ships at high water approach the coast so closely, that a man, furnished with better eyes than mine, might, I doubt not, discern the sailors from the window. No situation, at least when the weather is clear and bright, can be pleasanter; which you will easily credit, when I add, that it imparts something a little resembling pleasure even to me.——Gratify me with news of Weston!——If Mr. Gregson and your neighbours, the Courteneys, are there, mention me to them in such terms as you see good. Tell me if my poor birds are living! I never see the herbs I used to give them without

a recollection of them, and sometimes am ready to gather them, forgetting that I am not at home.—Pardon this intrusion!

" Mrs. Unwin continues much as usual.

" *Mundsley, Sept. 5,* 1795."

The compassionate and accomplished clergyman to whom this letter is addressed, endeavoured, with great tenderness and ingenuity, to allure his dejected friend to prolong a correspondence that seemed to promise some little alleviation to his melancholy: but that cruel distemper baffled all the various expedients that could be devised to counteract its overwhelming influence.

Much hope was entertained from air and exercise, with a frequent change of scene.—In September Mr. Johnson conducted his kinsman (to the promotion of whose recovery he devoted all the faculties of his affectionate spirit) to take a survey of Dunham-Lodge, a seat that happened to be vacant: it is seated on a high ground, in a park, about four miles from Swaffham. Cowper spoke of it as a house rather too spacious for him, yet such as he was not unwilling to inhabit; a remark that induced Mr. Johnson, at a subsequent period, to become the tenant of this mansion, as a scene more eligible for Cowper than the town of Dereham. This town they also surveyed in their excursion; and, after passing a night there, returned to Mundsley, which they quitted for the season on the seventh of October.

They removed immediately to Dereham; but left it in the course of the month for Dunham-Lodge, which now became their settled residence.

The spirits of Cowper were not sufficiently revived to allow him to resume either his pen or his books; but the kindness of his young kinsman continued to furnish him with inexhaustible amusement, by reading to him, almost incessantly, a series of novels, which, although they did not lead him to converse on what he heard, yet failed not to rivet his attention, and so to prevent his afflicted mind from preying on itself.

In April, 1796, the good, infirm old lady, whose infirmities continued to engage the tender attention of Cowper, even in his darkest periods of depression, received a visit from her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Powley. On their departure, Mr. Johnson assumed the office which Mrs. Powley had tenderly performed for her venerable parent, and regularly read a chapter in the Bible every morning to Mrs. Unwin before she rose. It was the invariable custom of Cowper to visit his poor old friend the

moment he had finished his breakfast, and to remain in her apartment while the chapter was read.

In June the pressure of his melancholy appeared to be in some little degree alleviated, for on Mr. Johnson's receiving the edition of Pope's Homer, published by Mr. Wakefield, Cowper eagerly seized the book, and began to read the notes to himself with visible interest. They awakened his attention to his own version of Homer. In August he deliberately engaged in a revisal of the whole, and for some time produced almost sixty new lines a day.

This mental occupation animated all his intimate friends with a most lively hope of his speedy and perfect recovery. But autumn repressed the hope that summer had excited.

In September the family removed from Dunham-Lodge to try again the influence of the sea-side, in their favourite village of Mundsley.

Cowper walked frequently by the sea; but no apparent benefit arose, no mild relief from the incessant pressure of his melancholy. He had relinquished his Homer again, and could not yet be induced to resume it.

Towards the end of October, this interesting family of disabled invalids, and their affectionate attendants, retired from the coast to the house of Mr. Johnson, in Dereham; a house now chosen for their winter residence, as Dunham-Lodge appeared to them too dreary.

The long and exemplary life of Mrs. Unwin was drawing towards a close:—The powers of nature were gradually exhausted, and on the seventeenth of December she ended a troubled existence, distinguished by a sublime spirit of piety and friendship, that shone through long periods of calamity, and continued to glimmer through the distressful twilight of her declining faculties. Her death was uncommonly tranquil. Cowper saw her about half an hour before the moment of expiration, which passed, without a struggle or a groan, as the clock was striking one in the afternoon.

On the morning of that day he said to the servant, who opened the window of his chamber, "Sally, is there life above stairs?" A striking proof of his bestowing incessant attention on the sufferings of his aged friend, although he had long appeared almost totally absorbed in his own.

In the dusk of the evening he attended Mr. Johnson to survey the corpse; and after looking at it a few moments, he started suddenly away, with a vehement but unfinished sentence of passionate sorrow.

He spoke of her no more.

She was buried by torch-light, on the twenty-third of December, in the north aisle of Dereham church; and two of her friends, impressed with a just and deep sense of her extraordinary merit, have raised a marble tablet to her memory, with the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF

MARY,

(Widow of the Reverend MORLEY UNWIN,
and Mother of the Reverend WILLIAM CAWTHORN UNWIN,)

Born at Ely, 1724—buried in this Church, 1796.

Trusting in God, with all her heart and mind,
This woman prov'd magnanimously kind;
Endur'd affliction's desolating hail,
And watch'd a poet through misfortune's vale.
Her spotless dust, angelic guards, defend!
It is the dust of Unwin, Cowper's friend!
That single title in itself is fame,
For all who read his verse revere her name.

The infinitely tender and deep sense of gratitude that Cowper, in his seasons of health, invariably manifested towards this zealous and faithful guardian of his troubled existence; the agonies he suffered on our finding her under the oppression of a paralytic disease, during my first visit to Weston; and all his expressions to me concerning the comfort and support that his spirits had derived from her friendship,—all made me peculiarly anxious to know how he sustained the event of her death. It may be regarded as an instance of providential mercy to this afflicted poet, whose sensibility of heart was so wonderfully acute, that his aged friend, whose life he had so long considered as essential to his own, was taken from him at a time when the pressure of his malady, a perpetual low fever, both of body and mind, had, in a great degree, diminished the native energy of his faculties and affections.

Severe as the sufferings of melancholy were to his disordered frame, I am strongly inclined to believe that the anguish of heart which he would otherwise have endured, must have been infinitely more severe. From this anguish he was so far preserved by the marvellous state of his own disturbed health, that, instead of mourning the loss of a person in whose life he had seemed to live, all perception of that loss was mercifully taken from him; and

from the moment when he hurried away from the inanimate object of his filial attachment, he appeared to have no memory of her having existed, for he never asked a question concerning her funeral, nor ever mentioned her name.

Towards the summer of 1797, his bodily health appeared to improve, but not to such a degree as to restore any comfortable activity to his mind. In June he wrote to me a brief letter, but such as too forcibly expressed the cruelty of his distemper.

The process of digestion never passed regularly in his frame during the years that he resided in Norfolk. Medicine appeared to have little or no influence on his complaint, and his aversion at the sight of it was extreme.

From Asses' milk, of which he began a course on the twenty-first of June in this year, he gained a considerable acquisition of bodily strength, and was enabled to bear an airing in an open carriage before breakfast, with Mr. Johnson.

A depression of spirits, which suspended the studies of a writer so eminently endeared to the public, was considered, by men of piety and learning, as a national misfortune; and several individuals of this description, though personally unknown to Cowper, wrote to him in the benevolent hope, that expressions of friendly praise, from persons who could be influenced only by the most laudable motives in bestowing it, might reanimate the dejected spirit of a poet, not sufficiently conscious of the public service that his writings had rendered to his country, and of that universal esteem which they had so deservedly secured to their author.

I cannot think myself authorized to mention the names of all who did honour to Cowper and to themselves on this occasion, but I trust the Bishop of Landaff will forgive me, if my sentiments of personal regard towards him induce me to take an affectionate liberty with his name, and to gratify myself by recording, in these pages, a very pleasing example of his liberal attention to the interests of humanity.

He endeavoured evangelically to cheer and invigorate the mind of Cowper; but the depression of that disordered mind was the effect of bodily disorder so obstinate, that it received not the slightest relief from what, in a season of corporeal health, would have afforded the most animated gratification to this interesting invalid.

The [illegible] of his malady had now made him utterly deaf to the most honourable praise.

He had long discontinued the revisal of his Homer; but, by the entreaty of his young kinsman, he was persuaded to resume it in September, 1797, and he persevered in it, oppressed as he was

by indisposition, till March, 1799. On Friday evening, the eighth of that month, he completed his revisal of the Odyssey, and the next morning wrote part of a new preface.

To watch over the disordered health of afflicted genius, and to lead a powerful but oppressed spirit, by gentle encouragement, to exert itself in salutary occupation, is an office that requires a very rare union of tenderness, intelligence and fortitude. To contemplate and minister to a great mind, in a state that borders on mental desolation, is like surveying, in the midst of a desert, the tottering ruins of palaces and temples, where the faculties of the spectator are almost absorbed in wonder and regret, and where every step is taken with awful apprehension.

It seemed as if Providence had expressly formed the young kinsman of Cowper to prove exactly such a guardian to his declining years as the peculiar exigences of his situation required. I never saw the human being that could, I think, have sustained the delicate and arduous office (in which the inexhaustible virtues of Mr. Johnson persevered to the last) through a period so long, with an equal portion of unvaried tenderness and unshaken fidelity. A man who wanted sensibility would have renounced the duty; and a man endowed with a particle too much of that valuable, though perilous quality, must have felt his own health utterly undermined by an excess of sympathy with the sufferings perpetually in his sight. Mr. Johnson has completely discharged perhaps the most trying of human duties; and, I trust, he will forgive me for this public declaration, that, in his mode of discharging it, he has merited the most cordial esteem from all who love the memory of Cowper. Even a stranger may consider it as a striking proof of his tender dexterity in soothing and guiding the afflicted poet, that he was able to engage him steadily to pursue and finish the revisal and correction of his Homer, during a long period of bodily and mental sufferings, when his troubled mind recoiled from all intercourse with his most intimate friends, and laboured under a morbid abhorrence of all cheerful exertion.

But in deploring the calamity of my friend, and describing the merit of his affectionate attendant, I must not forget that it is still incumbent on me, as a faithful biographer, to notice a few circumstances in the dark and distressful years that Cowper had yet to linger on earth. In the summer of 1798, Mr. Johnson was induced to vary his plan of remaining, for some months, in the marine village of Mundsley, and thought it more eligible for the invalid to make frequent visits from Dereham to the coast, passing a week at a time by the sea-side.

Cowper, in his Poem on Retirement, seems to inform us what

his own sentiments were, in a season of health, concerning the regimen most proper for the disease of melancholy.

" Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill
" Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
" Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
" And sends the patient into purer air."

The frequent change of place, and the magnificence of marine scenery, produced, at times, a little relief to his depressive sensations. On the seventh of June, 1798, he surveyed the Light-house at Happisburgh, and expressed some pleasure on beholding, through a telescope, several ships at a distance. Yet, in his usual walk with Mr. Johnson, by the sea-side, he exemplified but too forcibly his own affecting description of melancholy silence.

" That silent tongue
" Could give advice, could censure, or commend,
" Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend;
" Renounc'd alike its office, and its sport,
" Its brisker and its graver strains fall short:
" Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
" And, like a summer brook, are past away."

But this description is applicable only in the more oppressive preceding years, for of the summer 1798, Mr. Johnson says, " We had no longer air and exercise alone, but exercise and Homer hand in hand."

On the twenty-fourth of July Cowper had the honour of a visit from a lady for whom he had long entertained affectionate respect, the Dowager Lady Spencer; and it was rather remarkable, that, on the very morning she called upon him, he happened to have begun his revisal of the Odyssey, which he had originally inscribed to her. Such an incident, in an happier season, would have produced a very enlivening effect on his spirits; but, in his present state, it had not even the power to lead him into any free conversation with his amiable visitor.

The only amusement that he appeared to admit without reluctance, was the reading of Mr. Johnson, who, indefatigable in the supply of such amusement, had exhausted an immense collection of novels; and, at this period, began reading to the poet his own works. To these he listened also in silence, and heard all his poems recited in order, till the reader arrived at the history of John Gilpin, which he begged not to hear. Mr. Johnson proceeded

to his manuscript poems. To these he willingly listened, but made not a single remark on any. In October, 1798, the pressure of his melancholy seemed to be mitigated in some little degree, for he exerted himself so far as to write, without solicitation, to Lady Hesketh; and I insert passages of this letter, because, gloomy as it is, it describes, in a most interesting manner, the sudden attack of his malady, and tends to confirm an opinion that his mental disorder arose from a scorbutic habit, which, when his perspiration was obstructed, occasioned an unsearchable obstruction in the finer parts of his frame. Such a cause would produce, I apprehend, an effect exactly like what my suffering friend describes in this affecting letter.

DEAR COUSIN,

You describe delightful scenes, but you describe them to one who, if he even saw them, could receive no delight from them; who has a faint recollection, and so faint as to be like an almost forgotten dream, that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes. The country that you have had in prospect has been always famed for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantage of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any.

In one day, in one minute, I should rather have said, she became an universal blank to me, and though from a different cause, yet with an effect as difficult to remove as blindness itself.

* * * * *

Mundsley, October 13, 1798.

On his return from Mundsley to Dereham, in an evening towards the end of October, Cowper, with Miss Perowne and Mr. Johnson, was overturned in a post-chaise. He discovered no terror on the occasion, and escaped without injury from the accident.

In December he received a visit from his highly esteemed friend Sir John Throckmorton; but his malady was, at that time, so oppressive that it rendered him almost insensible to the kind solicitude of friendship.

He still continued to exercise the powers of his astonishing mind. Upon his finishing the revisal of his Homer, in March, 1799, Mr. Johnson endeavoured, in the gentlest manner, to lead him into new literary occupation.

For this purpose, on the eleventh of March, he had before him the paper, containing the commencement of his poem on *The*

four Ages. Cowper altered a few lines; he also added a few; but soon observed to his kind attendant, "that it was too great a work for him to attempt in his present situation."

At supper, Mr. Johnson suggested to him several literary projects, that he might execute more easily. He replied, "that he had just thought of six Latin verses, and if he could compose any thing, it must be in pursuing that composition."

The next morning he wrote the six verses he had mentioned, and added a few more, entitling the poem, "*Montes glaciales.*"

It proved a versification of a circumstance recorded in a newspaper, which had been read to him a few weeks before, without his appearing to notice it. This poem he translated into English verse, on the nineteenth of March, to oblige Miss Perowne. Both the original and the translation shall appear in the Appendix.

On the twentieth of March he wrote the stanzas, entitled, *The Cast-away*, founded on an anecdote in Anson's voyage, which his memory suggested to him, although he had not looked into the book for many years.*

As this poem is the last original production from the pen of Cowper, I shall introduce it here, persuaded that it will be read with an interest proportioned to the extraordinary pathos of the subject, and the still more extraordinary powers of the poet, whose lyre could sound so forcibly, unsilenced by the gloom of the darkest distemper, that was conducting him, by slow gradations, to the shadow of death.

THE CAST-AWAY.

Obscurest night involv'd the sky;
Th' Atalantic billows roar'd;
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.
He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the 'whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But wag'd with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their out-cast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord
Delay'd not to bestow.
But he, they knew, nor ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent pow'r,
His destiny repell'd:
And ever as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cry'd—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in ev'ry blast,
Could catch the sound no more.
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

'No poet wept him: but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears, by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalise the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date.
But misery still delights to trace
Its 'semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he.

In August he translated this poem into Latin verse. In October he went, with Miss Perowne and Mr. Johnson, to survey a larger house in Dereham, which he preferred to their present residence, and in which the family were settled in the following December.

Though his corporeal strength was now evidently declining, the tender persuasion of Mr. Johnson induced him to amuse his mind with frequent composition. Between August and December he wrote all the translations, from various Latin and Greek epigrams, which the reader will find in the appendix.

In his new residence he amused himself with translating a few fables of Gay into Latin verse. The fable which he used to recite as a child, "The hare and many friends," became one of his latest amusements.

The perfect ease and spirit with which his translations from Gay are written, induce me to print not only those which he left entire, but even the two verses (for they are excellent) with which he was beginning to translate another, when increasing maladies obliged him to relinquish for ever this elegant occupation.

These Latin fables were all written in January, 1800. Towards the end of that month I had requested him to new-model a passage in his Homer, relating to some figures of Dædalus: on the thirty-

first of January I received from him his improved version of the lines in question, written in a firm and delicate hand.

The sight of such writing from my long silent friend inspired me with a lively but too sanguine hope, that I might see him once more restored.

Alas! at this period a complication of new maladies began to threaten his inestimable life; and the neat transcript of his improved verses on the curious monument of ancient sculpture, so gracefully described by Homer, verses which I surveyed as a delightful omen of future letters from a correspondent so inexpressibly dear to me, proved the last effort of his pen.

On the very day that this endearing mark of his kindness reached me, a dropsical appearance in his legs induced Mr. Johnson to have recourse to fresh medical assistance. The beloved invalid was, with great difficulty, persuaded to take the remedies prescribed, and to try the exercise of a post-chaise, an exercise which he could not bear beyond the twenty-second of February.

In March, when his decline became more and more striking, he was visited by Mr. Rose. He hardly expressed any pleasure on the arrival of a friend whom he had so long and so tenderly regarded; yet he showed evident signs of regret on his departure, the sixth of April.

The long calamitous illness and impending death of a darling child precluded me from sharing with Mr. Rose the painful gratification of seeing, once more, the man whose genius and virtues we had once contemplated together, with mutual veneration and delight; whose approaching dissolution we felt, not only as an irreparable loss to ourselves, but as a national misfortune. On the nineteenth of April, the close of a life so wonderfully chequered, and so universally interesting, appeared to be very near.

On Sunday, the twentieth, he seemed a little revived.

On Monday he appeared dying, but recovered so much as to eat a slight dinner.

Tuesday and Wednesday he grew apparently weaker every hour.

On Thursday he sat up, as usual, in the evening.

Friday, the twenty-fifth, at five in the morning, a deadly change appeared in his features.

He spoke no more.

His last words were uttered in the night:—In rejecting a cordial, he said to Miss Perowne, who had presented it to him, "What can it signify?" Yet, even at this time, he did not seem impressed with any idea of dying, although he conceived that nothing would contribute to his health.

The deplorable inquietude and darkness of his latter years were mercifully terminated by a most gentle and tranquil dissolution. He passed through the awful moments of death so mildly, that although five persons were present, and observing him, in his chamber, not one of them perceived him to expire: but he had ceased to breathe about five minutes before five in the afternoon.

On Saturday, the third of May, he was buried in a part of Dereham church, called St. Edmund's Chapel, and the funeral was attended by several of his relations.

He died intestate: his affectionate relation, Lady Hesketh, has fulfilled the office of his administratrix, and given orders for a monument to his memory where his ashes repose. In the metropolis, I trust, the public affection for an author so eminently deserving, will enable me to make his manuscripts relating to Milton, which are now before me, the means of erecting a cenotaph in his honour, suitable to the dignity of his poetical character, and to the liberality of the nation, that may be justly proud of expressing a parental sense of his merit.

I have regarded my own intimacy with him as a blessing to myself, and the remembrance of it is now endeared to me by the hope that it may enable me to delineate the man and the poet with such fidelity and truth, as may render his remote, and even his future admirers, minutely acquainted with an exemplary being, most worthy to be intimately known and universally beloved.

The person and mind of Cowper seem to have been formed with equal kindness by nature; and it may be questioned if she ever bestowed on any man, with a fonder prodigality, all the requisites to conciliate affection and to inspire respect.

From his figure, as it first appeared to me, in his sixty-second year, I should imagine that he must have been very comely in his youth; and little had time injured his countenance, since his features expressed, at that period of life, all the powers of his mind and all the sensibility of his heart.

He was of a middle stature, rather strong than delicate in the form of his limbs; the colour of his hair was a light brown, that of his eyes a bluish grey, and his complexion ruddy. In his dress he was neat, but not finical; in his diet temperate, and not dainty.

He had an air of pensive reserve in his deportment, and his extreme shyness sometimes produced in his manners an indescribable mixture of aukwardness and dignity: but no being could be more truly graceful, when he was in perfect health, and perfectly pleased

with his society. Towards women, in particular, his behaviour and conversation were delicate and fascinating in the highest degree.

Nature had given him a warm constitution; and had he been prosperous in early love, it is probable that he might have enjoyed a more uniform and happy tenor of health. But a disappointment of the heart, arising from the cruelty of fortune, threw a cloud on his juvenile spirit. Thwarted in love, the native fire of his temperament turned impetuously into the kindred channel of devotion. The smothered flames of desire uniting with the vapours of constitutional melancholy and the fervency of religious zeal, produced altogether that irregularity of corporeal sensation, and of mental health, which gave such extraordinary vicissitudes of splendour and of darkness to his mortal career, and made Cowper, at times, an idol of the purest admiration, and, at times, an object of the sincerest pity.

As a sufferer, indeed, no man could be more entitled to compassion, for no man was ever more truly compassionate to the sufferings of others. It was that rare portion of benevolent sensibility in his nature, which endeared him to persons of all ranks, who had opportunities of observing him in private life. The great prince of Conde used to say, "No man is a hero to his familiar domestic:" but Cowper was really more. He was beloved and revered with a sort of idolatry in his family; not from any romantic ideas of his magical powers as a poet, but from that evangelical gentleness of manners and purity of conduct which illumined the shade of his sequestered life.

I may be suspected of speaking with the fond partiality, the unperceived exaggerations of friendship; but the fear of such censure shall not deter me from bearing my most deliberate testimony to the excellence of him whose memory I revere, and saying, that, as a man, he made, of all men whom I have ever had opportunities to observe so minutely, the nearest approaches to moral perfection. Indeed, a much more experienced judge of mankind, and Cowper's associate in early life, Lord Thurlow, has expressed the same idea of his character; for being once requested to describe him, he replied with that solemn energy of dignified elocution, by which he is accustomed to give a very forcible effect to a few simple words—"Cowper is truly a good man."

His daily habits of study and exercise, his whole domestic life, is so minutely and agreeably delineated in the series of his letters, that it is unnecessary for his biographer to expatiate upon them. I have little occasion, indeed, to dwell on this topic; but let me apply to my young readers a few expressive words of Louis Racine, in

addressing to his own son the Life and Letters of his illustrious father.——"*Quand vous l' aurez connu dans sa famille, vous le gouterez mieux, lorsque vous viendrez a le connoitre sur le Parnasse: vous scaurez, pourquoi ses vers sont toujours pleins de Sentimens.*"——I might add, in alluding to a few of his most tender and pathetic letters: "*C'est une simplicite de moeurs si admirable dans un homme tout sentiment, et tout coeur, qui est cause, qu'en copiant pour vous ses lettres, je verse a tous momens des larmes, parcequil me communique la tendresse, dont il etoit rempli.*"——Cowper greatly resembled his eminent and exemplary brothers of Parnassus, Racine and Metastasio, in the simplicity and tenderness of his domestic character.

His voice conspired with his features to announce to all who saw and heard him, the extreme sensibility of his heart: and in reading aloud he furnished the chief delight of those social, enchanting winter evenings, which he has described so happily in the fourth book of the Task. He had been taught, by his parents, at home, to recite English verse, in the early years of his childhood; and acquired considerable applause, as a child, in the recital of Gay's popular fable, "The hare and many friends:" a circumstance that, probably, had great influence in raising his passion for poetry, and in giving him a peculiar fondness for the wild persecuted animal that he converted into a very grateful domestic companion.

Secluded from the world, as Cowper had long been, he yet retained, in advanced life, uncommon talents for conversation; and his conversation was distinguished by mild and benevolent pleasantry, by delicate humour peculiar to himself, or by a higher tone of serious good sense, and those united charms of a cultivated mind, which he has himself very happily described, in drawing the colloquial character of a venerable divine.

> Grave, without dullness; learned, without pride;
> Exact, yet not precise; though meek, keen-eyed;
> Who, when occasion justified its use,
> Had wit, as bright as ready, to produce;
> Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
> Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
> His rich materials, and regale your ear
> With strains it was a privilege to hear:
> Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
> And his chief glory, was the gospel theme:
> Ambitious not to shine, or to excel,
> But to treat justly what he lov'd so well.

Men who withdraw themselves from the ordinary forms of society, whether delicacy of health, or a passion for study, or both united, occasion their retirement from the world, are generally obliged to pay a heavy tax for the privacy they enjoy, in having their habits of life and their temper very darkly misrepresented by the ignorant malice of offended pride. The sweetness and purity of Cowper's real character did not perfectly preserve him from such misrepresentation. Many persons have been misled so far as to suppose him a severe and sour sectary, though gentleness and good nature were among his pre-eminent qualities, and though he was deliberately attached to the established religion of his country. The reader may recollect a letter to his young kinsman, who was then on the point of taking orders, in which Cowper sufficiently proves his attachment to the church of England; and he speaks so decidedly on the subject, that certainly none of the sectaries have a right to reckon him in their number. He was, however, as his poetry has most elegantly testified, a most ardent friend to liberty, both civil and religious; and his love of freedom induced him to animadvert, with lively indignantion, on every officious and oppressive exercise of episcopal authority. Few ministers of the gospel have searched the scripture more diligently than Cowper, and, in his days of health, with a happier effect; for a spirit of evangelical kindness and purity pervaded the whole tenor of his language, and all the conduct of his life.

His infinite good nature, as a literary man, is strikingly displayed in the indulgent condescension with which he gratified two successive clerks of Northampton, in writing for them their annual copies of mortuary verses. He thought, like the amiable Plutarch, that the most ordinary office may be dignified by a benevolent spirit.

In describing himself to his amiable friend, Mr. Park, the engraver, he spoke too slightingly of his own learning; for he was, in truth, a scholar, as any man may fairly be called who is master of four languages besides his own. Cowper read Greek and Latin, French and Italian; but the extraordinary incidents of his life precluded him from indulging himself in a multiplicity of books, and his reading was conformable to the rule of Pliny, "*Non multa, sed multum.*"

He had devoted some time to the pencil, and he mentions his reason for quitting it in the following passage of a letter to the same correspondent.

Weston, 1792.

It was only one year that I gave to drawing; for I found it an employment hurtful to my eyes, which have

always been weak and subject to inflammation. I finished my attempts in this way with three small landscapes, which I presented to a lady. These may, perhaps, exist, but I have now no correspondence with the fair proprietor. Except these, there is nothing remaining to show that I ever aspired to such an accomplishment.

The native warmth of Cowper's affections led him to take a particular pleasure in recording the merit with which he was personally acquainted: a remarkable instance of this amiable disposition appears in his condescending to translate the Latin epitaph on his school-master, Dr. Lloyd. This epitaph, with Cowper's version, and his remark upon it, my reader may find in the Appendix: another epitaph on his uncle, Mr. Ashley Cowper, I shall insert here, as it displays, in a most pleasing point of view, both the affectionate ardour and the modesty of its author.

LINES

Composed for a Memorial of ASHLEY COWPER, *Esq. immediately after his death, by his Nephew* WILLIAM, *of Weston.*

Farewell! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;
In life's last stage (Oh blessing rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth, with all its blossoms crown'd;
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchang'd thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharg'd with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half supprest,
Love shall be satisfied, and veil the rest.

The person whom these verses commemorate was himself an elegant poet, and father of the lady to whom so many of Cowper's letters are addressed in the preceding collection. The reader can hardly fail to recollect the very pathetic manner in which the poet spoke to the daughter of this gentleman on the death of a parent so justly beloved.

In describing the social and friendly faculties of Cowper, it

would be unjust not to bestow particular notice on a talent that he possessed in perfection, and one that friendship ought especially to honour, as she is indebted to it for a considerable portion of her most valuable delights: I mean the talent of writing letters.

Melmoth, the elegant translator of Pliny's letters, has observed, in an interesting note to the thirteenth letter of the second book, how highly the art of epistolary writing was esteemed by the Romans, lamenting, at the same time, that our country has not distinguished itself in this branch of literature.

My late accomplished friend, Dr. Warton, has also remarked, in his life of Pope, that "in the various sorts of composition in which the English have excelled, we have, perhaps, the least claim to excellence in the article of letters of our celebrated countrymen."

Those of Pope are generally thought deficient in that air of perfect ease, that unstudied flow of affection, which gives the highest charm to epistolary writing: but those unaffected graces which the delicate critic wished in vain to find in the letters of Pope, may be found, abundant and complete, in the various correspondence of Cowper. He was, indeed, a being of such genuine simplicity and tenderness, so absolute a stranger to artifice and disguise; his affections were so ardent and so pure, that in writing to those he loved he could not fail to show what really passed in his own bosom, and his letters are most faithful representatives of his heart. He could never subscribe to that dangerous and sophistical dogma of Dr. Johnson, in his splenetic disquisition on the letters of Pope, that "friendship has no tendency to secure veracity."

It certainly has such a tendency, and in proportion to the sense and the goodness of the writer; for a sensible, and a good man must rather wish to afford his bosom friend the most accurate knowledge of his real character, than to obtain a precarious increase of regard by any sort of illusion. The great charm of confidential epistolary intercourse to such a man arises from the persuasion, that veracity is not dangerous in speaking of his own defects, when he is speaking to a true and a considerate friend.

The letters not intended for the eye of the public have generally obtained the greatest share of popular applause; and for this reason, because such letters display no profusion of studied ornaments, but abound in the simple and powerful attractions of nature and truth.

Letters, indeed, will ever please, when they are frank, confidential conversations on paper between persons of well-principled and highly cultivated minds, of graceful manners, and of tender affections.

The language of such letters must, of course, have that mixture

of ease and elegance peculiarly suited to such composition, and most happily exemplified in the letters of Cicero and of Cowper.—These two great masters of a perfect epistolary style have both mentioned their own excellent and simple rule for attaining it—to use only the language of familiar conversation.

Cowper's opinion of two English writers, much admired for the style of their letters, is expressed in the following extract from one of his own to Mr. Hill.

"I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him sublime. * * * * I once thought Swift's letters the best that could be written, but I like Gray's better. His humour, or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet, I think, equally poignant with the Dean's."

The letters of Gray are admirable, but they appear to me not equal to those of Cowper, either in the graces of simplicity, or in warmth of affection.

The very sweet stanzas that Cowper has written on friendship, would be alone sufficient to prove that his heart and spirit were most tenderly alive to all the delicacy and delight of that inestimable connection. He was indeed such a friend himself, as the voice of wisdom describes, in calling a true friend "the medicine of life:" and though misfortune precluded him, in his early days, from the enjoyment of connubial love, and of professional prosperity, he may be esteemed as singularly happy in this very important consolatory privilege of human existence; particularly in his friendships with that finer part of the creation, whose sensibility makes them most able to relish, or to call forth the powers of diffident genius, and to alleviate the pressure of mental affliction. It may be questioned if any poet on the records of Parnassus ever enjoyed a confidential intimacy, as Cowper did, with a variety of accomplished women, maintaining, at the same time, consummate innocence of conduct.

Pre-eminent as he was, in warmth and vigour of fancy and affection, the quickness and strength of his understanding were proportioned to the more perilous endowments of his mind. Though he had received from nature lively appetites and passions, his reason held them in the most steady and laudable subjection.

The only internal enemy of his peace and happiness, that his intellect could not subdue, was one tremendous idea, mysteriously impressed on his fervent imagination, in a scene of bodily disorder, and at such periods recurring upon his mind with an overwhelming influence, which not all the admirable powers of his own innocent upright spirit, nor all the united aids of art and nature, were able to counteract.

Though he was sometimes subject to imaginary fears, he maintained, in his season of health, a most magnanimous reliance on the kindness of heaven. This sublime sentiment is forcibly and beautifully expressed in the following passage, extracted from his correspondence with Mr. Hill.

"I suppose you are sometimes troubled on my account, but you need not. I have no doubt it will be seen, when my days are closed, that I served a master who would not suffer me to want any thing that was good for me. He said to Jacob, 'I will surely do thee good;' and this he said not for his sake only, but for ours also, if we trust in him. This thought relieves me from the greatest part of the distress I should else suffer in my present circumstances, and enables me to sit down peacefully upon the wreck of my fortune."

He also possessed and exerted that becoming fortitude which teaches a man to support, under various trials, the sober respect that he owes to himself. Praise, however exalted, did not intoxicate him, and detraction was unable to poison his pure sense of his own merit: so that he thus escaped an infirmity into which some great and good poets have fallen, an infirmity that was remarkable in Racine, and which I had once occasion to observe and lament in a very eminent departed author of our own country, who complained to me that time had so far depressed his spirits as to take from him all sense of pleasure in public praise, and yet left him acute feelings of pain from public detraction.

Cowper possessed, in his original motives for appearing in the character of a poet, the best possible preservative against this double infelicity of mind.

His predominant desire was to render his poetry an instrument of good to mankind: his love of fame was a secondary passion, and, like all his passions, in perfect subjection to the great principles of religious duty which he made the rule of his life.

It is evident, from the tenor of his correspondence, that he had a lively and a proper relish for praise, when justly and affectionately bestowed. The quickness and the nicety of his feelings, on this delicate point, he has displayed in the following letter to a lady, whose various talents he very highly esteemed, on receiving her poem, "*The Emigrants*," addressed to him in a dedication most worthy of such a patron.

To Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Weston, July 25, 1793.

My dear Madam,

Many reasons concurred to make me impatient for the arrival of your most acceptable present, and among them was the fear lest you should, perhaps, suspect me of tardiness in acknowledging so great a favour; a fear that, as often as it prevailed, distressed me exceedingly. At length I have received it, and my little bookseller assures me that he sent it the very day he got it. By some mistake, however, the waggon brought it instead of the coach, which occasioned a delay that I could ill afford.

It came this morning, about an hour ago: consequently I have not had time to peruse the poem, though, you may be sure, I have found enough for the perusal of the dedication. I have, in fact, given it three readings, and in each have found increasing pleasure.

I am a whimsical creature. When I write for the public, I write, of course, with a desire to please, in other words, to acquire fame, and I labour accordingly; but when I find that I have succeeded, feel myself alarmed, and ready to shrink from the acquisition.

This I have felt more than once; and when I saw my name at the head of your dedication, I felt it again: but the consummate delicacy of your praise soon convinced me that I might spare my blushes, and that the demand was less upon my modesty than my gratitude. Of that be assured, dear Madam, and of the truest esteem and respect of your most obliged and affectionate humble servant,

Wm. COWPER.

P. S. I should have been much grieved to have let slip this opportunity of thanking you for your charming sonnets, and my two most agreeable old friends, Monimia and Orlando.

Cowper felt the full value of applause when conferred by a liberal and a powerful mind; and I had a singularly pleasing opportunity of observing the just sensibility of his nature on this point, by carrying to him, in one of my visits to Weston, a recent newspaper, including the speech of Mr. Fox, in which that accomplished orator had given new lustre to a splendid passage in the Task, by reciting it in parliament. The passage alluded to contains the

sublime verses on the destruction of the bastile; verses that were originally composed in the form of a prophecy. The eloquence of the poet and orator united could hardly furnish a perfect description of the double delight which this unexpected honour afforded to the author, and to the good old enthusiastic admirer and cherisher of his talents, Mrs. Unwin. Her feelings were infinitely the most vivid on this agreeable occasion; for the poet, though he truly enjoyed such honourable applause, was ever on his guard against the perils of praise, and had continually impressed on his own devout spirit, his primary motives of poetical ambition. The mention of these motives, which conduce, as well as his extraordinary powers, to distinguish Cowper in the highest rank of illustrious poets, will naturally lead me to consider him in that point of view, and to examine the difficulties he has surmounted, and the great aims he has accomplished, in his poetical capacity.

Accident, idleness, want, spleen, love, and the passion for fame, have all, in their turns, had such occasional influence over the human faculties, as to induce men of considerable mental powers to devote themselves to the composition of verse: but the poetical character of Cowper appears to have had a much nobler origin. To estimate that character according to its real dignity, we should consider him as a poet formed by the munificence of nature and the decrees of heaven. He seems to have received his rare poetical powers as a gift from providence, to compensate the pressure of much personal calamity, and to enable him to become, though secluded by irregular health from the worldly business, and from the ordinary pastimes of men, a singular benefactor to mankind.

If we attend to the rise and progress of his works, we shall perceive that such was the predominant aim of this truly philanthropic poet, and that, in despight of his manifold impediments and troubles, heaven graciously enabled him to accomplish the noblest purpose that the sublimest faculties can devise for their own most arduous exercise, and most delightful reward. He had cultivated his native talent for poetry in early life, although the extreme modesty of his nature had restrained him from a public display of his poetical powers. Through many years of mental disquietude and affliction, that powerful talent, which was destined to burst forth with such unrivalled lustre, seems to have remained in absolute inactivity; but in different seasons of a very long abstinence from poetical exertion, his mind had been engaged in such studies (when health allowed him to study) as form, perhaps, the best possible preparation for great poetical achievements: I mean a fervent application to that book which furnishes the most ample and beneficial aliment to the heart and to the fancy, the book to which

Milton and Young were indebted for their poetical sublimity, Cowper, in reading the Bible, admired and studied the eloquence of the prophets. He was particularly charmed with the energy of their language in describing the wrath of the Almighty.

By his zealous attention to the scripture, he incessantly treasured in his own capacious mind those inexhaustible stores of sentiment and expression which enabled him gradually to ascend the purest heights of poetical renown, which rendered him, at last, what he ardently wished to prove—the poet of christianity—the monitor of the world.

It was after a very long and severe fit of mental depression, that, by the friendly request of his faithful associate in affliction, he sought, in poetical composition of considerable extent, a salutary exercise for a mind formed for the most active and beneficent exertion, though occasionally subject to an utter suspension of its admirable powers. I have already mentioned the circumstance, communicated to me by Mrs. Unwin, concerning the first extensive poem, in point of time, that appears in the first volume of Cowper.

"The Progress of Error" seems the least attractive among the several admonitory poems of the collection, and we judge from it, that even the genius of Cowper required the frequent habit of writing verse to display itself to advantage. Yet even this poem, in which he is said to have made the first serious trial of his long suspended talent, has passages of exquisite beauty. Take, for example, his portrait of Innocence and Folly, painted with the delicate simplicity and tenderness of Corregio.

> Both baby-featur'd, and of infant size,
> View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
> Folly and Innocence are so alike,
> The diff'rence, though essential, fails to strike:
> Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
> A simp'ring countenance, a trifling air:
> But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
> Delights us by engaging our respect.

This poem also discovers, in some degree, that wonderful combination of very different powers, which the subsequent works of Cowper display in delightful profusion.

The affectionate and accomplished biographer of Burns has fallen (only, I apprehend, from a casual slip of memory) into a sort of silent injustice towards Cowper, when in speaking of the few poets "who have at once excelled in humour, in tenderness, and in sub-

limity," he affirms that "this praise, in modern times, is only due to Ariosto, to Shakspeare, and perhaps to Voltaire."

Recollection, I am confident, will rapidly convince such a consummate judge of poetical merit, that the works of Cowper contain many examples of that triple excellence, which is assuredly most rare, and which the masterly biographer very justly attributes to the marvellous peasant whose life and genius he has so feelingly and so honourably described. But to return to the poem of which I was speaking: it proves that Cowper could occasionally blend the moral humour of Hogarth, with the tenderness and sublimity that belong to artists of a superior rank. The portraits of the English travellers and the foreign Abbe, that are sketched in this poem, are all touched with the spirit of Hogarth.

The Progress of Error contains also some of those happy verses of serious morality, in which Cowper excelled; verses that, expressing a simple truth with perfect grace and precision, rapidly fix themselves, and with a lasting proverbial influence, on the memory. I will cite only two detached couplets in proof of my assertion.

> None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
> Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
> Call'd to the temple of impure delight;
> He that abstains, and he alone does right.

As soon as Cowper found that the composition of moral verse was medicinal to his own mind, he seems to have formed the noble resolution of making his works an universal medicine for the various mental infirmities of the world. His own ideas on this subject are perfectly expressed in the following passage from his first letter to his friend Mr. Bull, who began his correspondence with the poet by a letter of praise, on the publication of his first volume.

"*March* 24, 1782.

* * * * * * *

"Your letter gave me great pleasure, both as a testimony of your approbation and of your regard. I wrote in hopes of pleasing you, and such as you, and though I must confess that, at the same time, I cast a side-long glance at the good-liking of the world at large, I believe I can say it was more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic, we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey. If my book is so far honoured as to be made the vehicle of true knowledge to any that are ignorant, I shall rejoice, and do already rejoice, that it has procured me a proof of your esteem."

It was probably this idea of tinging the rim of the cup with honey (an expression used by Lucretius and by Tasso) which induced Cowper to place in the front of his volume the poem entitled Table Talk. The title has in itself an inviting appearance, and the lively desultory spirit of the composition sufficiently vindicates the propriety of the title. It is a rapid and animated descant on a variety of interesting topics. The brief tale from that humorous and high-spirited Spaniard, Quevedo, is admirably told, and I have frequently heard it recited as a most striking example of Cowper's talent for such narration, by a very dear departed friend of the most delicate discernment.

The poet, in this outset of his moral enterprise, bestows a graceful compliment on his sovereign—

"His life a lesson to the land he sways."

And he judged it right to annex to this high compliment such a profession of his own independent spirit as every ingenuous mind must delight to observe from the pen of a poet, when his life and his writings reflect a reciprocal lustre on each other.

A bribe!
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy
To lure me to the baseness of a lie;
And of all lies (be that one poet's boast!)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.

This professed abhorrence of adulation was uttered in the real spirit of simplicity and truth. No poet was ever more perfectly free from that base propensity, which is sometimes erroneously imputed to the poetical tribe, who, from their peculiar warmth of sensation, are often thought to flatter, when they speak only their genuine feelings.

Perhaps Cowper sometimes indulged himself in a very different weakness, if I may call the little excesses of a generous independent pride by so harsh an appellation.

It is incumbent on me to explain the petty foible of my friend to which I allude. Having composed, from the impulse of his heart, his little poem on the elevation of his intimate companion in former days, Lord Thurlow, to the dignity of Chancellor, he condemned it to lie in long concealment, from an apprehension that, although he knew the praise to be just, it might be supposed to flow from a sordid and selfish solicitude to derive some advantage from the recent grandeur of a man whom he had once cordially loved, but whom

their different destinies had made for many years almost a personal stranger to the poet, though never an alien to his heart.

But to resume the few remarks I wish to make on the Poem of Table Talk. It contains what Cowper could readily command, a great variety of style. Much of the poem has the manner of Churchill, and particularly the lines that exhibit a strong character of that popular and powerful satirist; a poet whose highest excellence Cowper possessed, with many more refined attractions, which the energetic, but coarse spirit of that modern Juvenal could not attain. Towards the close of Table-Talk, the poet introduces, very happily, what he had proposed to himself as the main scope of his own poetical labours—the service that a poet may render to the great interest of religion. This he describes in a strain of sublimity, and contrasts it very ably with inferior objects of poetical ambition.

From this poem of infinite diversity it would be easy to select specimens of almost every excellence that can be found in a work of this nature. Truth, however, obliges me to observe, that this admirable prelude to the collected poetry of Cowper has a weak and ungraceful conclusion.

The four poems, entitled, Truth, Expostulation, Hope, and Charity, are four Christian exhortations to piety, which may be thought tedious and dull by readers who have no relish for devotional eloquence, or who, however blest with a serious sense of religion, have too hastily admitted the very strange and groundless dogma of Dr. Johnson, that "contemplative piety cannot be poetical;" a position resembling that of the ancient sophist, who denied the existence of motion, and whose indignant hearer answered him by walking immediately in his sight. With such simple and forcible refutation, the genius of Cowper replies to the paradoxical pedantry of a critic, whose high intellectual powers, when he exerts and exhausts them to command and illuminate the expansive sphere of poetry, delight and disgust his readers alternately, by a frequent mixture of gigantic force and dwarfish imbecility. His weak, though solemn sophistry on this subject is completely refuted by the poems of Cowper, because contemplative piety, which, according to the critic's assertion, cannot be poetical, is, in truth, one of the most powerful charms by which this devout poet accomplishes his poetical enchantment.

But to return to the four sacred poems that lead me to this remark. That on Truth exhibits the author's singular talent of blending the humorous and the sublime. In his portrait of the sanctified pride, he is at once the copyist and the compeer of Hogarth: in his picture of cheerful piety, and true Christian free-

dom, he soars to a species of excellance that the pencil of Hogarth could not command.

Expostulation flows in a more even tenor of sublime admonition: it was founded on a sermon preached by the author's zealous and eloquent friend, Mr. Newton, and contains the following admirable description of what the clergy ought to be.

> The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
> From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
> Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn,
> Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn;
> Their wisdom pure, and given them from above;
> Their usefulness insur'd by zeal and love;
> As meek as the man Moses, and withal
> As bold as, in Agrippa's presence, Paul;
> Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
> Holy and unpolluted; are thine such?

I will not transcribe the closing couplet, because it appears to me one of the few passages in the poet where the warm current of his zeal hurried him into a hasty expression of asperity, not in unison with the native and habitual candour of his contemplative mind.

The Poem on Hope, although the poet means only to describe

> "That hope which can alone exclude despair,"

has a gay diversity of colouring, and the dialogue introduced is written with exquisite pleasantry. The great and constant aim of the author is expressed in his motto,

> "Doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas."

In the commencement of his Poem on Charity, the author renders a just and eloquent tribute to the humanity of Captain Cook; and in the progress of it bursts into an animated and graceful eulogy on Howard, the visitor of prisons. The sentiments that Cowper endeavours to impress on the heart of his reader, in this series of devotional poems, are drawn from the great fountain of intellectual purity, the gospel; and to the poet, in his character of a Christian Monitor, we may justly and gratefully apply the following verses from this poem on Charity.

> When one that holds communion with the skies
> Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,

And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.

In the extensive and admirably varied Poem on Conversation, the poet shines as a teacher of manners as well as of morality and religion.

It is remarkable that, in this work, he is particularly severe on what he considered as his own peculiar defect, that excess of diffidence, that insurmountable shyness, which is so apt to freeze the current of English conversation.

Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.

True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be asham'd t' appear;
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced, and nurs'd.
The circle form'd, we sit, in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate.
Yes Ma'am, and no Ma'am, utter'd softly, show,
Every five minutes, how the minutes go.

This poem abounds with much admirable description, both serious and comic. The portrait of the splenetic man is, perhaps, the most highly finished example of comic power; and the scene of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, is a perfect model of solemn and graceful simplicity. I cannot cease to speak of this very attractive poem without observing, that the author has inserted in it two passages intended to obviate such objections as he conceived most likely to be urged against the tendency of his writings. He was aware that the light and vain might suppose him a gloomy fanatic, and as a preservative against such injurious misconception, he composed the following just and animated lines.

What is fanatic frenzy? scorn'd so much!
And dreaded more than a contagious touch.
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear;
That fire is catching if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.

He then draws an excellent picture of real fanaticism, and such a picture as could not have been painted by one of her votaries.

Again, to vindicate the cheerful tendency of the lessons he wished to inculcate, he exclaims,

> —— Let no man charge me, that I mean
> To clothe in sables every social scene,
> And give good company a face severe,
> As if they met around a father's bier!

I will add a few verses from the close of the poem, because they appear a just description of his own eloquence, both in poetry and conversation, when he conversed with those he loved—He is speaking of a character improved by a proper sense of religion.

> Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
> For all that was absurd, prophane, impure:
> Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
> Pursues the course that truth and nature teach;
> Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
> Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme;
> While all the happy man possess'd before,
> The gift of nature, or the classic store,
> Is made subservient to the grand design
> For which Heaven form'd the faculty divine.

The Poem on Retirement may be a delightful and useful lesson to those who wish to enjoy and improve a condition of life which is generally coveted by all in some period of their existence. The different votaries of retirement are very happily described; and the portrait of Melancholy, in particular, has all that minute and forcible excellence, derived from the faithful delineation of nature; for the poet described himself when under the overwhelming pressure of that grievous malady. The caution to the lover is expressed with all the delicacy and force of the most friendly admonition; and the fair sex are too much obliged to the tenderness of the poet to resent his bold assertion, that they are not entitled to absolute adoration.

This poem contains several of those exquisite proverbial couplets that I have noticed on a former occasion. Verses like the following are fit to be treasured in the heart of every man.

> An idler is a watch that wants both hands;
> As useless if it goes, as when it stands.

Absence of occupation is not rest;
A mind quite vacant is a mind distrest.

Religion does not censure, or exlude
Unnumber'd pleasures, harmlessly pursued.

The very sweet close of this poem I will not dwell upon at present, because I mean to notice it in collecting, as I advance, the most remarkable passages of the poet, in which he has spoken of himself. I must not, however, bid adieu to his first volume for the present, without observing that, of the smaller poems at the end of it, three are eminently happy, both in sentiment and expression; the verses assigned to Alexander Selkirk, the Winter Nosegay, and Mutual Forbearance.

It may, perhaps, console some future diffident poet, on his first appearance in public, if his merits happen to be depreciated by the presumptuous sentence of periodical criticism; it may console him to be informed, that when the first volume of Cowper was originally published, one of the critical journals of his day represented him as a good devout gentleman, without a particle of true poetical genius. To this very curious decision we may apply with a pleasant stroke of poetical justice, the following couplet from the Book so sagaciously described.

The moles and bats, in full assembly, find,
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.

But to those who were inclined to deny his title to the rank and dignity of a poet, Cowper made the best of all possible replies, by publishing a poem which rapidly and jusly became a prime favourite with every poetical reader.

In his *Task*, he not only surpassed all his former compositions, but executed an extensive work, of such original and diversified excellence, that, as it arose without the aid of any model, so it will probably remain for ever unequalled by a succession of imitators.

Unde nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum.

The Task may be called a bird's-eye view of human life. It is a minute and extensive survey of every thing most interesting to the reason, to the fancy, and to the affections of man. It exhibits his pleasures and his pains, his pastimes and his business, his folly

and his wisdom, his dangers and his duties, all with such exquisite facility and force of expression, with such grace and dignity of sentiment, that rational beings, who wish to render themselves more amiable and more happy, can hardly be more advantageously employed than in frequent perusal of the Task.

"O how fayre fruits may you to mortal men
"From Wisdom's garden give! How many may
"By you the wiser and the better prove!"

To apply three verses, of singular simplicity, from Nicholas Grimoald, (one of the earliest writers of English blank verse) to the poet who has added such a large increase of variegated lustre to that species of composition.

The Task, beginning with all the peaceful attractions of sportive gaiety, rises to the most solemn and awful grandeur, to the highest strain of religious solemnity. Its frequent variation of tone is masterly in the greatest degree, and the main spell of that inexhaustible enchantment which hurries the reader through a flowery maze of many thousand verses, without allowing him to feel a moment of languor or fatigue. Perhaps no author, ancient or modern, ever possessed, so completely as Cowper, the nice art of passing, by the most delicate transition, from subjects to subjects that might otherwise seem but little or not at all allied to each other, the rare talent

"Happily to steer
"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

The Task may be compared to one of the grand fabrics of musical contrivance, where a single work contains a vast variety of power for producing such harmony and delight as might be expected to arise only from a large collection of instruments. The auditor is charmed by the vicissitudes of partial excellence, and astonished by the magnificent compass of a single production. But the supreme attraction of the Task arises from that conviction, which all who delight in it cannot fail to feel, that the poet, however pre-eminent in intellectual powers, must have been equally pre-eminent in tender benevolence of heart. His reader loves him as a sympathetic friend, and blesses him as an invaluable instructor.

The truth of this remark may be illustrated by the following verses, which I insert with pleasure, although I know not their author, as an elegant proof of that affection in a stranger, which the poetry of Cowper has such a peculiar tendency to inspire.

On seeing a Sketch of COWPER *by* LAWRENCE.

Sweet bard, whose mind, thus pictur'd in thy face,
O'er every feature spreads a nobler grace;
Whose keen, but soften'd eye appears to dart
A look of pity through the human heart;
To search the secrets of man's inward frame;
To weep with sorrow o'er his guilt and shame.
Sweet bard, with whom, in sympathy of choice,
I've oftimes left the world, at nature's voice,
To join the song that all her creatures raise,
To carol forth their great Creator's praise:
Or, wrapt in visions of immortal day,
Have gaz'd on Truth in Zion's heavenly way.
Sweet bard, may this thine image, all I know,
Or ever may, of Cowper's form below,
Teach one who views it, with a Christian's love,
To seek, and find thee in the realms above.

Persons who estimate poetical talents more from the arbitrary dictates of established criticism than from their own feelings, may be disposed to exclude Cowper from the highest rank of poets, because he has written no original work of the epic form:—He has constructed no fable; he has described no great action, accomplished by a variety of characters, derived either from history or invention. But if the great epic poets of all nations were assembled to give their suffrages concerning the rank to be assigned to Cowper as a poet, I am persuaded they would address him to this effect: "We are proud to receive you as a brother, because, if the form of your composition is different from ours, you are certainly equal to the noblest of our fraternity in the scope and effect of your verse. You are so truly a poet by the munificence of nature, that she seems to have given you an exclusive faculty, (resembling the fabulous faculty of Midas relating to gold, though given to you for beneficial purposes alone) the faculty of turning whatever you touch to a fit subject for poetry: you are the poet of familiar life: but you paint it with such felicity of design and execution, that, as long as verse is valued upon earth as a vehicle of instruction and delight, you must and ought to be revered and beloved as pre-eminently instructive and delightful: by having accomplished, with equal felicity, the two great and arduous objects of your art, you have deserved to be the most popular of poets."

Such, I apprehend, would be the praise which all the perfect judges of his poetry, could they be selected from every age, past, present, and future, would unanimously bestow on the genius of Cowper. Yet the Task, though, taken altogether, it is, perhaps, the most attractive poem that was ever produced, and such as required the rarest assemblage of truly poetical powers for its production, bears, like every work from a human hand, that certain mark of a mortal agent—defect. Even the partiality of friendship must allow that the Task has its blemishes, and the greatest of them is that tone of asperity in reproof, which I am persuaded its gentle and benevolent author caught unconsciously from his frequent perusal of the prophets. The severe invective against the commemoration of Handel is the most striking instance of the asperity to which I allude, and it awakened the displeasure of a poetical lady, whose displeasure Cowper, of all men, would have been most truly sorry to have excited, had he been as well acquainted with the charms of her conversation as he was with her literary talents.

Cowper's eminent contemporary, the favourite poet of Scotland, seems to have felt, with fraternal sensibility, both the beauties and the blemishes of this most celebrated work.

"Is not the Task a glorious poem?" says Burns, in one of his letters to his accomplished and generous friend, Mrs. Dunlop: "the religion of the Task, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and nature, the religion that exalts, that ennobles man."

Though Cowper occasionally caught a certain air of Calvinistic austerity, he had not a particle of Calvin's intolerance in his heart. He could never have occasioned the cruel death of a Servetus. Indulgence and good nature were the poet's predominant qualities, and their influence was such, that, although his extraordinary talents for satire threw perpetual temptation in his way, he declined the temptation: he chose to be not a satirist, but a monitor. "*Vitæ sanctitas summa, comitas par; insectatur vitia non homines.*" He wisely observed that the most dignified satirists are little better than mere beadles of Parnassus. He considered satire rather as the bane than the glory both of Dryden and of Pope. In truth, though many an upright man has, in a fit of honest moral indignation, begun to write satire, in a persuasion that such works would benefit the world and do honour to himself, yet even satirists of this higher order have generally found that they did little more than gratify the common malignity of the world, and suffer angry and blind prejudice and passions to insinuate themselves imperceptibly into their nobler purposes, disfiguring their works and

disquieting their lives. Such, perhaps, was the natural train of reflection that suggested to Boileau the admirable verse in which he feelingly and candidly condemns the path that he had himself pursued—

"C'est un mauvais metier que celui de medire."

Cowper felt the truth of this maxim so forcibly, that in his Poem on Charity he has turned the sharpest weapons of satire against the satirists themselves.

Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd
The milk of their good purpose all to curd;
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepar'd to poignard whomsoe'er they meet.

These lines are alone sufficient to prove that Cowper could occasionally assume the utmost severity of invective; yet nature formed him to delight in exhortation more than in reproof; and hence he justly describes himself, in his true monitory character, in the verses that very sweetly terminate his instructive Poem on Retirement.

Content, if, thus sequester'd, I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise;
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

When a poet has so nobly entitled himself to the esteem and affection of his readers, the most fastidious of them can hardly be inclined to censure him as an egotist, if he takes more than one occasion to draw his own portrait. Few passages in Horace are read with more pleasure than the verses in which he gives a circumstantial account of himself. This reflection induces me to add a few lines from the Task, in which the poet has delineated his own situation exactly in that point of view which must be most pleasing to those who most feel an interest in his lot.

The more we have sympathised in his afflictions, the more we may rejoice in recollecting that he had seasons of felicity, which he, in some measure, makes our own by the delightful fidelity of his description.

"Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace,
No loose or wanton, though a wand'ring muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus bless'd, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,
And proffigate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
Allur'd by my report;—but sure, no less,
That, self-condemn'd, they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise, and when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that its worth
Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too:
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of Piety, and sacred Truth,
And Virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them, and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd."

Indeed, the great and rare art of enjoying life, in its purest and sublimest delights, is what this beneficent poet appears most anxious to communicate, and impress on the heart and soul of his reader. Witness that most exquisite passage of the Task, where he teaches the pensive student, who contemplates the face of earth, to survey the works of his Maker with a tender transport of filial exultation.

"He looks abroad into the varied field
Of Nature, and though poor, perhaps, compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
And the resplendent rivers: His to enjoy,
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—My Father made them all!
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,

Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd and built, and still upholds a world
So cloath'd with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast, or in the chace, in song, or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you."

I believe the happiest hours of Cowper's life were those in which he was engaged on this noble poem; and as his happiness was, in a great measure, the fruit of his occupation, it is the more to be regretted that some incident, propitious to poetry, did not engage his active spirit a second time in the construction of a great original work.

There was a time, indeed, when his zealous and much regarded friend and neighbour, Mr. Greatheed, most kindly exhorted him to such an enterprise: an anecdote that I seize this opportunity of recording in the words of that gentleman.

"Homer being completely translated and committed to the press, I endeavoured to urge upon Mr. Cowper's attention the idea of a British epic, and would have recommended to him the reign of Alfred, the brightest ornament of the English throne, as one of the most eventful periods of our history. He discovered reluctance to the undertaking, and, to the best of my recollection, principally objected to the difficulties attending the introduction of a suitable machinery under the Christian dispensation. He pointed out the absurdities of Tasso, and the deficiency of Glover in this respect, and thought that Milton had occupied the only epic ground fit for a Christian poet."

Cowper would probably have thought otherwise on such a suggestion, had it been pressed upon his fancy in a more propitious season of his life, before his spirit was harassed by many troubles which attended him during the latter years that he bestowed upon Homer, and above all, by the enfeebled health of Mrs. Unwin, to which he gratefully devoted such incessant attention as must have inevitably impeded any great mental enterprise, even if his fervid imagination had been happily struck with any less obvious and more promising subject for epic song. Had he engaged in such an

enterprise at a favourable season of his life, I am persuaded he would have enriched the literature of his country with a composition more valuable than his version of Homer, allowing to that version as high a value as translation can boast.

He possessed all the requisites for the happiest accomplishment of the most arduous original work—fancy, judgment, and taste; all of the highest order, and in union so admirable that they heightened the powers of each other. He was singularly exempt from the two great sources of literary, and, indeed, of moral imperfections—negligence and affectation. From the first he was secured by a modest sense of his own abilities, united to a spirit of application, like the alacrity of Cæsar—

"Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum."

From affectation of every kind he was perpetually preserved by a majestic simplicity of mind, never seduced by false splendour, and most feelingly alive to all the graces of truth. But with the rarest combination of different faculties for the successful execution of any great poetical work, his tender and modest genius, sublime as it was, wanted the animating voice of friendship to raise it into confident exertion. The Task would not have been written without the inspiring voice of Lady Austen. The solemn and sage spirit of Numa required the inspiration of his Egeria.

—— Sic sacra Numæ ritusque colendos
Mitis Aricino dictabat nympha sub antro.

The great pleasure that Cowper felt in the conversation of accomplished women, inspired him with that delicate vivacity with which he was accustomed to express his gratitude for a variety of little occasional presents that he received from his female friends.

Dr. Johnson has said surlily and unjustly of Milton, that "he never learnt the art of doing little things with grace." But in truth, poets who possess such exquisite feelings, and such powers of language, as belonged to Milton and to Cowper, can hardly fail to give elegance and grace to their poetical trifles, whenever affection leads them to trifle in verse. Cowper, whose sensations of gratitude were singularly strong, was remarkably happy in those sprightly poetical compliments which he often addressed to his friends in return for some highly welcome, though trivial gift, endeared to his affectionate spirit by his regard for the giver. To illustrate this very amiable part of his character, I shall here insert a few of these animated and graceful trifles.

To my Cousin ANNE BODHAM,

On receiving from her a Net-work Purse made by herself, May 4, 1793.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee!
I thank thee for my Purse:

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem's too dear
For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
The best things kept within it.

To Mrs. KING,

On her kind Present to the Author—a Patch-work Counterpane of her own making.

The bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call
Both on his heart and head,
To pay, with tuneful thanks, the care
And kindness of a lady fair,
Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
(As Homer's epic shows)
Composed of sweetest vernal flow'rs,
Without the aid of sun or show'rs,
For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that, which in the scorching day
Receives the weary swain;
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank, with daisies pied,
'Till rous'd to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groan'd for me!
  Should ev'ry maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
  The bell would toll for some.

And O! what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of ev'ry hue
  All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers,
  Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to ev'ry gentle fair
Who will not come to pick me bare
  As bird of borrow'd feather;
And thanks to one, above them all,
The gentle fair of Pirtenhall,
  Who put THE WHOLE TOGETHER.

GRATITUDE.

Addressed to Lady Hesketh.

This cap, that so stately appears,
  With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems, by the crest that it rears,
  Ambitious of brushing the sky:
This cap to my cousin I owe,
  She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreath'd into an elegant bow,
  The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
  Contriv'd both for toil and repose,
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
  In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
  And rival in lustre of that,
In which, or astronomy lies,
  Fair Cassiopeia sat.

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride,
Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot!
Escap'd from a cross-country ride!
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust.

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce,
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too.

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a beaufette,
But what the gods call it above
Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains, that keep the room warm,
Or cool, as the season demands;
Those stoves, that, for pattern and form,
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands.

All these are not half that I owe
To one from our earliest youth,
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth:
For Time, the destroyer, declared,
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these:
And fancies I fear they will seem,
Poets' goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

Though Cowper could occasionally trifle in rhyme, for the sake of amusing his friends, with an affectionate and endearing gaiety, he appears most truly himself when he exerts his poetical talents for the higher purpose of consoling the afflicted. Witness the following epistle, composed at the request of Lady Austen, to console a particular friend of hers. Twenty-five letters, written by Mrs. Billacoys, the lady to whom the poem is addressed, were inserted in an early volume of the Theological Miscellany, in which the poem also appeared. Mr. Bull has annexed it to Cowper's translations from the spiritual songs of Madame Guion, but I willingly embrace the opportunity of re-printing it in this volume, from a copy corrected by the author, in the pleasing persuasion that it must prove to all religious readers, acquainted with affliction, a lenient charm of very powerful effect.

EPISTLE TO A LADY IN FRANCE.

A Person of great Piety, and much afflicted.

Madam! a stranger's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate, and not to praise;
To give the creature the Creator's due,
Were guilt in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, and e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No trav'ller ever reach'd that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briars on his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain,
Where nature has her yielding mosses spread,
With unshod feet, and yet unharm'd, they tread,
Admonish'd, scorn the caution, and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love;
That hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still;

In pity to a chosen few, design'd
T' escape the common ruin of their kind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said—Go spend them in the vale of tears!

Oh balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
Oh salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the fount of grace above,
Those breath'd from lips of everlasting love!
The flinty soil, indeed, their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys.
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang, experienc'd still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, sin!
But ills of every shape, of every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm, that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah! be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste;
No shepherds' tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near:
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain.
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.

So once, in Gideon's fleece, the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping flocks around.

It may be observed, to the honour of the poet, that his extreme shyness and dislike of addressing an absolute stranger did not preclude him from a free and happy use of his mental powers, when he had a prospect of comforting the distressed. His diffidence was often wonderfully great, but his humanity was greater.

Diffident as Cowper was by nature, though a poet, he wanted not the becoming resolution to defend his poetical opinions, when he felt them to be just; particularly on the structure of English verse, which he had examined with the eye of a master. As a proof of his resolution, I transcribe, with pleasure, a passage from one of his earliest letters to his bookseller, Mr. Johnson.

It happened that some accidental reviser of the manuscript had taken the liberty to alter a line in a poem of Cowper's. This liberty drew from the offended poet the following very just and animated remonstrance, which I am anxious to preserve, because it elucidates, with great felicity of expression, his deliberate ideas on English versification.

"I did not write the line, that has been tampered with, hastily, or without due attention to the construction of it; and what appeared to me its only merit is, in its present state, entirely annihilated.

"I know that the ears of modern verse-writers are delicate to an excess, and their readers are troubled with the same squeamishness as themselves: so that if a line do not run as smooth as quicksilver, they are offended. A critic of the present day serves a poem as a cook serves a dead turkey, when she fastens the legs of it to a post, and draws out all the sinews. For this we may thank Pope: but unless we could imitate him in the closeness and compactness of his expression, as well as in the smoothness of his numbers, we had better drop the imitation, which serves no other purpose than to emasculate and weaken all we write. Give me a manly rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them.

"I have said thus much, as I hinted in the beginning, because I have just finished a much longer poem than the last, which our common friend will receive by the same messenger that has charge of this letter. In that poem there are many lines which an ear so nice as the gentleman's who made the above mentioned alteration would undoubtedly condemn, and yet (if I may be permitted to say it) they cannot be made smoother without being the worse for it. There is a roughness on a plumb which nobody that understands fruit would rub off, though the plumb would be much more polished without it. But lest I tire you, I will only add, that I wish you to guard me for the future from all such meddling; assuring you that I always write as smoothly as I can, but that I never did, never will, sacrifice the spirit or sense of a passage to the sound of it."

In showing with what proper spirit the poet could occasionally vindicate his own verse, let me observe, that although he frequently speaks in his letters with humorous asperity concerning critics, no man could be more willing to receive, with becoming modesty and gratitude, the friendly assistance of just and tempe-

rate criticism. Some proofs of this humility, so laudable, if not uncommon in poets of great powers, I shall seize this opportunity of producing, in a few extracts from a series of the author's letters to his bookseller.

Weston, Feb. 11, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I am very sensibly obliged by the remarks of Mr. Fuseli, and beg that you will tell him so: they afford me opportunities of improvement which I shall not neglect. When he shall see the press-copy, he will be convinced of this, and will be convinced likewise, that, smart as he sometimes is, he spares me often when I have no mercy on myself. He will see, in short, almost a new translation. * * * I assure you faithfully, that whatever my faults may be, to be easily or hastily satisfied with what I have written is not one of them.

Sept. 7, 1790.

It grieves me that, after all, I am obliged to go into public without the whole advantage of Mr. Fuseli's judicious strictures. My only consolation is, that I have not forfeited them by my own impatience. Five years are no small portion of a man's life, especially at the latter end of it, and in those five years, being a man of almost no engagements, I have done more in the way of hard work than most could have done in twice the number. I beg you to present my compliments to Mr. Fuseli, with many and sincere thanks for the services that his own more important occupations would allow him to render me.

It is a singular spectacle for those who love to contemplate the progress of social arts, to observe a foreigner, who has raised himself to high rank in the arduous profession of a painter, correcting, and thanked for correcting the chief poet of England in his English version of Homer.

From the series of letters now before me, I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing two more passages, because they display the disposition of Cowper in a very amiable point of view. The first relates to Mr. Newton—the second to Mr. Johnson himself.

Weston, Oct. 3, 1790.

Mr. Newton having again requested that the preface which he wrote for my first volume may be prefixed to

it, I am desirous to gratify him in a particular that so emphatically bespeaks his friendship for me; and should my books see another edition, shall be obliged to you if you will add it accordingly.

I beg that you will not suffer your reverence, either for Homer or his translator, to check your continual examinations. I never knew, with certainty, till now, that the marginal strictures I found in the Task-proofs were yours. The justness of them, and the benefit I derived from them, are fresh in my memory, and I doubt not that their utility will be the same in the present instance.

Weston, Oct. 30, 1790.

I am anxious to preserve this singular anecdote, as it is honourable both to the modest poet, and to his intelligent bookseller.

But let me recall the reader's attention to the letter, in which the poet delivered so forcibly his own ideas of English versification.

This letter leads me to suggest a reason why some readers imagine that the rhyme of Cowper is not equal to his blank verse. Their idea arises from his not copying the melody of Pope: but from this he deviated by design, and his character of Pope, in the Poem of Table-Talk, may, when added to this letter, completely unfold to us his reasons for doing so. The lines to which I allude are these:

> Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
> In verse well disciplin'd, complete, compact,
> Gave virtue and morality a grace,
> That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,
> Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
> E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws:
> But he (his musical finesse was such,
> So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
> Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler has his tune by heart.

Cowper conceived that Pope, by adhering too closely to the use of pure Iambic feet in his verse, deprived himself of an advantage to be gained by a more liberal admission of other feet, and particularly Spondees, which, according to Cowper's idea, have a very

happy effect in giving variety, dignity, and force. He exemplifies his idea by exclaiming, in the following couplet of the same poem,

> Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
> Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force.

It is, however, remarkable, that Cowper, in his Poem on the Nativity, from the French of Madame Guion, seems to have chosen the style of Pope, which, on other occasions, he had rather tried to avoid. His versification in the poem just mentioned, affords a complete proof that, in rhyme, as in blank verse, he could at once be easy, forcible, and melodious.

Churchill had before objected to an excess of unvaried excellence in the verses of Pope: an objection that appears rather fastidious than reasonable. Happy the poet whose antagonist can only say of his language, that it is too musical, and of his fancy, that it is too much under the guidance of reason! Such are the charges by which even scholars and critics, of acknowledged taste and good nature, have, from the influence of accidental prejudice, endeavoured to lessen the poetical eminence of Pope; a poet remarkably unfortunate in his numerous biographers: for Ruffhead, whom Warburton employed in a task, which gratitude might have taught him to execute better himself, is neglected as dull: Johnson, though he nobly and eloquently vindicates the dignity of the poet, yet betrays a perpetual inclination to render him contemptible as a man: and Warton, though by nature one of the most candid and liberal of critics, continues, as a biographer, to indulge that prejudice which had early induced him, in his popular Essay on this illustrious poet, to endeavour to sink him a little in the scale of poetical renown: not, I believe, from any envious motive, but as an affectionate compliment to his friend Young, the patron to whom he inscribed his Essay.

Of this continued prejudice, which this good natured critic was himself very far from perceiving, he exhibits a remarkable proof in his Life of Pope, by the following facetious severity on the translation of Homer.

"No two things can be so unlike as the Iliad of Homer and the Iliad of Pope: to colour the images, to point the sentences, to lavish Ovidian graces on the simple Grecian, is to put a bag-wig on Mr. Townley's fine busto of the venerable old bard."

This sentence has all the sprightly pleasantry of my amiable old friend: but to prove that it is critically unjust, the reader has only to observe that Pope is very far from having produced that ludicrous

effect which the comparison of the critic supposes. Spectators must laugh, indeed, at a bust of Homer enveloped in a wig; but the reader has not a disposition to laughter in reading the Iliad of Pope. On the contrary, in many, many passages, where it deviates widely from the original, a reader of taste and candour admires both the dexterity and the dignity of the translator; and if he allows the version to be unfaithful, yet, with Mr. Twining, (the accomplished translator of Aristotle, who has justly and gracefully applied an expressive Latin verse to this glorious translation, so bitterly branded with the epithet unfaithful) he tenderly exclaims,

"Perfida, sed quamvis perfida, cara tamen."

I have been induced, by a sense of what is due to the great works of real genius, to take the part of Pope against the lively injustice of a departed friend, for whose literary talents, and for whose social character, I still retain the sincerest regard. The delight and the improvement derived from such noble works as the Homer of Pope, ought to guard every scholar against any partialities of friendship that can render him blind to the predominant merits, or severe to the petty imperfections of such a work. Predominant merits and petty imperfections are certainly to be found in the translation of Pope. These are temperately and judiciously displayed in the liberal essay of that gentle and amiable critic, Spense, on the Odyssey; who, though he was rather partial to blank verse, yet regarded Pope's Homer as a work entitled to great admiration. It is, indeed, a work so truly admirable, that I should be sorry if the more faithful version of my favourite friend could materially injure the honour of its author: but between Pope and Cowper there is no contest: "They are performers on different instruments," as Cowper has very properly remarked himself, in the preface to his own translation.

We may apply to the two translators, therefore, the comprehensive Latin words that Gibbon applied to two eminent lawyers, "*Magis pares, quam similes;*" but of the two translators it may be added, that each has attained such a degree of excellence in the mode he adopted, as will probably remain unsurpassed for ever. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring to decide which is entitled to the greater portion of praise, a reader, who has derived great pleasure from both, may rather wish (for the embellishment and honour of the English language) that it may exhibit a double version of every great ancient poet, perfectly equal in spirit and beauty to the Homers of Pope and of Cowper. My impartial esteem for the merits of these two pre-eminent translators had al-

most tempted me to introduce in this composition a minute display of their alternate successes and failures in many most striking passages of Homer; but, on reflection, it appears to me, that such a comparison, if fairly and extensively conducted, would form an episode too large for the body of my work, and the spirit of my departed friend seemed to admonish me against it, in the following words of his Grecian favourite:

Μητ' αρ με μαλ' αινεε, μητε τι νεικεε
Ειδοσι γαρ τοι ταυτα μετ' Αργειοις αγορευεις.

"Neither praise me much, nor blame,
For these are Grecians in whose ears thou speak'st,
And know me well."

Cowper's Homer's Iliad, 10.

I will therefore confine myself to the general result of such a comparison, and I am persuaded that all unprejudiced scholars, who may amuse themselves by pursuing the comparison, will find the result to be this: that both the English poets have rendered noble justice to their original, taken altogether; that, in separate parts, each translator has frequently sunk beneath him, and each, in their happier moments, surpassed the model which they endeavoured to copy.

Pope had partners in the latter portion of his work: Cowper accomplished his mighty labour by his own exertions: and he seems to have taken an honest pleasure in recording, with his own hand, the time and the pains that he bestowed on his translation.

In the copy of Clarke's Homer, which he valued particularly as the gift of his friend, Mr. Rose, he inserted the following memorandum.

"My translation of the Iliad I began on the twenty-first day of November, in the year 1784, and finished the translation of the Odyssey on the twenty-fifth day of August, 1790. During eight months of this time I was hindered by indisposition, so that I have been occupied in the work, on the whole, five years and one month.——Wm. Cowper.

"Mem: I gave the work another revisal while it was in the press, which I finished March 4, 1791."

When we add to this account all the time which he gave to preparations for his second edition, it will hardly be hyperbolical to

say, that this deeply studied version of Homer was, like the siege of Troy, a work of ten years. Nor will this time appear wonderful, when we recollect how determined Cowper was to be as minutely faithful as possible to the exact sense of his original. The following passage from one of his letters to Mr. Park will show how much he gratified his own mind by such scrupulous fidelity. In thanking his friend for a present of Chapman's Iliad, he says:

"*Weston, July* 15, 1793.

"I have consulted him in one passage of some difficulty, and find him giving a sense of his own, not at all warranted by the words of Homer. Pope sometimes does this, and sometimes omits the difficult part entirely. I can boast of having done neither, though it has cost me infinite pains to exempt myself from the necessity."

The late Mr. Wakefield, in re-publishing Pope's Homer, has mentioned Cowper's superior fidelity to his original with the liberal praise of a scholar; but he falls, I think, into injudicious severity on the structure of his verse—a severity the more remarkable, as he warmly censures Boswell for *unfeeling petulance* and *insolent dogmatism*, in speaking of Cowper's translation. Mr. Wakefield, though a man of extensive learning and acute sensibility, appears to me in some measure unjust both to Cowper and to Pope. He labours to prove that Pope was miserably defective in the knowledge of Greek, and questions the exactitude of Lord Bathurst's testimony, in the anecdote that seemed to vindicate the translator's acquaintance with the original. It is in my power to strengthen the credibility of that anecdote by a circumstance within my own memory, which I mention with pleasure, to refute a strange uncandid supposition, that Pope did not read himself the Greek which he profest to translate, but trusted entirely to other translators. Many years ago I had in my hands a small edition of Homer, (Greek, without Latin) and it was the very copy that Pope used in his translation. It had a few memorandums in his own hand-writing, ascertaining the lines he translated on such and such days. I might have bought the book for a price considerably above its usual value, but I was at the time unhappily infected with Warton's prejudice against the genius of Pope, and from the influence of that prejudice I failed to purchase a book which, "on my mended judgment, if I offend not to say it is mended," I should have rejoiced to acquire by doubling the price. May this petty anecdote be a warning to every literary youth, of an ardent spirit, not to adopt too hastily ideas that may lessen his regard for such

celebrated writers as time and experience will probably endear to his more cultivated mind.

It is, indeed, a prejudice not uncommon in the literary world, that little respect is due to poetical translators. The learned and amiable Jortin says, in his Life of Erasmus, "The translating of poets into other languages, and into verse, seems to be an occupation beneath a good poet; a work in which there is much labour and little honour."

Jortin was led to this idea by some expressions in a letter from Erasmus to Eobanus Hessus, who translated Homer into very animated Latin verse. As that translator did not employ a living language in his version of the great poet, his correspondent might justly apprehend that the credit of his work would not be answerable to its labour. But surely the case is very different, when poets, who have gained reputation by original works in a modern language, devote their talents to make their countrymen, learned or unlearned, easily and agreeably intimate with the poetical favourites of the ancient world.

Jortin presumes that pecuniary advantage must be a primary motive with a translator of extensive works; but there is a nobler incentive to such composition, and one that, I am persuaded, was very forcibly felt both by Pope and Cowper: I mean the generous gratification that a feeling spirit enjoys in a fair prospect of adding new lustre to the glory of a favourite author, to whom he has been often indebted for inexhaustible delight. He labours, indeed; but he frequently labours

"Studio fallente laborem."

Yet the magnitude of such works entitles them to no ordinary praise, when they are accomplished with considerable success. Every nation ought to think itself highly indebted to translators who enrich their native language by works of such merit as the Homers of Pope and of Cowper, because a long translation to the greatest masters of poetical diction is a sort of fatiguing dance performed in fetters. It certainly was so to Pope, and even to Cowper, whose versification, in his Homer, though so excellent that it gives to his translation what Johnson calls the first excellence of a translator, "to be read with pleasure by those who know not the original," yet seems not, in every part, to have that exquisite union of force, freedom and fluency, which is felt so delightfully through all the books of the Task. It is there that the versification of Cowper is most truly Homeric, that it perpetually displays what Plutarch describes as the characteristic of

Homer's verse, compared with that of Antimachus, "a certain charm, superadded to other graces and power, an appearance of having been executed with dexterous facility."*

Perhaps of all poets, ancient and modern, Homer, and Cowper in his original composition, exhibit this charm in the highest degree. They both have the gift of speaking in verse, as if poetry were their native tongue.

The poetical powers of the latter were indeed a gift, and his use of them was worthy of the veneration which he felt towards the giver of every good. He has accomplished, as a poet, the sublimest object of poetical ambition—he has dissipated the general prejudice that held it hardly possible for a modern author to succeed in sacred poetry—he has proved that verse and devotion are natural allies—he has shown that true poetical genius cannot be more honourably or more delightfully employed than in diffusing through the heart and mind of man, a filial affection for his Maker, with a firm and cheerful trust in his word. He has sung in a strain equal to the subject, the blessed Advent of universal peace; and perhaps the temperate enthusiasm of friendship may not appear too presumptuous in supposing that his poetry will have no inconsiderable influence in preparing the world for a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

Those who are little inclined to attribute such mighty powers to modern verse may yet allow, that the more the works of Cowper are read, the more his readers will find reason to admire the variety and the extent, the graces and the energy of his literary talents. The universal admiration excited by these will be heightened and endeared, to the friends of virtue, by the obvious reflection, that his writings, excellent as they appear, were excelled by the gentleness, the benevolence, and the sanctity of his life. To the merits of such a life, I could wish that a more early intimacy with my departed friend had enabled me to render more ample justice; but affection has made me industrious in my endeavours to supply, from the purest sources of intelligence, all the deficiency of my personal knowledge; and in composing this cordial tribute to a man whose history is so universally interesting, my chief ambition has been to deserve the approbation of his pure spirit, who appeared to me on earth among the most amiable of earthly friends, and

* Η μεν Αντιμαχου ποιησις και τα Διονυσιου ζωγραφηματα, των Κολοφωνιων ισχυν εχοντα και τονον εκθεσιασμενοις και καταπονοις εοικε: ταις δε Νικομαχου γραφαις και τοις Ομηρου στιχοις μετα της αλλης δυναμεως και χαριτος, προσεστι το δοκειν ευχερως και ραδιως απειργασθαι.

Plutarch. in Timoleone.

whom I cherish a lively hope of beholding in a state of happier existence, with the spirits of "just men made perfect." Pardon me, thou tenderest of mortals, if I have praised thee with a warmth of affection that might appear to thy diffident nature to border on excess. I am not conscious that I have, in the slightest particular, over-stepped the modesty of truth; but, lest expressions of my own should have a more questionable shape, I will close this imperfect, though affectionate memorial, by applying to thee those tender and beautiful verses which Cowley (one of thy favourite poets) addressed to a poetical brother, in all points, perhaps, and assuredly in genius, by many degrees, thy inferior.

Long did the Muses banish'd slaves abide,
And build vain pyramids to mortal pride:
Like Moses, thou (though spells and charms withstand)
Hast brought them nobly home, back to their holy land.
Poet and Saint, to thee are justly given,
The two most sacred names of Earth and Heaven.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT has been once more my lot, during the process of printing an extensive work, to lose a friend whom I had anxiously hoped to please with a sight of my completed publication. I allude to Lady Austen, whose name is justly mentioned with honour in the Life of Cowper, as she possessed and exerted an influence so happily favourable to the genius of the poet. Before I began the present work, I had the pleasure and the advantage to form a personal acquaintance with this lady: she favoured me, in a very graceful and obliging manner, with much valuable information, and with some highly interesting materials for the history of our friend, who had sportively given her the title of sister, and who, while their intercourse lasted, treated her with all the tenderness and all the confidence of a brother.

Her maiden name was Richardson: she was married, very early in life, to Sir Robert Austen, Baronet, and resided with him in France, where he died. Her intercourse with Cowper is already related. In a subsequent period she was married to a native of France, Mr. De Tardif, a gentleman and a poet, who has expressed, in many elegant French verses, his just and deep sense

of her accomplished, endearing character. In visiting Paris with him, in the course of the last summer, she sunk under the fatigue of the excursion, and died in that city on the twelfth of August, 1802.

My obligations to her kindness induce me to terminate this brief account of a person so cordially regarded by Cowper, and so instrumental to the existence of his greatest work, with an offering of respect and gratitude, in the shape of an

EPITAPH.

Honour and Peace, ye guardians kindly just,
Fail not in duty to this hallow'd dust!
And mortals (all whose cultur'd spirits know
Joys that pure faith and heavenly verse bestow)
Passing this tomb, its buried inmate bless,
And obligation to her powers confess,
Who, when she grac'd this earth, in Austen's name,
Wak'd, in a poet, inspiration's flame!
Remov'd, by counsel, like the voice of spring,
Fetters of diffidence from Fancy's wing,
Sent the freed eagle in the sun to bask,
And from the mind of Cowper—call'd the Task!

I close my work with these verses, from a persuasion that I can pay no tribute to the memory of Cowper more truly acceptable to his tender spirit, than praise sincerely bestowed on the objects of his affection.

APPENDIX.

(No. 1.)

ORIGINAL POEMS.

To JOHN JOHNSON,

On his presenting me with an antique Bust of HOMER.

KINSMAN belov'd, and as a son by me,
When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
The sculptur'd form of my old fav'rite bard,
I rev'rence feel for him, and love for thee.

Joy too, and grief; much joy, that there should be
Wise men, and learn'd, who grudge not to reward,
With some applause, my bold attempt, and hard,
Which others scorn. Critics by courtesy!

The grief is this, that, sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail;
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross when balanc'd in the Christian scale!

Be wiser thou!—Like our fore-father DONNE,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone!

To the Reverend Mr. NEWTON,

On his Return from Ramsgate.

That ocean you of late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen,
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controuling steep
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threat'ning deep,
No longer such to you.

To me, the waves that ceaseless broke
Upon the dang'rous coast,
Hoarsely, and ominously, spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more.

LOVE ABUSED.

What is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah, if from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's fev'rish veins,
Lust, like a lawless, headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on ev'ry side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enliv'ning scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flow'ry beauties dead.
The stream, polluted, dark and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears.

Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

EPITAPH

On Mr. CHESTER, of Chicheley.

Tears flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,
'Till all who knew him follow to the skies.
Tears therefore fall, where CHESTER's ashes sleep;
Him, wife, friends, brothers, children, servants weep—
And justly—few shall ever him transcend
As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

EPITAPH

On Mrs. M. HIGGINS, of Weston.

Laurels may flourish round the conqu'ror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell:
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

To Count GRAVINA.

On his translating the Author's Song on a Rose into Italian Verse.

My Rose, Gravina, blooms anew,
And steep'd not now in rain,
But in Castalian streams, by you,
Will never fade again.

INSCRIPTION

For a Stone, erected at the sowing of a Grove of Oaks at Chillington, the Seat of THOMAS GIFFARD, Esquire. 1790.

Other stones the æra tell
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.
Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm, and frost?—these Oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay;

But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread the branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.
Cherish honour, virtue, truth!
So shalt thou prolong thy youth:
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fixt, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

INSCRIPTION

For a Hermitage in the Author's Garden.

This cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to——the last retreat.

STANZAS

On the late indecent Liberties taken with the Remains of the great MILTON.—*Anno* 1790.

Me too, perchance, in future days,
The sculptur'd stone shall show,
With Paphian myrtle, or with bays
Parnassian, on my brow.

But I, or ere that season come,
Escap'd from every care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
And sleep securely there.*

So sang, in Roman tone and stile,
The youthful bard ere long,
Ordain'd to grace his native isle
With her sublimest song.

* Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus
Nectens aut Paphiæ myrti aut Parnassidæ lauri
Fronde comas.—At ego secura pace quiescam. *Milton.*

Who, then, but must conceive disdain,
Hearing the deed unblest
Of wretches who have dar'd prophane
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heav'd the stones
Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones,
And steal his dust away.

Oh ill requited bard! neglect
Thy living worth repay'd,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts the dead.

A TALE,

Founded on a Fact which happened in January, 1779.

Where Humber pours his rich commercial stream,
There dwelt a wretch, who breath'd but to blaspheme.
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine, in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock, whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feather'd kind
Were but for battle, and for death design'd;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport, to minds on cruelty intent:
It chanc'd (such chances Providence obey)
He met a fellow-lab'rer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once inflam'd—
But now the savage temper was reclaim'd.
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace!
His iron-heart with scripture he assail'd,
Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,
Swift, as the lightning-glimpse, the arrow flew;
He wept, he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he: But none he found.

He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel.
Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.

Now, farewell, oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's, for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learn'd by his alter'd speech—the change divine!
Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh, when he would swear as fast as they.
"No," said the penitent, "such words shall share
"This breath no more, devoted now to pray'r.
"Oh! if thou seest, (thine eye the future sees)
"That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these;
"Now strike me to the ground, on which I kneel,
"Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;
"Now take me to that Heav'n I once defy'd,
"Thy presence, thy embrace!"—He spoke, and dy'd!

A TALE.

In Scotland's realm, where trees are few,
Nor even shrubs abound;
But where, however bleak the view,
Some better things are found;

For husband there and wife may boast
Their union undefil'd;
And false ones are as rare almost
As hedge-rows in the wild:

In Scotland's realm, forlorn and bare,
This hist'ry chanc'd of late—
This hist'ry of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct fill'd;
They pair'd, and only wish'd a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heaths uncover'd, and the moors,
Except with snow and sleet;
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores
Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding place they sought,
'Till both grew vex'd and tir'd;
At length a ship arriving, brought
The good so long desir'd.

A ship!—could such a restless thing
Afford them place to rest?
Or was the merchant charg'd to bring
The homeless birds a nest?

Hush!—silent hearers profit most!—
This racer of the sea
Prov'd kinder to them than the coast—
It serv'd them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal;
The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel,
Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft
Their roofless home they fixt;
Form'd with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mixt.

Four iv'ry eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight:—
The vessel weighs—forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother bird is gone to sea,
As she had chang'd her kind;
But goes the mate? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No!—Soon as from ashore he saw
The winged mansion move;
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love!

Then perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along;
The billows and the blasts defied,
And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman, with sincere delight,
His feather'd shipmate eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight,
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new,
Each some approaching good divines,
And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honour'd land! a desert, where
Not even birds can hide,
Yet parent of this loving pair,
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye, who rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan;
Were not afraid to plough the brine
In company with man.

To whose lean country, much disdain
We English often show;
Yet from a richer, nothing gain
But wantonness and woe.

Be it your fortune, year by year,
The same resource to prove;
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love!

This tale is founded on an anecdote which the author found in the Buckinghamshire Herald, for Saturday, June 1, 1793, in the following words.

Glasgow, May 23d.

In a block or pully, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was

followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hulk for food.

STANZAS,

Addressed to Lady HESKETH, *by a Lady, in returning a Poem of Mr.* COWPER's, *lent to the Writer on Condition she should neither show it, nor take a Copy.*

What wonder! if my wavering hand
Had dar'd to disobey,
When Hesketh gave a harsh command,
And Cowper led astray?

Then take this tempting gift of thine,
By pen uncopied yet:
But can'st thou, Memory, confine,
Or teach me to forget?

More lasting than the touch of art
Her characters remain;
When written by a feeling heart
On tablets of the brain.

COWPER's Reply.

To be remember'd thus is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the few, like her, the same,
The press might rest for me.

So Homer, in the memory stor'd
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserv'd—a richer hoard,
But never lodg'd so well.

APPENDIX.

(No. 2.)

TRANSLATIONS OF GREEK VERSES.

From the Greek of JULIANUS.

A SPARTAN, his companions slain,
Alone from battle fled;
His mother, kindling with disdain
That she had borne him, struck him dead:

For courage, and not birth alone,
In Sparta, testifies a son.

On the same, by PALLADAS.

A Spartan, 'scaping from the fight,
His mother met him in his flight,
Upheld a falchion to his breast,
And thus the fugitive address'd:

"Thou can'st but live to blot with shame
"Indelible thy mother's name,
"While ev'ry breath that thou shalt draw
"Offends against thy country's law:
"But if thou perish by this hand,
"Myself, indeed, throughout the land,
"To my dishonour shall be known
"The mother still of such a son;
"But Sparta will be safe and free,
"And that shall serve to comfort me."

AN EPITAPH.

My name—my country—what are they to thee?
What—whether base or proud, my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpass'd all other men—
Perhaps I fell below them all—what then?
Suffice it, stranger, that thou see'st a tomb—
Thou know'st its use—it hides—no matter whom.

Another.

Take to thy bosom, gentle earth, a swain
With much hard labour in thy service worn.
He set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
And he these olives that the vale adorn.

He fill'd with grain the glebe, the rills he led
Through this green herbage, and those fruitful bow'rs:
Thou, therefore, Earth, lie lightly on his head,
His hoary head, and deck his grave with flow'rs.

Another.

Painter, this likeness is too strong,
And we shall mourn the dead too long.

Another.

At three-score winters end I died
A cheerless being, sole and sad;
The nuptial knot I never tied,
And wish my father never had.

By CALLIMACHUS.

At morn we plac'd on his funereal bier
Young Melanippus; and at even-tide,
Unable to sustain a loss so dear,
By her own hand his blooming sister died.

Thus Aristippus mourn'd his noble race,
Annihilated by a double blow;
Nor son could hope, nor daughter more t' embrace,
And all Cyrene sadden'd at his woe.

On Miltiades.

Miltiades, thy valour best
(Although in every region known)
The men of Persia can attest,
Taught by thyself at Marathon.

On an Infant.

Bewail not much, my parents, me, the prey
Of ruthless Ades, and sepulcher'd here,
An infant, in my fifth scarce finish'd year,
He found all sportive, innocent, and gay,
Your young Callimachus; and if I knew
Not many joys, my griefs were also few.

By Heraclides.

In Gnidus born, the consort I became
Of Euphron. Aretimias was my name,
His bed I shared, nor proved a barren bride,
But bore two children at a birth, and died.
One child I leave to solace and uphold
Euphron hereafter, when infirm and old;
And one, for his remembrance sake, I bear
To Pluto's realm, till he shall join me there.

On the Reed.

I was of late a barren plant,
Useless, insignificant,
Nor fig, nor grape, nor apple bore,
A native of the marshy shore;
But gather'd for poetic use,
And plung'd into a sable juice,
Of which my modicum I sip,
With narrow mouth and slender lip.
At once, although by nature dumb,
All-eloquent I have become,
And speak with fluency untired,
As if by Phœbus self inspired.

To Health.

Eldest born of [redacted] divine,
Blest Hygeia! be it mine
To enjoy what thou can'st give,
And henceforth with thee to live:
For in pow'r if pleasure be,
Wealth, or num'rous progeny;
Or in amorous embrace,
Where no spy infests the place;
Or in aught that Heav'n bestows
To alleviate human woes.
When the wearied heart despairs
Of a respite from its cares;
These and ev'ry true delight
Flourish only in thy sight.
And the sister Graces Three
Owe, themselves, their youth, to thee,
Without whom we may possess
Much, but never happiness.

On the Astrologers.

Th' Astrologers did all alike presage
My uncle's dying in extreme old age;
One only disagreed. But he was wise,
And spoke not till he heard the fun'ral cries.

On an Old Woman.

Mycilla dyes her locks, 'tis said,
But 'tis a foul aspersion;
She buys them black, they therefore need
No subsequent immersion.

On Invalids.

Far happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it every day.

On Flatterers.

No mischief worthier of our fear
In nature can be found,
Than friendship, in ostent sincere,
But hollow and unsound.

For lull'd into a dang'rous dream,
We close infold a foe,
Who strikes, when most secure we seem,
Th' inevitable blow.

On the Swallow.

Attio maid! with honey fed,
Bear'st thou to thy callow brood
Yonder locust from the mead,
Destin'd their delicious food?

Ye have kindred voices clear,
Ye alike unfold the wing,
Migrate hither, sojourn here,
Both attendant on the spring.

Ah, for pity, drop the prize;
Let it not, with truth, be said
That a songster gasps and dies,
That a songster may be fed.

On late acquired Wealth.

Poor in my youth, and in life's later scenes
Rich to no end, I curse my natal hour;
Who nought enjoy'd, while young, denied the means;
And nought, when old, enjoy'd, denied the pow'r.

On a true Friend.

Hast thou a friend? Thou hast, indeed,
A rich and large supply,
Treasure to serve your ev'ry need,
Well-manag'd, till you die.

On a Bath, by PLATO.

Did Cytherea to the skies
From this pellucid lymph arise?
Or was it Cytherea's touch,
When bathing here, that made it such?

On a Fowler, by ISIODORUS.

With seeds and bird-lime, from the desert air,
Eumelus gather'd free, though scanty fare.
No lordly patron's hand he deign'd to kiss,
Nor luxury knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
Thrice thirty years he liv'd, and to his heirs
His reeds bequeath'd, his bird-lime, and his snares.

On NIOBE.

Charon, receive a family on board,
Itself sufficient for thy crazy yawl;
Apollo and Diana, for a word
By me too proudly spoken, slew us all.

On a good Man.

Traveller, regret not me; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind;
And with one wife liv'd many a year in peace.
Three virtuous youths espoused my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay;
Nor saw I one of all derived from me
Touch'd with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my fun'ral rites bestow'd,
And me my blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode
Where shades of pious men for ever dwell.

On a Miser.

They call thee rich, I deem thee poor—
Since, if thou dar'st not use thy store,
But sav'st it only for thine heirs,
The treasure is not thine, but theirs.

Another.

A Miser, traversing his house,
Espied, unusual there, a mouse,
And thus his uninvited guest,
Briskly inquisitive, address'd:
"Tell me, my dear, to what cause is it
"I owe this unexpected visit?"
The mouse her host obliquely eyed,
And, smiling, pleasantly replied,
"Fear not, good fellow, for your hoard,
"I come to lodge, and not to board."

Another.

Art thou some individual of a kind
Long-liv'd by nature as the rook or hind?
Heap treasure, then, for if thy need be such,
Thou hast excuse, and scarce can'st heap too much.
But man thou seem'st; clear therefore from thy breast
This lust of treasure—folly at the best!
For why should'st thou go wasted to the tomb,
To fatten with thy spoils, thou know'st not whom?

On Female Inconstancy.

Rich, thou had'st many lovers—poor, hast none,
So surely want extinguishes the flame;
And she who call'd thee once her pretty one,
And her Adonis, now inquires thy name.

Where wast thou born, Sosicrates, and where,
In what strange country can thy parents live,
Who seem'st, by thy complaints, not yet aware
That want's a crime no woman can forgive?

On the Grasshopper.

Happy songster, perch'd above
On the summit of the grove,
Whom a dew-drop cheers to sing
With the freedom of a king.
From thy perch survey the fields
Where prolific nature yields
Nought that willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.
For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of Spring;
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flow'rs.
Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly—thou and he are friends;
Nor thy never-ceasing strains,
Phœbus or the muse disdains,
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing,
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou?

On Hermocratia.

Hermocratia named—save only one,
Twice fifteen births I bore, and buried none.
For neither Phœbus pierc'd my thriving joys,
Nor Dian—she my girls, or he my boys.
But Dian rather, when my daughters lay
In parturition, chas'd their pangs away;
And all my sons, by Phœbus' bounty, shared
A vig'rous youth, by sickness unimpaired.
Oh Niobe! far less prolific, see
Thy boast against Latona sham'd by me!

From MENANDER.

Fond youth, who dream'st that hoarded gold
Is needful, not alone to pay
For all thy various items sold
To serve the wants of ev'ry day—

Bread, vinegar, and oil, and meat,
For sav'ry viands season'd high,
But somewhat more important yet—
I tell thee what it cannot buy.

No treasure, had'st thou more amass'd
Than fame to Tantalus assign'd,
Would save thee from the tomb at last;
But thou must leave it all behind:

I give thee, therefore, counsel wise;
Confide not vainly in thy store,
However large—much less despise
Others comparatively poor.

But in thy more exalted state,
A just and equal temper show,
That all who see thee, rich and great,
May deem thee worthy to be so.

On PALLAS *Bathing.*

From a Hymn of CALLIMACHUS.

Nor oils of balmy scent produce,
Nor mirror for Minerva's use;
Ye nymphs who lave her! she, array'd
In genuine beauty, scorns their aid.
Not even when they left the skies,
To seek on Ida's head the prize,
From Paris' hand, did Juno deign,
Or Pallas in the chrystal plain
Of Simois' stream, her locks to trace,
Or in the mirror's polish'd face,
Though Venus oft with anxious care
Adjusted twice a single hair.

To Demosthenis.

It flatters and deceives thy view,
This mirror of ill-polish'd ore;
For were it just, and told thee true,
Thou would'st consult it never more.

On a similar Character.

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
With washes dye your hair;
But paint and washes both are vain
To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil;
No labour will efface 'em;
You wear a mask of smoothest oil;
Yet still with ease we trace 'em.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
Which, though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make,
Old Hecuba young Helen.

On an ugly Fellow.

Beware, my friend, of chrystal brook,
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
Thy nose, thou chance to see.
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And, self-detested, thou would'st pine
As self-enamour'd he.

On a battered Beauty.

Hair, wax, rouge, honey, teeth, you buy
A multifarious store:
A mask at once would all supply,
Nor would it cost you more.

On a Thief.

When Aulus, the nocturnal thief, made prize
Of Hermes, swift-winged envoy of the skies—
Hermes, Arcadia's king, the thief divine,
Who, when an infant, stole Apollo's kine,
And whom, as arbiter and overseer
Of our gymnastic sports, we planted here—
Hermes! he cried, you meet no new disaster;
Oftimes the pupil goes beyond his master.

On Pedigree, from EPICHARMUS.

My mother, if thou love me, name no more
My noble birth. Sounding at every breath
My noble birth, thou kill'st me. Thither fly,
As to their only refuge, all from whom
Nature withholds all good besides: *they* boast
Their noble birth, conduct us to the tombs
Of their forefathers, and from age to age
Ascending, trumpet their illustrious race.
But whom hast thou beheld, or can'st thou name,
Deriv'd from no forefathers? Such a man
Lives not; for how could such be born at all?
And if it chance, that, native of a land
Far distant, or in infancy depriv'd
Of all his kindred, one who *cannot* trace
His origin, exist, why deem him sprung
From baser ancestry than theirs who *can?*
My mother, he whom nature at his birth
Endow'd with virtuous qualities, although
An Æthiop and a slave, is nobly born.

On Envy.

Pity, says the Theban bard,
From my wishes I discard
Envy: let me rather be,
Rather far a theme for thee.
Pity to distress is shown;
Envy to the great alone.

So the Theban—But to shine
Less conspicuous be mine!
I prefer the golden mean
Pomp and penury between.
For alarm and peril wait
Ever on the loftiest state,
And the lowest, to the end,
Obloquy and scorn attend.

By PHILEMON.

Oft we enhance our ills by discontent,
And give them bulk beyond what nature meant.
A parent, brother, friend deceas'd, to cry,
"He's dead indeed, but he was born to die;"
Such temperate grief is suited to the size
And burthen of the loss, is just and wise.
But to exclaim, "Ah! wherefore was I born,
"Thus to be left, for ever thus forlorn?"
Who thus laments his loss, invites distress,
And magnifies a woe that might be less,
Through dull despondence to his lot resigned,
And leaving reason's remedy behind.

By MOSCHUS.

I slept, when Venus enter'd: To my bed
A Cupid in her beauteous hand she led,
A bashful-seeming boy, and thus she said:
"Shepherd receive my little one: I bring
"An untaught love, whom thou must teach to sing."
She said, and left him. I suspecting nought,
Many a sweet strain my subtle pupil taught,
How reed to reed Pan first with ozier bound,
How Pallas form'd the pipe of softest sound,
How Hermes gave the lute, and how the quire
Of Phœbus owe to Phœbus' self the lyre.
Such were my themes: my themes nought heeded he,
But ditties sang of am'rous sort to me,
The pangs that mortals and immortals prove
From Venus' influence and the darts of love.
Thus was the teacher by the pupil taught;
His lessons I retain'd, and mine forgot.

APPENDIX.

(No. 3.)

TRANSLATIONS from HORACE and VIRGIL.

THE

FIFTH SATIRE

OF THE

FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

(Printed in Duncombe's Horace.)

A humorous Description of the Author's Journey from Rome to Brundusium.

'TWAS a long journey lay before us,
When I, and honest Heliodorus,
Who far in point of rhetoric
Surpasses ev'ry living Greek,
Each leaving our respective home,
Together sally'd forth from Rome.

First at Aricia we alight,
And there refresh, and pass the night,
Our entertainment rather coarse
Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse;
Thence o'er the causeway, soft and fair,
To Apiiforum we repair.
But as this road is well supply'd
(Temptation strong) on either side
With inns commodious, snug and warm,
We split the journey, and perform
In two days time, what's often done
By brisker travellers in one.
Here, rather choosing not to sup
Than with bad water mix my cup,

After a warm debate, in spite
Of a provoking appetite,
I sturdily resolv'd at last
To balk it, and pronounce a fast,
And in a moody humour wait,
While my less dainty comrades bait.

Now o'er the spangled hemisphere
Diffus'd, the starry train appear,
When there arose a desp'rate brawl,
The slaves and bargemen, one and all,
Rending their throats, (have mercy on us!)
As if they were resolv'd to stun us;
"Steer the barge this way to the shore!
"I tell you, we'll admit no more!
"Plague! will you never be content?"
Thus a whole hour at least is spent,
While they receive the sev'ral fares,
And kick the mule into his gears.
Happy, these difficulties past,
Could we have fall'n asleep at last!
But, what with humming, croaking, biting,
Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,
These tuneful natives of the lake
Conspir'd so keep us broad awake.
Besides, to make the concert full,
Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,
The bargeman, and a passenger,
Each in his turn essay'd an air
In honour of his absent fair.
At length, the passenger, oppress
With wine, left off, and snor'd the rest.
The weary bargeman too gave o'er,
And hearing his companion snore,
Seiz'd the occasion, fix'd the barge,
Turn'd out his mule to graze at large,
And slept, forgetful of his charge.
And now the sun o'er eastern hill
Discover'd that our barge stood still;
When one, whose anger vex'd him sore,
With malice fraught, leaps quick on shore,
Plucks up a stake, with many a thwack
Assails the mule and driver's back.

Then slowly moving on with pain,
At ten Feronia's stream we gain,
And in her pure and glassy wave
Our hands and faces gladly lave.
Climbing three miles, fair Anxur's height
We reach, with stony quarries white.
While here, as was agreed, we wait
'Till, charg'd with bus'ness of the state,
Mæcenas and Cocceius come,
The messengers of peace from Rome.
My eyes, by wat'ry humours blear
And sore, I with black balsam smear.
At length they join us, and with them
Our worthy friend, Fonteius came,
A man of such complete desert,
Antony lov'd him at his heart.
At Fundi we refus'd to bait,
And laugh'd at vain Aufidius' state.
A prætor now, a scribe before,
The purple-border'd robe he wore,
His slave the smoking censer bore.
Fir'd at Muræna's we repose,
At Formia sup at Capito's.

With smiles the rising morn we greet,
At Sinnuessa pleas'd to meet
With Plotius, Varius, and the bard
Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.
The world no purer spirits knows,
For none my heart more warmly glows.
Oh! what embraces we bestow'd,
And with what joy our breasts o'erflow'd!
Sure, while my sense is sound and clear,
Long as I live, I shall prefer
A gay, good-natur'd, easy friend,
To ev'ry blessing Heav'n can send.
At a small village the next night
Near the Vulturnus we alight;
Where, as employ'd on state affairs,
We were supply'd by the purvey'rs,
Frankly at once, and without hire,
With food for man and horse, and fire.
Capua next day betimes we reach,
Where Virgil and myself, who each

Labour'd with different maladies,
His such a stomach, mine such eyes,
As would not bear strong exercise,
In drowsy mood to sleep resort;
Mæcenas to the tennis-court.
Next at Coccefus' farm we're treated,
Above the Caudian tavern seated.
His kind and hospitable board
With choice of wholesome food was stor'd.

Now, O ye Nine, inspire my lays!
To nobler themes my fancy raise!
Two combatants, who scorn to yield
The noisy tongue-disputed field,
Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim
A poet's tribute to their fame;
Cicirrus of true Oscian breed,
Sarmentus, who was never freed,
But ran away. We don't defame him.
His lady lives, and still may claim him.
Thus dignify'd, in hardy fray
These champions their keen wit display,
And first Sarmentus led the way.
"Thy locks," quoth he, "so rough and coarse,
"Look like the mane of some wild horse."
We laugh. Cicirrus undismay'd—
"Have at you!"—cries, and shakes his head.
"'Tis well," Sarmentus says, "you've lost
"That horn your forehead once could boast;
"Since, maim'd and mangled as you are,
"You seem to butt." A hideous scar
Improv'd, 'tis true, with double grace,
The native horrors of his face.
Well, after much jocosely said
Of his grim front, so fi'ry red,
(For carbuncles had blotch'd it o'er,
As usual on Campania's shore)
"Give us," he cry'd, "since you're so big,
"A sample of the Cyclops' jig.
"Your shanks methinks no buskins ask,
"Nor does your phiz require a mask."
To this Cicirrus—"In return,
"Of you, Sir, now I fain would learn,

" When 'twas, no longer deem'd a slave,
" Your chains you to the Lares gave:
" For though a scriv'ner's right you claim,
" Your lady's title is the same.
" But what could make you run away,
" Since, pygmy as you are, each day
" A single pound of bread would quite
" O'erpow'r your puny appetite?"
Thus jok'd the champions, while we laugh'd
And many a cheerful bumper quaff'd.

To Beneventum next we steer;
Where our good host, by over-care
In roasting thrushes lean as mice,
Had almost fall'n a sacrifice.
The kitchen soon was all on fire,
And to the roof the flames aspire.
There might you see each man and master
Striving amidst this sad disaster
To save the supper. Then they came
With speed enough to quench the flame.
From hence we first at distance see
Th' Apulian hills, well known to me,
Parch'd by the sultry western blast;
And which we never should have past,
Had not Trivicus by the way
Receiv'd us at the close of day.
But each was forc'd at ent'ring here
To pay the tribute of a tear;
For more of smoke than fire was seen—
The hearth was pil'd with logs so green.
From hence in chaises we were carry'd
Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarry'd
At a small town, whose name my verse
(So barb'rous is it) can't rehearse.
Know it you may, by many a sign,
Water is dearer far than wine;
Their bread is deem'd such dainty fare,
That ev'ry prudent traveller
His wallet loads with many a crust,
For at Canusium you might just
As well attempt to gnaw a stone
As think to get a morsel down.

That too with scanty streams is fed,
Its founder was brave Diomed.
Good Varius, (ah, that friends must part!)
Here left us all with aching heart.
At Rubi we arriv'd that day,
Well jaded by the length of way,
And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter.
Next day no weather could be better,
No roads so bad; we scarce could crawl
Along to fishy Barium's wall.
Th' Egnatians next, who, by the rules
Of common sense, are knaves or fools,
Made all our sides with laughter heave,
Since we with them must needs believe,
That incense in their temples burns,
And without fire to ashes turns.
To circumcision's bigots tell
Such tales! For me, I know full well,
That in high heav'n, unmov'd by care,
The gods eternal quiet share:
Nor can I deem their spleen the cause,
Why fickle Nature breaks her laws.
Brundusium last we reach: and there
Stop short the Muse and traveller.

THE

NINTH SATIRE

OF THE

FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

The Description of an Impertinent.

Adapted to the present Times, 1759.

SAUNT'RING along the street one day,
On trifles musing by the way—
Up steps a free familiar wight,
(I scarcely knew the man by sight.)
"Carlos," he cry'd, "your hand, my dear!
"Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!

" Pray heav'n I see you well!"—" So, so:
" E'en well enough, as times now go.
" The same good wishes, Sir, to you."
Finding he still pursu'd me close—
" Sir, you have bus'ness I suppose."
" My bus'ness, Sir, is quickly done.
" 'Tis but to make my merit known.
" Sir, I have read"—" O learned Sir,
" You and your learning I revere."
Then, sweating with anxiety,
And sadly longing to get free,
Gods, how I scamper'd, scuffled for't,
Ran, halted, ran again, stopp'd short,
Beckon'd my boy, and pull'd him near,
And whisper'd nothing in his ear.

Teaz'd with his loose unjointed chat—
" What street is this? What house is that?"—
O Harlow, how I envy'd thee
Thy unabash'd effrontery,
Who dar'st a foe with freedom blame,
And call a coxcomb by his name!
When I return'd him answer none,
Obligingly the fool ran on:
" I see you're dismally distrest,
" Would give the world to be releas'd.
" But by your leave, Sir, I shall still
" Stick to your shirts, do what you will.
" Pray, which way does your journey tend?"
" Oh 'tis a tedious way, my friend,
" Across the Thames, the Lord knows where.
" I would not trouble you so far."
" Well, I'm at leisure to attend you."
" Are you?" thought I, " the de'il befriend you."
No ass, with double panniers rack'd,
Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,
E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull
As I, nor half so like a fool.
" Sir, I know little of myself,
(Proceeds the pert conceited elf)
" If Gray or Mason you will deem
" Than me more worthy your esteem.
" Poems I write by folios,
" As fast as other men write prose.

" Then I can sing so loud, so clear,
" That bard cannot with me compare.
" In dancing too I all surpass,
" Not Cooke can move with such a grace."
Here I made shift, with much ado,
To interpose a word or two.
" Have you no parents, Sir, no friends,
" Whose welfare on your own depends?"—
" Parents, relations, say you? No,
" They're all dispos'd of long ago—
" Happy to be no more perplex'd.
" My fate too threatens, I go next.
" Dispatch me, Sir, 'tis now too late,
" Alas! to struggle with my fate!
" Well, I'm convinc'd my time is come—
" When young, a gypsy told my doom.
" The beldame shook her palsy'd head,
" As she perus'd my palm, and said:
" Of poison, pestilence, or war,
" Gout, stone, defluction, or catarrh,
" You have no reason to beware.
" Beware the coxcomb's idle prate;
" Chiefly, my son, beware of that.
" Be sure, when you behold him, fly
" Out of all ear-shot, or you die."

To Rufus' Hall we now drew near,
Where he was summon'd to appear,
Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,
Or suffer judgment by default.
" For Heaven's sake, if you love me, wait
" One moment! I'll be with you straight."
Glad of a plausible pretence—
" Sir, I must beg you to dispense
" With my attendance in the court,
" My legs will surely suffer for't."—
" Nay, prythee, Carlos, stop awhile!"
" Faith, Sir, in law I have no skill;
" Besides, I have no time to spare.
" I must be going, you know where."
" Well, I protest, I'm doubtful now,
" Whether to leave my suit or you,"
" Me without scruple! (I reply)
" Me by all means, Sir,"—" No, not I,

" *Allons, Monsieur!*" 'Twere vain, you know,
To strive with a victorious foe;
So I reluctantly obey,
And follow, where he leads the way.

" You, and Newcastle, are so close,
" Still hand and glove, Sir, I suppose.—
" Newcastle (let me tell you, Sir)
" Has not his equal every where."—
" Well; there, indeed, your fortune's made.
" Faith, Sir, you understand your trade.
" Would you but give me your good word,
" Just introduce me to my Lord,
" I should serve charmingly by way
" Of second fiddle, as they say:
" What think you, Sir? 'twere a good jest,
" 'Slife, we should quickly scout the rest."—
" Sir, you mistake the matter far,
" We have no second fiddles there."—
" Richer than I some folks may be,
" More learned. But it hurts not me.
" Friends though he has of diff'rent kind,
" Each has his proper place assign'd."
" Strange matters these alledg'd by you!"—
" Strange they may be. But they are true."
" Well, then, I vow 'tis mighty clever;
" Now, I long ten times more than ever
" To be advanc'd extremely near
" One of his shining character.
" Have but the will; there wants no more,
" 'Tis plain enough you have the pow'r.
" His easy temper (that's the worst)
" He knows, and is so shy at first,
" But such a cavalier as you—
" Lord, Sir, you'll quickly bring him too!
" Well; if I fail in my design,
" Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.
" If by the saucy servile tribe
" Deny'd, what think you of a bribe?
" Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,
" But try my luck again to-morrow.
" Never attempt to visit him
" But at the most convenient time;

" Attend him on each levee-day,
" And there my humble duty pay.
" Labour like this our want supplies,
" And they must stoop who mean to rise."

While thus he wittingly harangu'd,
For which you'll guess I wish him hang'd,
Campley, a friend of mine, came by,
Who knew his humour more than I.
We stop, salute, and—" Why so fast,
" Friend Carlos?—Whither all this haste?"—
Fir'd at the thoughts of a reprieve,
I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,
Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,
Do ev'ry thing but speak plain out;
While he, sad dog, from the beginning
Determin'd to mistake my meaning,
Instead of pitying my curse,
By jeering made it ten times worse.
" Campley, what secret, pray, was that
" You wanted to communicate?"
" I recollect. But 'tis no matter.
" Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.
" E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell
" Another time, Sir, just as well."

Was ever such a dismal day!
Unlucky cur, he steals away,
And leaves me, half bereft of life,
At mercy of the butcher's knife:
When sudden, shouting from afar,
See his antagonist appear!
The bailiff seiz'd him quick as thought.
" Ho, Mr. Scoundrel! are you caught?
" Sir, you are witness to th' arrest."
" Aye marry, Sir, I'll do my best."
The mob huzzas. Away they trudge,
Culprit and all, before the judge.
Meanwhile I luckily enough,
Thanks to Apollo, got clear off.

THE SALLAD.

By VIRGIL.

This singular poem, which the learned and judicious Heyne seems inclined to think a translation of Virgil's, from the Greek of Parthenius, was translated into English, by Cowper, during his depressive malady, June, 1799; and to those who are used to philosophize on the powers of the human mind under affliction, it will appear a highly interesting curiosity.

I find, in the second volume of the St. James's Magazine, published in 1763, by Lloyd, the early friend of Cowper, another version of this poem in rhyme—it has only the initials of the author prefixed—R. T.

THE winter-night now well-nigh worn away,
The wakeful cock proclaim'd approaching day,
When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
Yawn'd, stretch'd his limbs, and anxious to provide
Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
By slow degrees his tatter'd bed forsook,
And, poking in the dark, explor'd the nook
Where embers slept with ashes heap'd around,
And with burnt fingers-ends the treasure found.

It chanc'd that from a brand beneath his nose,
Sure proof of latent fire, some smoke arose;
When trimming with a pin th' incrusted tow,
And stooping it toward the coals below,
He toils, with cheeks distended, to excite
The ling'ring flame, and gains at length a light.
With prudent heed he spreads his hand before
The quiv'ring lamp, and opes his gran'ry door.
Small was his stock, but taking for the day
A measur'd stint of twice eight pounds away.
With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
Fixt in the wall, affords his lamp a stand:
Then baring both his arms—a sleeveless coat
He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat;

And with a rubber, for that use design'd,
Cleansing his mill within, begins to grind;
Each hand has its employ; lab'ring amain,
This turns the wince, while that supplies the grain.
The stone revolving rapidly, now glows,
And the bruis'd corn, a mealy current flows;
While he, to make his heavy labour light,
Tasks oft his left-hand to relieve his right;
And chaunts with rudest accent, to beguile
His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
And now, dame Cybale, come forth! he cries;
But Cybale, still slumb'ring, nought replies.

From Afric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
Whose face and form alike her birth betray'd.
With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,
Legs slender, broad and most mishapen feet,
Chapp'd into chinks, and parch'd with solar heat.
Such, summon'd oft, she came; at his command
Fresh fuel heap'd, the sleeping embers fann'd,
And made, in haste, her simm'ring skillet steam,
Replenish'd newly from the neighbouring stream.

The labours of the mill perform'd, a sieve
The mingled flour and bran must next receive,
Which shaken oft, shoots Ceres through refin'd
And better dress'd, her husks all left behind.
This done, at once, his future plain repast,
Unleaven'd, on a shaven board he cast,
With tepid lymph first largely soak'd it all,
Then gather'd it with both hands to a ball,
And spreading it again with both hands wide,
With sprinkled salt the stiffen'd mass supplied;
At length the stubborn substance, duly wrought,
Takes from his palms, impress'd, the shape it ought,
Becomes an orb—and, quarter'd into shares,
The faithful mark of just division bears.
Last, on his hearth it finds convenient space,
For Cybale before had swept the place,
And there, with tiles and embers overspread,
She leaves it, reeking in its sultry bed.

Nor Simulus, while Vulcan thus alone
His part perform'd, proves heedless of his own;
But sedulous not merely to subdue
His hunger, but to please his palate too,
Prepares more sav'ry food. His chimney-side
Could boast no gammon, salted well, and dried,
And hook'd behind him; but sufficient store
Of bundled annis, and a cheese it bore—
A broad round cheese, which, through its centre strung
With a tough broom-twig, in the corner hung;
The prudent hero, therefore, with address
And quick dispatch, now seeks another mess.

Close to his cottage lay a garden-ground,
With reeds and osiers sparely girt around;
Small was the spot, but lib'ral to produce,
Nor wanted aught that serves a peasant's use;
And sometimes e'en the rich would borrow thence,
Although its tillage was his sole expense.
For oft, as from his toils abroad he ceas'd,
Home-bound by weather, or some stated feast,
His debt of culture here he duly paid,
And only left the plough to wield the spade.
He knew to give each plant the soil it needs,
To drill the ground, and cover close the seeds;
And could with ease compel the wanton rill
To turn, and wind, obedient to his will.
There flourish'd star-wort, and the branching beet,
The sorrel acid, and the mallow sweet,
The skirret, and the leak's aspiring kind,
The noxious poppy—quencher of the mind!
Salubrious sequel of a sumptuous board,
The lettuce, and the long huge bellied gourd;
But these (for none his appetite controul'd
With stricter sway) the thrifty rustic sold;
With broom-twigs neatly bound, each kind apart,
He bore them ever to the public mart;
Whence, laden still, but with a lighter load
Of cash well-earn'd, he took his homeward road,
Expending seldom, ere he quitted Rome,
His gains, in flesh-meat for a feast at home.
There, at no cost, on onions rank and red,
Or the curl'd endive's bitter leaf, he fed:

On scallions slic'd; or, with a sensual gust,
On rockets—foul provocatives of lust!
Nor even shunn'd, with smarting gums, to press
Nasturtium—pungent, face-distorting mess!

Some such regale now also in his thought,
With hasty steps his garden-ground he sought:
There delving with his hands, he first displac'd
Four plants of garlick, large, and rooted fast;
The tender tops of parsley next he culls,
Then the old rue-bush shudders as he pulls,
And coriander last to these succeeds,
That hangs on slightest threads her trembling seeds.

Plac'd near his sprightly fire, he now demands
The mortar at his sable servant's hands;
When, stripping all his garlick first, he tore
Th' exterior coats, and cast them on the floor,
Then cast away, with like contempt, the skin,
Flimsier concealment of the cloves within.
These search'd, and perfect found, he one by one
Rinc'd, and dispos'd within the hollow stone.
Salt added, and a lump of salted cheese,
With his injected herbs he cover'd these,
And tucking with his left his tunic tight,
And seizing fast the pestle with his right,
The garlick bruising first he soon express'd,
And mix'd the various juices of the rest.
He grinds, and by degrees his herbs below,
Lost in each other, their own pow'rs forego,
And with the cheese in compound, to the sight
Nor wholly green appear, nor wholly white.
His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent,
He curs'd full oft his dinner for its scent,
Or with wry faces, wiping, as he spoke,
The trickling tears, cried, "Vengeance on the smoke!"
The work proceeds: not roughly turns he now
The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow.
With cautious hand, that grudges what it spills,
Some drops of olive-oil he next instills;
Then vinegar, with caution scarcely less;
And gath'ring to a ball the medley-mess,
Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side,

And thus complete in figure and in kind,
Obtains at length the sallad he design'd.

And now black Cybale before him stands,
The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands;
He glad receives it, chasing far away
All fears of famine, for the passing day:
His legs enclos'd in buskins, and his head
In its tough casque of leather, forth he led
And yok'd his steers, a dull obedient pair,
Then drove a-field, and plung'd the pointed share.

APPENDIX.

(No. 4.)

Translations from various Latin Poems of Vincent Bourne, and a few Epigrams of Owen.

The Thracian.

THRACIAN parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But with undissembled mirth,
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome, with equal scorn,
"Oh the savages!" exclaim,
Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well-entitled to the name!

But the cause of this concern
And this pleasure, would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

THRAX.

Threicium infantem, cum lucem intravit et auras,
Fletibus excepit mæstus uterque parens.
Threicium infantem, cum luce exivit et auris
Extulit ad funus lætus uterque parens.
Interea tu Roma; et tu tibi Græcia plaudens,
Dicitis, hæc vera est Thraica barbaries.
Lætitiæ causam, causamque exquirite luctus;
Vosque est quod doceat Thraica barbaries.

Reciprocal Kindness, the primary Law of Nature.

Androcles, from his injur'd Lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Lybia's desert fled;
Tir'd with his toilsome flight, and parch'd with heat,
He spied, at length, a cavern's cool retreat.
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
When, hugest of its kind, a lion came:
He roar'd approaching; but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs chang'd, arriv'd within,
And with expressive looks his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implor'd from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dar'd not awhile afford his trembling hand,
But bolder grown at length, inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wip'd the sanious flood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepar'd,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shar'd.
But thus to live—still lost, sequester'd still—
Scarce seem'd his lord's revenge an heavier ill.

Mutua Benevolentia primaria Lex Naturæ est.

Per Libyæ Androcles siccas errabat arenas,
  Qui vagus iratum fugerat exul herum.
Lassato tandem fractoque labore viarum,
  Ad scopuli patuit cæca caverna latus.
Hanc subit; et placidæ dederat vix membra sopori
  Cum subito immanis rugat ad antra leo:
Ille pedem attollens læsum, et miserabile murmur
  Edens, qua poterat voce, precatur opem.
Perculsus novitate rei, incertusque timore,
  Vix tandem tremulas admovet erro manus:
Et spinam explorans (nam fixa in vulnere spina
  Hærebat) cauto molliter ungue trahit:
Continuo dolor omnis abit, teter fluit humor;
  Et coit, absterso sanguine, rupta cutis:
Nunc iterum sylvas dumosque peragrat; et affert
  Providus assiduas hospes ad antra dapes.

Home, native home!—Oh might he but repair!—
He must, he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and doom'd to perish on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands!
When, lo! the self-same lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famish'd into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And, soften'd by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.

Mute with astonishment th' assembly gaze;
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is nat'ral—Nature bade him rend
An enemy; she bids him spare a friend.

A Manual more ancient than the Art of Printing, and not to be found in any Catalogue.

There is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Juxta epulis accumbit homo conviva leonis,
Nec crudos dubitat participare cibos.
Quis tamen ista ferat desertæ tædia vitæ?
Vix furor ultoris tristior esset heri
Devotum certis caput objectare periclis
Et patrios statuit rursus adire lares.
Traditur hic, feri facturus spectacula plebi,
Accipit et miserum tristis arena reum.
Irruit e caveis fors idem impastus et acer,
Et medicum attonito suspicit ore leo.
Suspicit, et veterem agnoscens vetus hospes amicum
Decumbit notos blandulus ante pedes.
Quid vero perculsi animis, stupuere quirites?
Ecquid prodigii, territa Roma, vides?
Unius naturæ opus est; ea sola furorem
Sumere quæ jussit, ponere sola jubet.

Manuale Typographia omni antiquius nulli usquam Librorum insertum Catalogo.

Exiguus liber est, muliebri creber in usu,
Per se qui dici bibliotheca potest.

Words none, things num'rous it contains:
And, things with words compar'd,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merits most regard?

Oftimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And open'd, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamp'd behind
Adorns its outer part;
But all within 'tis richly lin'd,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit; and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stor'd,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of ev'ry size,
And form'd for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

Copia verborum non est, sed copia rerum;
Copia (quod nemo deneget) utilior.
Rubris consuitur pannis; fors texitur auro;
Bis sexta ad summum pagina claudit opus.
Nil habet a tergo titulive aut nominis; intus
Thesauros artis servat, et intus opes:
Intus opes, quæ nympha sinu pulcherrima gestet,
Quas nive candidior tractet ametque manus.
Quando instrumentum præsens sibi postulat usus,
Majusve, aut operis pro ratione, minus.
Et genere et modulo diversa habet arma, gradatim
Digesta, ad numeros attenuata suos.

The full-charg'd leaf, which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease,
From size to size they fall,
In ev'ry leaf grow less and less;
The last are least of all.

Oh! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here?
This volume's method and intent,
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or pos'd, whoever reads;
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
No book is treasur'd there,
Nor yet in Granta's num'rous store,
That may with this compare.

Primum enchiridii folium majuscula profert,
Qualia quæ bloeso est lumine poscat anus.
Quod sequitur folium, matronis arma ministrat,
Dicere quæ magnis proximiora licet.
Tertium, item quartum, quintumque minuscula supplet,
Sed non ejusdem singula quoeque loci.
Disposita ordinibus certis, discrimina servant;
Quæ sibi conveniant, seligat unde nurus.
Ultima quæ restant quæ multa minutula nympha,
Dicit, sunt sexti divitæ folii.
Quantillo in spatio doctrina O! quanta latescit!
Quam tamen obscuram vix brevitate voces.
Non est interpres, non est commentarius ullus,
Aut index; tam sunt omnia perspicua.

No !—Rival none in either host
Of this was ever seen,
Or that contents could justly boast
So brilliant and so keen.

An Ænigma.

A needle small, as small can be,
In bulk and use surpasses me,
Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for nought,
As many of my kind are bought
As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost,
The labour is not light,
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their sev'ral tasks,
To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
The shears another plies,
Who clips in lengths the brazen thread
For him, who, chafing every shred,
Gives all an equal size.

Ætatem ad quamvis, ad captum ita fingitur omnem,
Ut nihil auxilii postulet inde liber.
Millia librorum numerat perplura; nec ullum
Bodlæi huic jactat bibliotheca parem.
Millia Cæsareo numerat quoque munere Granta,
Hæc tamen est inter millia tale nihil.
Non est, non istis author de millibus unus,
Cui tanta ingenii vis, vel acumen inest.

ÆNIGMA.

Parvula res, et acu minor est, et ineptior usu:
Quotque dies annus, tot tibi drachma dabit.
Sed licet exigui pretii minimique valoris,
Ecce, quot artificum postulat illa manus!
Unius in primis cura est conflare metallum;
In longa alterius ducere fila labor.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob, with which it must be crown'd;
His follow'r makes it fast;
And with his mallet and his file
To shape the point, employs a while
The seventh, and the last.

Now, therefore, Œdipus! declare
What creature, wonderful, and rare,
A process, that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado,
At last produces!—Tell me true,
And take me for your pains!

Sparrows self-domesticated in Trinity College, Cambridge.

None ever shar'd the social feast,
Or as an inmate, or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not, (and with some delight
Perhaps he view'd the novel sight)
How num'rous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell,
Where such a family may dwell,

Tertius in partes resecat, quartusque resectum
Perpolit ad modulos attenuatque datos.
Est quinti tornare caput, quod sextus adaptet;
Septimus in punctum cudit et exacuit.
His tandem auxiliis ita res procedit, ut omnes
Ad numeros ingens perficiatur opus.
Quæ tanti ingenii quæ tanti est summa laboris?
Si mihi respondes Œdipe, tota tua est.

Passeres indigenæ Col. Trin. Cant. Commenseales.

Incola qui norit sedes, aut viserit hospes,
Newtoni egregii quas celebravit honos;
Viditque et meminit, loetus fortasse videndo,
Quam multa ad mensas advolitarit avis.
Ille nec ignorat, nidos ut, vere ineunte,
Tecta per et forulos et tabulata struat.

Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeather'd brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious list'ners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arriv'd, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
Th' expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

Familiarity Dangerous.

As in her ancient mistress' lap,
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike dispos'd to play.

Ut coram educat teneros ad pabula foetus,
Et pascat micis, quas det amica manus.
Convivas quoties campanæ ad prandia pulsus
Convocat, haud epulis certior hospes adest.
Continuo jucunda simul vox fertur ad aures,
Vicinos passer quisque relinquit agros
Hospitium ad notum properatur; et ordine stantes
Expectant panis fragmina quisque sua.
Hos tamen, hos omnes, vix uno largior asse
Sumptus per totam pascit alitque diem.
Hunc unum, hunc modicum (nec quisquam inviderit assem)
Indigenæ hospitii jure, merentur aves.

Nulli te facias nimis sodalem.

Palpat heram felis, gremio recubans in anili;
Quam semel atque iterum Lydia palpat hera.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground
With many a threat, that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But Lydia, bid thy fury rest!
It was a venial stroke,
For she that will with kittens jest
Should bear a kitten's joke.

Invitation to the Redbreast.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat, while he reigns,
In the well-shelter'd dwellings of man,
Who never can'st seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude!
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My window shall show thee a feast.

Ludum lis sequitur; nam totos exerit ungues,
Et longo lacerat vulnere felis anum.
Continuo exardens gremio muliercula felem
Nec gravibus multis excutit absque minis.
Quod tamen haud æquum est—si vult cum fele jocari,
Felinum debet Lydia ferre jocum.

Ad Rubeculam Invitatio.

Hospes avis, conviva domo gratissima cuivis,
Quam bruma humanam quærere cogit opem;
Huc O! hyberni fugias ut frigora coeli,
Confuge, et incolumis sub lare vive meo!

For, taught by experience, I know
  Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
  Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
  Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
  Or where it shall please thee to sing:
And should'st thou, compell'd by a frost,
  Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host!
  Only pay, as thou payd'st me before.

Thus music must needs be confest
  To flow from a fountain above,
Else how should it work in the breast
  Unchangeable friendship and love?
And who on the globe can be found,
  Save your generations and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
  Or boasts any musical pow'rs?

Unde tuam esuriem releves, alimenta fenestræ
  Apponam, quoties itque reditque dies.
Usu etenim edidici, quod grato alimenta rependes
  Cantu, quæ dederit cunque benigna manus.
Vere novo tepidæ spirant cum molliter auræ,
  Et novus in quavis arbore vernat honos,
Pro libitu ad lucos redeas, sylvasque revisas,
  Læta quibus resonat musica, parque tuæ.
Sin iterum, sin forte iterum, inclementia bruma
  Ad mea dilectam tecta reducet avem
Esto, redux, grato memor esto rependere cantu
  Pabula, quæ dederit cunque benigna manus.
Vis hinc harmoniæ, numerorum hinc sacra potestas
  Conspicitur, nusquam conspicienda magis,
Vincula quod stabilis firmissima nectit amoris,
  Vincula vix longa dissocianda die.
Captat, et incantat blando oblectamine musa
  Humanum pariter pennigerumque genus;
Nos homines et aves, quotcunque animantia vivunt,
  Nos soli harmoniæ gens studiosa sumus.

Strada's Nightingale.

The shepherd touch'd his reed; sweet Philomel
Essay'd, and oft essay'd to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
The numbers, echo'd note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
In loftier tones defy'd the simple bird.

She dar'd the task, and rising as he rose,
With all the force that passion gives, inspir'd,
Return'd the sounds awhile, but in the close
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expir'd.

Thus strength, not skill prevail'd. O fatal strife!
By the poor songstress playfully begun;
And O sad victory! which cost thy life—
And he may wish that he had never won!

Ode on the Death of a Lady who lived one hundred Years, and died on her Birth-day in 1728.

Ancient dame, how wide and vast,
To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
All thy multitude of years!

Stradæ Philomela.

Pastorem audivit calamis Philomela canentem,
Et voluit tenues ipsa referre modos;
Ipsa retentavit numeros, didicitque retentans
Argutum fida reddere voce melos.
Pastor inassuetus rivalem ferre, misellam
Grandius ad carmen provocat, urget avem.
Tuque etiam in modulos surgis Philomela; sed impar
Viribus heu impar, examinisque cadis.
Durum certamem! tristis victoria! cantum
Maluerit pastor non superasse tuum.

ANUS SÆCULARIS

Quæ justam centum annorum ætatem, ipso die natali, explevit, et clausit anno 1728.

Singularis prodigium O senectæ,
Et novum exemplum diuturnitatis,
Cujus annorum series in amplum
desinit orbem!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler pow'rs;
We, to narrow bounds confin'd,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb;
Swifter than a shadow flee,
Nourish'd, but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some that waste us by degrees,
Some that suddenly destroy.

And if life o'erleap the bourn
Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and doat, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wain
Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
Pant with anguish, and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone.

Vulgus infelix hominum, dies en!
Computo quam dispare computamus!
Quam tua a summa procul est remota
summula nostra.
Pabulum nos luxuriesque lethi,
Nos, simul nati, incipimus perire,
Nos statim a cunis cita destinamur
præda sepulchro.
Occulit mors insidias, ubi vix,
Vix opinari est, rapidæve febris
Vim repentinam, aut male pertinacis
semina morbi.
Sin brevem possit superare vita
Terminum, quicquid superest, vacivum,
Illud ignavis superest et imbe-
cillibus annis.
Detrahunt multum, minuuntque sorti
Morbidi questus gemitusque anheli;
Ad parem crescunt numerum diesque
atque dolores.

If a few, (to few 'tis giv'n)
Ling'ring on this earthly stage,
Creep, and halt with steps unev'n,
To the period of an age:—

Wherefore live they but to see
Cunning, arrogance, and force?
Sights, lamented much by thee,
Holding their accustom'd course!

Oft' was seen, in ages past,
All that we with wonder view;
Often shall be to the last;
Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate; content,
Should propitious Heav'n design
Life for us, as calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine.

The Cause won.

Two neighbours furiously dispute;
A field—the subject of the suit.

Si quis hæc vitet (quotus ille quisque est!)
Et gradu pergendo laborioso
Ad tuum, fortasse tuum, moretur
reptilis oevum:
At videt, mæstum tibi sæpe visum, in-
Jurias, vim, furta, dolos, et inso-
Lentiam, quo semper eunt, eodem
ire tenore.
Nil inest rebus novitatis; et quod
Uspiam est nugarum et ineptiarum,
Unius volvi videt, et revolvi
circulus ævi.
Integram ætatam tibi gratulamur;
Et dari nobis satis æstimamus,
Si tuam, saltem vacuam querelis
dimidiemus.

Victoria Forensis.

Caio cum Titio lis et vexatio longa
Sunt de vicini proprietate soli.

Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice.
No single word but has its price.
No term but yields some fair pretence,
For novel and increas'd expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it may disclaim;
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

The Silk-Worm.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulb'ry-leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more!
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;

Protinus ingentes animos in jurgia sumunt
Utraque vincendi pars studiosa nimis.
Lis tumet in schedulas, et jam verbosior, et jam:
Nec verbum quodvis asse minoris emunt.
Præterunt menses, et terminus alter et alter;
Quisque novos sumptus alter et alter, habent.
Ille querens, hic respondens pendente vocatur
Lite; sed ad finem litis, uterque querens.

BOMBYX.

Fine sub Aprilis Bombyx excluditur ovo,
Reptilis exiguo corpore vermiculus.
Frondibus hic mori, volvox dum fiat adultus,
Gnaviter incumbens, dum satietur, edit.
Crescendo ad justum cum jam maturuit ævum,
Incipit artifici stamine textor opus:

Though, till his growing time be past,
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arriv'd, his work begins;
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins,
Till circle upon circle wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclos'd, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task;
And, though a worm, when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,
When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio-pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous; supplies
With future worms and future flies
The next ensuing year;—and dies!

The Innocent Thief.

Not a flow'r can be found in the fields,
Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to least, but it yields
The bee, never-weary'd, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplor'd,
With a diligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
Leaves evidence—none of the fact.

Filaque condensans filis, orbem implicat orbi
Et sensim in gyris conditus ipse latet.
Inque cadi teretem formam se colligit, unde
Egrediens pennas papilionis habet.
Fitque parens tandem, fœtumque reponit in ovis
Hoc demum extremo munere functus obit.
Quotquot in hac nostra spirant animalia terra,
Nulli est vel brevior vita, vel utilior.

Innocens Prædatrix.

Sedula per campos nullo defessa labore,
In cella ut stipet mella vagatur apis:
Purpureum vix florem opifex prætervolat unum,
Innumeras inter quas alit hortus opes;

Her lucrative task she pursues,
And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odour they lose,
Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
The canker-worm; in-dwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
The pride of the garden devours;
And birds pick the seed from the bed,
Still less to be spar'd than the flow'rs.

But she, with such delicate skill,
Her pillage so fits for our use,
That the chymist in vain with his still
Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
Neither honey, nor wax would be left.

Herbula gramineis vix una innascitur agris,
Thesauri unde aliquid non studiosa legit.
A flore ad florem transit, mollique volando
Delibat tactu suave quod intus habent.
Omnia delibat, parce sed et omnia, furti
Ut ne vel minimum videris indicium.
Omnia degustat tam parce, ut gratia nulla
Floribus, ut nullus diminuatur odor.
Non ita prædantur modice bruchique et erucæ;
Non ista hortorum maxima pestis aves:
Non ita raptores corvi, quorum improba rostra
Despoliant agros, effodiuntque sata.
Succos immiscens succis, ita suaviter omnes
Temperat, ut dederit chymia nulla pares.
Vix furtum est illud, dicive injuria debet,
Quod cera, et multo melle rependit apis.

Denner's Old-Woman.

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low!
No wrinkle, or deep-furrow'd frown on the brow!
Her forehead, indeed, is here circled around
With locks like the ribbon with which they are bound;
While glossy, and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin:
But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here!
Yet all is express'd, with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple, or freckle, conceal'd from the view.

Many fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labours of art, to this spectacle haste:
The youths all agree, that, could old age inspire
The passion of love, her's would kindle the fire:
And the matrons, with pleasure, confess that they see
Ridiculous nothing, or hideous in thee.

Denneri Anus.[*]

Doctum anus artificem, juste celebrata fatetur,
Denneri pinxit quam studiosa manus.
Nec stupor est oculis, fronti nec ruga severa,
Flaccida nec sulcis pendet utrinque gena.
Nil habet illepidum, morosum, aut triste tabella;
Argentum capitis præter, anile nihil.
Apparent nivæi vittæ sub margine cani,
Fila colorati qualia Seres habent.
Lanugo mentum, sed quæ tenuissima, vestit;
Mollisque, et qualis Persica mala tegit.
Nulla vel e minimis fugiunt spiracula visum;
At neque lineolis de cutis ulla latet.
Spectatum veniunt, novitas quos allicit usquam,
Quosque vel ingenii fama, vel artis amor.
Advenium juvenes; et anus si possit amari,
Dennere, agnoscunt hoc meruisse tuam.

[*] Diu publico fuit spectaculo, egregia hæc tabula in aula Palatina exteriori, juxta fanum Westmonasteriense.

The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
Oh wonderful woman! as placid as thine.

Strange magic of art! which the youth can engage
To peruse, half enamour'd, the features of age;
And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
That she, when as old, shall be equally fair!
How great is the glory that Denner has gain'd,
Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtain'd!

The Tears of a Painter.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expir'd—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seiz'd his brush, his colours spread;
And—"Oh! my child, accept"—he said,
"('Tis all that I can now bestow,)
"This tribute of a father's woe!"
Then, faithful to the two-fold part,
Both of his feelings and his art,
He clos'd his eyes, with tender care,
And form'd at once a fellow pair.
His brow, with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew, not livid yet;
And shaded all that he had done,
To a just image of his son.

Adveniunt hilares nymphæ; similemque senectam
Tam pulchram et placidam dent sibi fata, rogant
Matronæ adveniunt, vetulæque fatentur in ore
Quod nihil horrendum, ridiculumve vident.
Quantus honos arti, per quam placet ipsa senectus;
Quæ facit, ut nymphis invideatur anus!
Pictori cedit quæ gloria, cum nec Apelli
Majorem famam det Cytherea suo!

Lacrymæ Pictoris.

Infantem audivit puerum, sua gandia, Apelles
Intempestivo fato obiisse diem.
Ille, licet tristi perculsus imagine mortis,
Proferri in medium corpus inane jubet.
Et calamum, et succos poscens, hos accipe luctus,
Mœrorem hunc, dixit, nate, Parentis habe!

Thus far is well. But view again
The cause of thy paternal pain!
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.
Again his pencil's pow'r he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies;
And still his cheek unfaded shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedful to the finish'd whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
'Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copy'd from the true.

Now, painter, cease! thy task is done;
Long lives this image of thy son:
Nor short-liv'd shall the glory prove,
Or of thy labour, or thy love.

The Maze.

From right to left, and to and fro,
Caught in a labyrinth, you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the myst'ry, but in vain.

Dixit; et, ut clausit, clausos depinxit ocellos;
Officio pariter fidus utrique pater:
Frontemque et crines, nec adhuc pallentia formans
Oscula, adumbravit lungubre pictor opus.
Perge parens, mærendo tuos expendere luctus;
Nondum opus absolvit triste suprema manus.
Vidit adhuc molles genitor super oscula risus;
Vidit adhuc veneres irrubuisse genis.
Et teneras raptim veneres, blandosque lepores
Et tacitos risus transtulit in tabulam.
Pingendo desiste tuum signare dolorem;
Filioli longum vivet imago tui:
Vivet et æterna vives tu laude; nec arte
Vincendus pictor, nec pietate pater.

Spe Finis.

Ad dextram, ad lœvam, porro, retro, itque reditque,
Deprensum in laqueo quem labyrinthus habet.
Et legit et relegit gressus, sese explicet unde,
Perplexum quoerens unde revolvat iter.

Stand still, and breathe, and take from me
A clue that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you met her,
Herself could serve you with a better;
You enter'd easily—find where—
And make with ease your exit there!

No Sorrow peculiar to the Sufferer.

The lover, in melodious verses,
His singular distress rehearses,
Still closing with the rueful cry,
"Was ever such a wretch as I?"
Yes! thousands have endur'd before
All thy distress; some haply more.
Unnumber'd Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain:
And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone hast lost thy wits.

The Snail.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The Snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
together.

Sta modo, respira paulum, simul accipe filum;
Certius et melius non Ariadne dabit,
Sic te, sic solum, expedies errore; viarum
Principium invenias, id tibi finis erit.

Nemo miser nisi comparatus.

Quis fuit infelix adeo! quis perditus æque!
Conqueritur mæsto carmine tristis amans.
Non novus hic questus, rarove auditus; amantes
Deserti et spreti mille queruntur idem.
Fatum decantas quod tu miserabile, multus
Deplorat multo cum Corydone, Strephon.
Si tua cum reliquis confertur amica puellis,
Non ea vel sola est ferrea, tuve miser.

LIMAX.

Frondibus et pomis, herbisque tenaciter hoeret
Limax, et secum portat ubique domum.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent besides,
Of storm, or other harm besides
of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power in such,
He shrinks into his house, with much
displeasure!

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
the faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,
(He and his house are so combin'd)
If finding it, he fails to find
its master.

Tutus in hac sese occultat, si quando periclum
Imminent aut subitoe decidit imber aquæ
Cornua vel leviter tangas, se protinus in se
Colligit, in proprios contrahiturque lares.
Secum habitat quacunque habitat; sibi tota supellex;
Solæ, quas adamat, quasque requirit opes.
Secum potat, edit, dormit; sibi in oedibus isdem
Conviva et comes est, hospes et hospitium.
Limacem, quacumque siet, quacumque moretur,
(Si quis eum quoerat) dixeris esse domi.

EPIGRAMS

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF OWEN.

On one Ignorant and Arrogant.

Thou may'st of double ign'rance boast,
Who know'st not that thou nothing know'st.

In ignorantem arrogantem
Linum.

Captivum, Line, te tenet ignorantia duplex,
Scis nihil, et nescis te quoque scire nihil.

Prudent Simplicity.

That thou may'st injure no man, dove-like be,
And serpent-like, that none may injure thee!

Prudens Simplicitas.

Ut nulli nocuisse velis, imitare columbam:
Serpentem, ut possit nemo nocere tibi.

To a Friend in Distress.

I wish thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend,
For when at worst, they say, things always end!

Ad Amicum Pauperem.

Est male nunc? Utinam in pejus sors omnia vertat,
Succedunt summis optima sæpe malis.

When little more than boy in age,
I deem'd myself almost a sage;
But now seem worthier to be stil'd,
For ignorance—almost a child.

Omnia me dum junior essem, scire putabam,
Quo scio plus, hoc me nunc scio scire minus.

Retaliation.

The works of ancient Bards divine,
Aulus, thou scorn'st to read;
And should posterity read thine,
It would be strange indeed!

Lex Talionis.

Majorum nunquam, Aule, legis monumenta tuorum:
Mirum est, posteritas si tua scripta legat.

Sunset and Sunrise.

Contemplate, when the sun declines,
Thy death, with deep reflection;
And when again he rising shines,
Thy day of resurrection.

De Ortu et Occasu.

Sole oriente, tui reditus a morte memento!
Sis memor Occasus, sole cadente, tui!

APPENDIX.

(No. 5.)

MONTES GLACIALES,

In oceano Germanico natantes.

En, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata remotis,
Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras!
Non equidem prisco sæclum redisse videtur
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus alto visere monstro
Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vim leviora
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus, alti
In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant
Quid vero hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu?
Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro
Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,
Bacca cærulea, et flammas imitante pyropo.
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxere sibi diademata reges?
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos
Mercatorum oculos: prius et quàm littora Gangis
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.
Ortos unde putemus? An illos Vesvius atrox
Protulit, ignivomisve ejecit faucibus Ætna?
Luce micant propria, Phœbive, per aëra purum
Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent?
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est
Multa onerata nive, et canis conspersa pruinis.
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma fere omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona solutæ
Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cæpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum
In glaciem aggesta, sublimes vertice tandem

Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declinia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxu gemunt, subito concussa fragore,
Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim
Insula in Ægæo fluitasse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos: neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Decidua lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.
At vos, errones horrendi et caligini digni,
Cimmeria Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri
Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum!
Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni, leniter austro
Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas
Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

ON THE ICE ISLANDS.

Seen floating in the German Ocean.

What portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen, till now, in ours, th' astonis'd tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves.
But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains, seem to rove the flood.
Dire times were they, full-charg'd with human woes,
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wond'rous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All-bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No; never such a countless, dazzling store,
Had left unseen the Ganges' peopled-shore.
Rapacious hands, and ever watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have mark'd, and seiz'd the prize.

Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Ves'vius' or from Ætna's burning womb?
Thus shine they, self-illum'd, or but display
The borrow'd splendours of a cloudless day?
With borrow'd beams they shine. The gales that breathe,
Now land-ward, and the current's force beneath,
Have borne them nearer: and the nearer sight,
Advantag'd more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits, crested high, they show,
With mingled sleet and long-incumbent snow.
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,
Bleak winter well-nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft' as, dissolv'd by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff, to join the flood below,
He caught and curdled, with a freezing blast,
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.
By slow degrees, uprose the wond'rous pile,
And long-successive ages roll'd the while;
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand
Tall, as its rival mountains, on the land.
Thus stood—and, unremoveable by skill
Or force of man, had stood the structure still;
But that, though firmly fixt, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach—and, with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
(As if instinct with strong desire to lave)
Down went the pond'rous mass. So bards of old,
How Delos swam th' Ægean deep, have told.
But not of ice was Delos; Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flow'r. She, crown'd with laurel, wore,
E'en under wint'ry skies, a summer smile;
And Delos was Apollo's fav'rite isle.
But, horrid wand'rers of the deep, to you
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due:
Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,
But scornful turn'd his glorious eyes away.
Hence! seek your home; nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulph for ever lost!

APPENDIX.

(No. 6.)

I make no apology for the introduction of the following Lines, though I have never learned who wrote them. Their elegance will sufficiently recommend them to persons of classical taste and erudition: and I shall be happy if the English version that they have received from me, be found not to dishonour them. Affection for the memory of the worthy man whom they celebrate alone prompted me to this endeavour.

W. COWPER.

VERSES

To the Memory of Dr. LLOYD.

Spoken at the Westminster Election next after his Decease.

OUR good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast;
O ye of riper years, who recollect
How once ye lov'd, and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he rul'd you with a father's sway,
And when impair'd by time, and glad to rest,
Yet still with looks in mild complacence drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours, now drop a tear!
In morals blameless, as in manners meek,
He knew no wish, that he might blush to speak.
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from one* as made him rich indeed.
Hence then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here!
Go! garnish merit in a higher sphere,

* He was usher and under-master of Westminster near fifty years, and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a handsome pension from the king.

The brows of those, whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envy'd not!
Light lie the turf, good Senior, on thy breast,
And tranquil, as thy mind was, be thy rest!
Tho' living thou had'st more desert than fame,
And not a stone now chronicles thy name!

Abiit senex. Periit senex amabilis,
Quo non fuit jucundior.
Lugete vos ætas quibus maturior
Senem colendum præstitit;
Seu quando, viribus valentioribus
Firmoque fretus pectore,
Florentiori vos juventute excolens
Cura fovebat patria,
Seu quandó, fractus, jamque donatus rude,
Vultu sed usque blandulo,
Miscere gaudebat suas facetias
His annuis leporibus!
Vixit probis, puraque simplex indole,
Blandisque comis moribus,
Et dives æqua mente, charus omnibus,
Unius auctus munere.
Ite, tituli! Meritis beatioribus
Aptate laudes debitas!
Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens
Fortuna plus arriserat.
Placide senex, levi quiescas cespite,
Esti superbum nec vivo tibi
Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo
Lapis notatus nomine?

APPENDIX.

(No. 7.)

TRANSLATIONS from the FABLES of GAY.

Lepus Multis Amicus.

LUSUS amicitia est uni nisi dedita, cen fit,
Simplice ni nexus fœdere, lusus amor.
Incerto genitore puer, non sæpe paternæ
Tutamen novit, deliciasque domus:
Quique sibi fidos fore multos sperat, amicus
Mirum est huic misero si ferat ullas opem.

Comis erat mitisque, et nolle et velle paratus
Cum quovis, Gaii more modoque, lepus;
Ille quot in sylvis, et quot spatiantur in agris
Quadrupedes norat conciliare sibi.
Et quisque innocuo, invitoque lacessere quenquam
Labra tenus saltem fidus amicus erat.
Ortum sub lucis dum pressa cubilia linquit
Rorantes herbas, pabula sueta, petens,
Venatorum audit clangores pone sequentum
Fulmineumque sonum territus erro fugit.
Corda pavor pulsat, sursum sedet, erigit aures,
Respicit et sentit jam prope adesse necem.
Utque canes fallat, late circumvagus, illuc
Unde abiit mira callidate, redit;
Viribus et fractis tandem se projicit ultro
In media miserum semianimemque via.
Vix ibi stratus equi sonitum pedis audit, et oh spe
Quam læta adventum cor agitatur equi!
Dorsum, inquit, mihi, chare, tuum concede, tuoque
Auxilio nares fallere, vimque canum,
Me meus, ut nosti, pes prodit—fidus amicus
Fert quodcunque lubens, nec grave sentit, onus.

Belle miscelle lepuscule! equus respondet, amara
Omnia quæ tibi sunt, sunt et amara mihi,
Verum age—sume animos—multi, me pone, bonique
Adveniunt quorum sis cito salvus ope.
Proximus armenti dominus bos solicitatus
Auxilium his verbis se dare posse negat,
Quando quadrupedum quot vivunt, nullus amicum
Me nescire potest usque fuisse tibi,
Libertate æquus, quam cedat amicus amico,
Utar, et absque metu ne tibi displiceam;
Hinc me mandat amor. Juxta istum messis ascervum
Me mea, præ cunctis chara, juvenca manet;
Et quis non ultro quæcumque negotia linquit,
Pareat ut dominæ, cum vocat ipsa, suæ?
Neu me crudelem dicas—discedo—sed hircus
(Cujus ope effugias integer) hircus adest.
Febrem, ait hircus habes: heu sicca ut lumina languent!
Utque caput collo deficiente jacet!
Hirsutum mihi tergum; et forsan læserit ægrum,
Vellere eris melius fultus, ovisque venit.
Me mihi fecit onus natura, ovis inquit anhelans
Sustineo lanæ pondera tanta meæ;
Me nec velocem nec fortem jacto, solentque
Nos etiam sævi dilacerare canes.
Ultimus accedit vitulus, vitulumque precatur
Ut periturum alias ocyus eripiat.
Remne ego respondet vitulus suscepero tantam,
Non depulsus adhuc ubere, natus heri?
Te quem maturi canibus validique relinquunt
Incolumem potero reddere parvus ego?
Præterea tollens quem illi aversantur, amicis
Forte parum videar consuluisse meis.
Ignoscas oro. Fidissima dissociantur
Corda, et tale tibi sat liquet esse meum.
Ecce autem ad calces canis est! te quanta perempto
Tristitia est nobis ingruitura!—Vale!

Avarus et Plutus.

Icta fenestra Euri flatu stridebat, avarus
Ex somno trepidus surgit, opumque memor.
Lata silenter humi ponit vestigia, quemque
Respicit ad sonitum respiciensque tremit;

Angustissima quæque foramina lampade visit,
Ad vectes, obices, fertque refertque manum.
Dein reserat crebris junctam compagibus arcam
Exultansque omnes conspicit intus opes.
Sed tandem furiis ultricibus actus ob artes
Queis sua res tenuis creverat in cumulum,
Contortis manibus nunc stat, nunc pectora pulsans
Aurum execratur, perniciemque vocat;
O mihi, ait, misero mens quam tranquilla fuisset,
Hoc celasset adhuc si modo terra malum!
Nunc autem virtus ipsa est venalis; et aurum
Quid contra vitii tormina sæva valet?
O inimicum aurum! O homini infestissima pestis
Cui datur illecebras vincere posse tuas?
Aurum homines suasit contemnere quicquid honestum est,
Et præter nomen nil retinere boni.
Aurum cuncta mali per terras semina sparsit;
Aurum nocturnis furibus arma dedit.
Bella docet fortes, timidosque ad pessima ducit
Fœdifragas artes, multiplicesque dolos,
Nec vitii quicquam est quod non inveneris ortum
Ex malesuada auri sacrilegaque fame.
Dixit, et ingemuit; Plutusque suum sibi numen
Ante oculos, ira fervidus ipse stetit.
Arcum clausit avarus, et ora horrentia rugis
Ostendens, tremulum sic deus increpuit.
Questibus his raucis mihi cur, stulte, obstrepis aures?
Ista tui similes tristia quisque canit.
Commaculavi egone humanum genus, improbe? Culpa,
Dum rapis et captas omnia, culpa tua est.
Mene execrandum censes, quia tam pretiosa
Criminibus fiunt perniciosa tuis?
Virtutis specie, pulchro cen pallio amictus
Quisque catus nebulo sordida facta tegit.
Atque suis manibus commissa potentia, durum
Et dirum subito vergit ad imperium.
Hinc, nimium dum latro aurum detrudit in arcam,
Idem aurum latet in pectore pestis edax.
Nutrit avaritiam et fastum, suspendere adunco
Suadet naso inopes, et vitium omne docet.
Auri et larga probo si copia contigit, instar
Roris dilapsi ex æthere cuncta beat:
Tum, quasi numen inesset, alit, fovet, educat orbos
Et viduas lacrymis ora rigare vetat.

Quo sua crimina jure auro derivet avarus
Aurum animæ pretium qui cupit atque capit?
Lege pari gladium incuset sicarius atrox
Cæso homine, et ferrum judicet esse reum.

Papilio et Limax.

Qui subito ex imis rerum in fastigia surgit,
Nativas sordes, quicquid agatur olet.

In closing this series of Cowper's translations, I must not fail to express my concern, that I am unable to present to my reader, according to my intention, a specimen of the Henriade, as translated by the poetical brothers.

I had been informed that I should find their production in a Magazine for the year 1759—I have indeed found in a Magazine of that period a version of the poem, but not by the Cowpers; yet their version probably exists, comprised in a periodical publication: but my own researches, and those of a few literary friends, kindly diligent in inquiry, have hitherto been unable to discover it.

APPENDIX.

(No. 8.)

During Cowper's visit to Eartham, he kindly pointed out to me three of his papers in the last volume of the Connoisseur. I inscribed them with his name at the time, and imagine that the readers of his Life may be gratified in seeing them inserted here. I find other numbers of that work ascribed to him; but the three following I print as his, on his own explicit authority, Number 119. *Thursday, May* 6, 1756.—*Number* 134. *Thursday, August* 19, 1756.—*Number* 138. *Thursday, September* 16, 1756.

THE CONNOISSEUR.

(NUMBER 119.)

Plenus rimarum sum, huc et illuc perfluo.
TER.

Leaky at bottom; if those chinks you stop,
In vain—the secret will run o'er at top.

THERE is no mark of our confidence taken more kindly by a friend, than the entrusting him with a secret; nor any which he is so likely to abuse. Confidants in general are like crazy firelocks, which are no sooner charged and cocked, than the spring gives way, and the report immediately follows. Happy to have been thought worthy the confidence of one friend, they are impatient to manifest their importance to another: till, between them and their friend, and their friend's friend, the whole matter is presently known to *all our friends round the wrekin*. The secret catches, as it were by contact, and, like electrical matter, breaks forth from every link in the chain, almost at the same instant. Thus the whole exchange may be thrown into a buz to-morrow by what was whispered in the middle of Marlborough Downs this morning, and in a week's time the streets may ring with the intrigue of a woman of fashion, bellowed out from the foul mouths

of the hawkers, though at present it is known to no creature living but her gallant and her waiting-maid.

As the talent of secrecy is of so great importance to society, and the necessary commerce between individuals cannot be securely carried on without it, that this deplorable weakness should be so general is much to be lamented. You may as well pour water into a funnel, or a seive, and expect it to be retained there, as commit any of your concerns to so slippery a companion. It is remarkable, that in those men who have thus lost the faculty of retention, the desire of being communicative is always most prevalent where it is least justified. If they are intrusted with a matter of no great moment, affairs of more consequence will, perhaps, in a few hours, shuffle it entirely out of their thoughts: but if any thing be delivered to them with an earnestness, a low voice, and the gesture of a man in terror for the consequence of its being known; if the door is bolted, and every precaution taken to prevent surprise, however they may promise secrecy, and however they may intend it, the weight upon their minds will be so extremely oppressive, that it will certainly put their tongues in motion.

This breach of trust, so universal amongst us, is perhaps in great measure owing to our education. The first lesson our little masters and misses are taught is to become blabs and tell-tales: they are bribed to divulge the petty intrigues of the family below stairs to papa and mama in the parlour; and a doll or hobby-horse is generally the encouragement of a propensity which could scarcely be atoned for by a whipping. As soon as children can lisp out the little intelligence they have picked up in the hall, or the kitchen, they are admired for their wit: if the butler has been caught kissing the housekeeper in his pantry, or the footman detected in romping with the chambermaid, away flies little Tommy or Betsy with the news; the parents are lost in admiration of the pretty rogue's understanding, and reward such uncommon ingenuity with a kiss or a sugar-plumb.

Nor does an inclination to secrecy meet with less encouragement at school. The governants at the boarding-school teach miss to be a good girl, and tell them every thing she knows: thus, if any young lady is unfortunately discovered eating a green apple in a corner; if she is heard to pronounce a naughty word, or is caught picking the letters out of another miss's sampler, away runs the chit who is so happy as to get the start of the rest, screams out her information as she goes; and the prudent matron chucks her under the chin, and tells her that she is a good girl, and every body will love her.

The management of our young gentlemen is equally absurd

In most of our schools, if a lad is discovered in a scrape, the impeachment of an accomplice, as at the Old-Bailey, is made the condition of a pardon. I remember a boy, engaged in robbing an orchard, who was unfortunately taken prisoner in an apple-tree, and conducted, under the strong guard of the farmer and his dairy-maid, to the master's house. Upon his absolute refusal to discover his associates, the pedagogue undertook to lash him out of his fidelity; but finding it impossible to scourge the secret out of him, he at last gave him up for an obstinate villain, and sent him to his father, who told him he was ruined, and was going to disinherit him for not betraying his school-fellows.

I must own I am not fond of thus drubbing our youths into treachery; and am much pleased with the request of Ulysses, when he went to Troy, who begged of those who were to have the care of young Telemachus, that they would, above all things, teach him to be just, sincere, faithful, and to keep a secret.

Every man's experience must have furnished him with instances of confidants who are not to be relied on, and friends who are not to be trusted; but few, perhaps, have thought it a character so well worth their attention, as to have marked out the different degrees into which it may be divided, and the different methods by which secrets are communicated.

Ned Trusty is a tell-tale of a very singular kind. Having some sense of his duty, he hesitates a little at the breach of it. If he engages never to utter a syllable, he most punctually performs his promise; but then he has the knack of insinuating, by a nod and a shrug well-timed, or a seasonable leer, as much as others can convey in express terms. It is difficult, in short, to determine whether he is more to be admired for his resolution in not mentioning, or his ingenuity in disclosing a secret. He is also excellent at a doubtful phrase, as Hamlet calls it, or ambiguous giving out; and his conversation consists chiefly of such broken inuendoes as—"well I know—or I could—and if I would—or, if I list to speak—or there be, and if there might," &c.

Here he generally stops, and leaves it to his hearers to draw proper inferences from these piece-meal premises. With due encouragement, however, he may be prevailed on to slip the padlock from his lips, and immediately overwhelms you with a torrent of secret history, which rushes forth with more violence for having been so long confined.

Poor Meanwell, though he never fails to transgress, is rather to be pitied than condemned. To trust him with a secret is to spoil his appetite, to break his rest, and to deprive him, for a time, of every earthly enjoyment. Like a man who travels with his whole

fortune in his pocket, he is terrified if you approach him, and immediately suspects that you come with a felonious intent to rob him of his charge. If he ventures abroad, it is to walk in some unfrequented place, where he is least in danger of an attack. At home he shuts himself up from his family, paces to and fro his chamber, and has no relief but from muttering over to himself what he longs to publish to the world, and would gladly submit to the office of town-cryer, for the liberty of proclaiming it in the market-place. At length, however, weary of his burden, and resolved to bear it no longer, he consigns it to the custody of the first friend he meets, and returns to his wife with a cheerful aspect, and wonderfully altered for the better.

Careless is, perhaps, equally undesigning, though not equally excusable. Intrust him with an affair of the utmost importance, on the concealment of which your fortune and happiness depend: he hears you with a kind of half attention, whistles a favourite air, and accompanies it with the drumming of his fingers upon the table. As soon as your narration is ended, or perhaps in the middle of it, he asks your opinion of his sword-knot—damns his taylor for having dressed him in a snuff-coloured coat instead of a pompadour, and leaves you in haste to attend an auction; where, as if he meant to dispose of his intelligence to the best bidder, he divulges it with a voice as loud as an auctioneer's; and when you tax him with having played you false, he is heartily sorry for it, but never knew that it was to be a secret.

To these I might add the character of the open and unreserved, who thinks it a breach of friendship to conceal any thing from his intimates; and the impertinent, who having, by dint of observation, made himself master of your secret, imagines he may lawfully publish the knowledge it cost him so much labour to obtain, and considers that privilege as the reward due to his industry. But I shall leave these, with many other characters, which my reader's own experience may suggest to him, and conclude with prescribing, as a short remedy for this evil—that no man may betray the council of his friend, let every man keep his own.

THE CONNOISSEUR.

(NUMBER 134.)

Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris
Ædesque labentia Deorum, et
Fæda nigro simulacra fumo.

Hor.

The tottering tow'r and mould'ring walls repair,
And fill with decency the house of prayer:
Quick to the needy curate bring relief,
And deck the parish-church without a brief.

Mr. VILLAGE to Mr. TOWN.

Dear Cousin,

THE country, at present, no less than the metropolis, abounding with politicians of every kind, I begin to despair of picking up any intelligence that might possibly be entertaining to your readers. However, I have lately visited some of the most distant parts of the kingdom, with a clergyman of my acquaintance. I shall not trouble you with an account of the improvements that have been made in the seats we saw, according to the modern taste, but proceed to give you some reflections which occurred to us in observing several country churches, and the behaviour of their congregations.

The ruinous condition of some of these edifices gave me great offence; and I could not help wishing that the honest vicar, instead of indulging his genius for improvements, by enclosing his gooseberry bushes within a Chinese rail, and converting half an acre of his glebe-land into a bowling-green, would have applied part of his income to the more laudable purpose of sheltering his parishioners from the weather during their attendance on divine service. It is no uncommon thing to see the parsonage-house well thatched, and in exceeding good repair, while the church perhaps has scarce any other roof than the ivy that grows over it. The noise of owls, bats, and magpies makes the principal part of the church music in many of these ancient edifices; and the walls, like a large map, seem to be portioned out into capes, seas, and promontories, by the various colours by which the damps have stained them. Sometimes the foundation being too weak to support the steeple any longer, it has been found expedient to pull down that part of the

building, and to hang the bells under a wooden shed on the ground beside it. This is the case in a parish in Norfolk, through which I lately passed, and where the clerk and the sexton, like the two figures of St. Dunstan's, serve the bells in capacity of clappers, by striking them alternately with a hammer.

In other churches I have observed that nothing unseemly or ruinous is to be found, except in the clergyman, and the appendages of his person. The 'squire of the parish, or his ancestors, perhaps, to testify their devotion, and leave a lasting monument of their magnificence, have adorned the altar-piece with the richest crimson velvet, embroidered with vine-leaves and ears of wheat; and have dressed up the pulpit with the same splendour and expense; while the gentleman who fills it is exalted, in the midst of all this finery, with a surplice as dirty as a farmer's frock, and a periwig that seems to have transferred its faculty of curling to the band, which appears in full buckle beneath it.

But if I was concerned to see several distressed pastors, as well as many of our country churches, in a tottering condition, I was more offended with the indecency of worship in others. I could wish that the clergy would inform their congregations, that there is no occasion to scream themselves hoarse in making the responses; that the town-cryer is not the only person qualified to pray with due devotion; and that he who bawls the loudest may nevertheless be the wickedest fellow in the parish. The old women, too, in the aisle might be told, that their time would be better employed in attending to the sermon, than in fumbling over their tattered testaments till they have found the text; by which time the discourse is near drawing to a conclusion: while a word or two of instruction might not be thrown away upon the younger part of the congregation, to teach them that making posies in summer time, and cracking nuts in autumn, is no part of the religious ceremony.

The good old practice of psalm-singing is, indeed, wonderfully improved in many country churches since the days of Sternhold and Hopkins; and there is scarce a parish clerk who has so little taste as not to pick his staves out of the new version. This has occasioned great complaints in some places, where the clerk has been forced to bawl by himself, because the rest of the congregation cannot find the psalm at the end of their prayer-books; while others are highly disgusted at the innovation, and stick as obstinately to the old version as to the old style.

The tunes themselves have also been new set to jiggish measures, and the sober drawl which used to accompany the two first staves of the hundreth Psalm, with the Gloria Patri, is now split

into as many quavers as an Italian air. For this purpose there is in every country an itinerant band of vocal musicians, who make it their business to go round to all the churches in their turns, and after a prelude with the pitch-pipe, astonish the audience with hymns set to the new Winchester measure, and anthems of their own composing.

As these new-fashioned psalmodists are necessarily made up of young men and maids, we may naturally suppose that there is a perfect concord and symphony between them: and, indeed, I have known it happen, that these sweet singers have more than once been brought into disgrace by too close an unison between the thorough-bass and the treble.

It is a difficult matter to decide which is looked upon as the greatest man in a country church, the parson or his clerk. The latter is most certainly held in the higher veneration, where the former happens to be only a poor curate, who rides post every Sabbath from village to village, and mounts and dismounts at the church-door. The clerk's office is not only to tag the prayers with an amen, or usher in the sermon with a stave; but he is also the universal father to give away the brides, and the standing godfather to all the new-born bantlings. But, in many places, there is still a greater man belonging to the church than either the parson or the clerk himself. The person I mean is the 'squire, who, like the king, may be styled head of the church in his own parish. If the benefice be in his own gift, the vicar is his creature, and, of consequence, entirely at his devotion: or if the care of the church be left to a curate, the Sunday-fees, roast-beef and plumb-pudding, and the liberty to shoot in the manor, will bring him as much under the 'squire's command as his dogs and horses.

For this reason, the bell is often kept tolling, and the people waiting in the church-yard, an hour longer than the usual time; nor must the service begin till the 'squire has strutted up the aisle and seated himself in the great pew in the chancel. The length of the sermon is also measured by the will of the 'squire, as formerly by the hour glass; and I know one parish where the preacher has always the complaisance to conclude his discourse, however abruptly, the minute that the 'squire gives the signal by rising up after his nap.

In a village church, the 'squire's lady, or the vicar's wife, are perhaps the only females that are stared at for their finery; but in the large cities and towns, where the newest fashions are brought down weekly by the stage-coach, or waggon, all the wives and daughters of the most topping tradesmen vie with each other, every Sunday, in the elegance of their apparel. I could even trace

their gradations in their dress, according to the opulence, the extent, and the distance of the place from London. I was at church in a populous city in the north, where the mace-bearer cleared the way for Mrs. Mayoress, who came sidling after him in an enormous fan-hoop, of a pattern which had never been seen before in those parts. At another church, in a corporation town, I saw several *negligees*, with furbellowed aprons, which had long disputed the prize of superiority: but these were most woefully eclipsed by a burgess's daughter, just come from London, who appeared in a *trollopipe* or *slammerkin*, with treble ruffles to the cuffs, pinked and gymped, and the sides of the petticoat drawn up in festoons. In some lesser borough towns, the contest I found lay between three or four black and green bibs and aprons. At one a grocer's wife attracted our eyes by a new fashion cap, called *a joan*, and at another, they were wholly taken up by a mercer's daughter in a nun's hood.

I need not say any thing of the behaviour of the congregations in these more polite places of religious resort; as the same genteel ceremonies are practised there as at the most fashionable churches in town. The ladies, immediately on their entrance, breathe a pious ejaculation through their fan-sticks, and the beaux very gravely address themselves to the haberdashers' bills, glewed upon the lining of their hats. This pious duty is no sooner performed than the exercise of bowing and curtesying succeeds; the locking and unlocking of the pews drowns the reader's voice at the beginning of the service; and the rustling of silks, added to the whispering and tittering of so much good company, renders him totally unintelligible to the very end of it.

I am, dear cousin, yours, &c.

THE CONNOISSEUR.

(NUMBER 138.)

Servata semper lege et ratione loquendi.

JUV.

Your talk to decency and reason suit,
Not prate like fools, or gabble like a brute.

IN the comedy of the Frenchman in London, which we are told was acted at Paris with universal applause for several nights together, there is a character of a rough Englishman, who is represented as quite unskilled in the graces of conversation, and his dia-

logue consists almost entirely of a repetition of the common salutation of, How do you do? how do you do? Our nation has, indeed, been generally supposed to be of a sullen and uncommunicative disposition; while, on the other hand, the loquacious French have been allowed to possess the art of conversing beyond all other people. The Englishman requires to be wound up frequently, and stops very soon; but the Frenchman runs on in a continued alarum. Yet it must be acknowledged, that as the English consist of very different humours, their manner of discourse admits of great variety: but the whole French nation converse alike; and there is no difference in their address between a marquis and a valet de chambre. We may frequently see a couple of French barbers accosting each other in the street, and paying their compliments with the same volubility of speech, the same grimace, and action, as two courtiers in the Thuilleries.

I shall not attempt to lay down any particular rules for conversation, but rather point out such faults in discourse and behaviour as render the company of half mankind rather tedious than amusing. It is in vain, indeed, to look for conversation where we might expect to find it in the greatest perfection, among persons of fashion; there it is almost annihilated by universal card-playing; insomuch, that I have heard it given as a reason, why it is impossible for our present writers to succeed in the dialogue of genteel comedy, that our people of quality scarce ever meet but to game. All their discourse turns upon the odd trick, and the four honours, and it is no less a maxim with the votaries of whist than with those of Bacchus, that talking spoils company.

Every one endeavours to make himself as agreeable to society as he can; but it often happens that those who most aim at shining in conversation overshoot their mark. Though a man succeeds, he should not (as is frequently the case) engross the whole talk to himself, for that destroys the very essence of conversation, which is talking together. We should try to keep up conversation like a ball bandied to and fro from one to another, rather than seize it ourselves, and drive it before us like a foot-ball. We should likewise be cautious to adapt the matter of our discourse to our company, and not to talk Greek before ladies, or of the last new furbelow to a meeting of country justices.

But nothing throws a more ridiculous air over our whole conversation than certain peculiarities, easily acquired, but very difficultly conquered and discarded. In order to display these absurdities in a truer light, it is my present purpose to enumerate such of them as are most commonly to be met with; and first, to take notice of those buffoons in society, the attitudinarians and face-ma-

kers. These accompany every word with a peculiar grimace or gesture: they assent with a shrug, and contradict with a twisting of the neck; are angry with a wry mouth, and pleased in a caper or a minuet step. They may be considered as speaking harlequins; and their rules of eloquence are taken from the posture-master. These should be condemned to converse only in dumb show with their own person in the looking-glass; as well as the smirkers and smilers, who so prettily set off their faces, together with their words by a je-ne-scai-quoi between a grin and a dimple. With these we may likewise rank the affected tribe of mimics, who are constantly taking off the peculiar tone of voice or gesture of their acquaintance; though they are such wretched imitators, that (like bad painters) they are frequently forced to write the name under the picture before we can discover any likeness.

Next to these, whose elocution is absorbed in action, and who converse chiefly with their arms and legs, we may consider the profest speakers. And first, the emphatical; who squeeze, and press, and ram down every syllable with excessive vehemence and energy. These orators are remarkable for their distinct elocution and force of expression; they dwell on the important particles *of* and *the*, and the significant conjunctive *and;* which they seem to hawk up with much difficulty out of their own throats, and to cram them with no less pain into the ears of their auditors.

These should be suffered only to syringe (as it were) the ears of a deaf man, through an hearing trumpet: though, I must confess, that I am equally offended with whisperers or low speakers, who seem to fancy all their acquaintance deaf, and come up so close to you, that they may be said to measure noses with you, and frequently overcome you with the exhalations of a powerful breath. I would have these oracular gentry obliged to talk at a distance through a speaking trumpet, or apply their lips to the walls of a whispering gallery. The wits, who will not condescend to utter any thing but a bon mot, and the whistlers, or tune-hummers, who never articulate at all, may be joined very agreeably together in concert; and to these tinkling cymbals I would also add the sounding brass, the bawler, who inquires after your health with the bellowing of a town-cryer.

The tatlers, whose pliable pipes are admirably adapted to the "soft parts of conversation," and sweetly "pratling out of fashion," make very pretty music from a beautiful face and a female tongue: but from a rough manly voice and coarse features, mere nonsense is as harsh and dissonant as a jig from an hurdy-gurdy. The swearers I have spoken of in a former paper; but the half-swearers, who split, and mince, and fritter their oaths into *gad's*-

but, *ad's-fish*, and *demme;* the Gothic humboggers, and those who "nick-name God's creatures," and call a man a cabbage, a crab, a queer cub, an odd fish, and an unaccountable *muskin*, should never come into company without an interpreter. But I will not tire my reader's patience, by pointing out all the pests of conversation; nor dwell particularly on the sensibles, who pronounce dogmatically on the most trivial points, and speak in sentences; the wonderers, who are always wondering what o'clock it is, or wondering whether it will rain or no, or wondering when the moon changes; the phraseologists, who explain a thing by *all that*, or enter into particulars with *this*, *that*, and *t'other;* and, lastly, the silent men, who seem afraid of opening their mouths, lest they should catch cold, and literally observe the precept of the gospel, by letting their conversation be only yea yea, and nay nay.

The rational intercourse kept up by conversation, is one of our principal distinctions from brutes. We should therefore endeavour to turn this peculiar talent to our advantage, and consider the organs of speech as the instruments of understanding. We should be very careful not to use them as the weapons of vice, or tools of folly, and do our utmost to unlearn any trivial or ridiculous habits, which tend to lessen the value of such an inestimable prerogative. It is, indeed, imagined by some philosophers, that even birds and beasts (though without the power of articulation) perfectly understand one another by the sounds they utter; and that dogs and cats, &c. have each a particular language to themselves, like different nations. Thus it may be supposed, that the nightingales of Italy have as fine an ear for their own native wood-notes as any signor or signora for an Italian air; that the boars of Westphalia grunt as expressively through the nose as the inhabitants in High-German; and that the frogs in the dykes of Holland croak as intelligibly as the natives jabber their Low Dutch. However this may be, we may consider those whose tongues hardly seem to be under the influence of reason, and do not keep up the proper conversation of human creatures, as imitating the language of different animals. Thus, for instance, the affinity between chatterers and monkeys, and praters and parrots, is too obvious not to occur at once: Grunters and growlers may be justly compared to hogs; snarlers are curs; and the *spitfire passionate* are a sort of wild-cats that will not bear stroaking, but will pur when they are pleased. Complainers are screech-owls; and story-tellers, always repeating the same dull note, are cuckows. Poets, that prick up their ears at their own hideous braying, are no better than asses; critics in general are venomous serpents, that delight in hissing; and some of them who have got by heart a few technical

terms, without knowing their meaning, are no other than magpies! I myself, who have crowed to the whole town for near three years past, may, perhaps, put my readers in mind of a dunghill cock: but as I must acquaint them, that they will hear the last of me on this day fortnight, I hope they will then consider me as a swan, who is supposed to sing sweetly in his dying moments.

MOTTO ON A CLOCK,

With a Translation by the Editor.

Quæ lenta accedit, quam velox præterit hora!
Ut capias, patiens esto, sed esto vigil!

Slow comes the hour; its passing speed how great!
Waiting to seize it—vigilantly wait!

Cowper's tame Hares.

CONCLUSION.

Astanti sat erit si dicam sim tibi curæ:
* * * * * * *
Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus
Nectens aut paphia myrti, aut parnasside lauri
Fronde comas, at ego secura pace quiescam.

MILTONI MANSUS.

I shall but need to say, be yet my friend:
He too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me; and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian Isle,
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.

COWPER'S TRANSLATION.

THE

CONCLUSION.

THOUGH it seems unnecessary to enumerate the many public compliments that have been paid, by a variety of writers, to the poetical excellence of Cowper, I must not fail to notice a private tribute to his merit, which the kindness of a distant friend transmitted to me while these volumes were in the press.

In the form of a letter, to an accomplished author of Ireland, it comprizes a series of extensive observations on the poetry of my departed friend; observations so full of taste and feeling, that I hope the judicious writer will, in a season of leisure, revise, extend, and convert them into a separate monument to the memory of the poet, whom he is worthy to praise.

Being favoured with the liberty of using, in this publication, the manuscript I have mentioned, I shall select from it a passage relating both to Milton and to Cowper, as an introduction to the proposal in honour of the two illustrious and congenial poets, with which I have already promised to close this address to the public.

After many forcible remarks on the moral spirit of poetry, and a quotation from Lowth on its end and efficacy, the animated critic proceeds in the following words.

"The noblest benefits and delights of poetry can be but rarely produced, because all the requisites for producing them so very seldom meet. A vivid mind, and happy imitative power, may enable a poet to form glowing pictures of virtue, and almost produce in himself a short-lived enthusiasm of goodness; but although even these transient and factitious movements of mind may serve to produce grand and delightful effusions of poetry, yet when the best of these are compared with the poetic productions of a genuine lover of virtue, a discerning judgment will scarcely fail to mark the difference. A simplicity of conception and expression—a conscious, and therefore unaffected dignity—an instinctive adherence to sober reason, even amid the highest flights—an uniform justness and consistency of thought—a glowing, yet temperate ardour of feeling—a peculiar felicity, both in the choice and combination of terms, by which even the plainest words acquire the

truest character of eloquence, and which is rarely to be found, except where a subject is not only intimately known, but cordially loved; these, I conceive, are the features peculiar to the real votary of virtue, and which must, of course, give to his strains a perfection of effect never to be attained by the poet of inferior moral endowments.

I believe it will be readily granted, that all these qualities were never more perfectly combined than in the poetry of *Milton;* and I think, too, there will be little doubt, that the next to him, in every one of these instances, beyond all comparison, is *Cowper.* The genius of the latter did certainly not lead him to emulate the songs of the seraphim. But though he pursues a lower walk of poetry than his great master, he appears no less the enraptured votary of pure unmixed goodness. Nay, perhaps he may, in this one respect, possess some peculiar excellences, which may make him seem more the bard of Christianity. That divine religion infinitely exalts, but it also deeply humbles the mind it inspires. It gives majesty to the thoughts, but it impresses meekness on the manners, and diffuses tenderness through the feelings. It combines sensibility with fortitude—the lowliness of the child with the magnanimity of the hero.

The grandest features of the Christian character were never more gloriously exemplified than in that spirit which animates the whole of Milton's poetry. His own *Michael* does not impress us with the idea of a purer or more awful virtue than that which we feel in every portion of his majestic verse; and he no less happily indicates the source from which his excellence was derived, by the bright beams which he ever and anon reflects upon us from the sacred scriptures. But the milder graces of the gospel are certainly less apparent. What we behold is so awful, it might almost have inspired a wish, that a spirit equally pure and heavenly might be raised to illustrate, with like felicity, the more attractive and gentler influences of our divine religion.

In Cowper, above any poet that ever lived, would such a wish seem to be fulfilled. In his charming effusions, we have the same spotless purity—the same elevated devotion—the same vital exercise of every noble and exalted quality of the mind—the same devotedness to the sacred scriptures, and to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel: the difference is, that instead of an almost repressive dignity, we have the sweetest familiarity—instead of the majestic grandeur of the Old Testament, we have the winning graces of the New—instead of those thunders by which angels were discomfited, we have, as it were, "the still small voice" of Him who was meek and lowly of heart.

May we not then venture to assert, that from that spirit of devoted piety which has rendered both these great men liable to the charge of religious enthusiasm, but which, in truth, raised the minds of both to a kind of happy residence,

" In regions mild, of calm, and serene air,
" Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
" Which men call Earth,"

a peculiar character has been derived to the poetry of them both, which distinguishes their compositions from those of almost all the world besides? I have already enumerated some of the superior advantages of a truly virtuous poet, and presumed to state, that these are realized, in an unexampled degree, in Milton and Cowper. That they both owed this moral eminence to their *vivid sense of religion*, will, I conceive, need no demonstration, except what will arise to every reader of taste and feeling on examining their works. It will here, I think, be seen at once, that that sublimity of conception, that delicacy of virtuous feeling, that majestic independence of mind, that quick relish for all the beauties of nature, at once so pure, and so exquisite, which we find ever occurring in them both, could not have existed in the same unrivalled degree, if their devotion had been less intense, and, of course, their minds more dissipated amongst low and distracting objects."

In printing this brief specimen from the manuscript of a modest writer, who is personally unknown to me, I hope I may lead him to make, for his own honour, a more extensive use of his production. His eloquent remarks on the congeniality of mind between Milton and Cowper, may, possibly, induce some readers to favour my intention of rendering Milton a contributor to the posthumous honours of Cowper, by the following proposal.

My departed friend having expressed a wish to me that an edition of Milton might be formed, in which our respective writings concerning him should appear united, I hope to accomplish that affectionate desire. If the public favour my idea, the whole profits of the book will be applied to the purpose of raising a marble MONUMENT in the metropolis, to Cowper, by the sculptor whose genius he particularly regarded, my friend Mr. Flaxman. The proposed edition is to contain Cowper's admirable translations from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton, and all that is preserved of that unfinished Commentary, which he intended to continue and complete as a series of Dissertations on the Paradise Lost.

It is proposed that Cowper's Milton (for so I wish the edition to be called) shall consist of three quarto volumes, decorated with various engravings, at the price of six guineas; and those who intend to contribute in this manner to a national monument, in memory of Cowper, are requested to deposit their subscriptions either with Mr. JOHNSON, bookseller, of St. Paul's, or with Mr. EVANS, bookseller, of Pall-Mall.

As many persons may be inclined to subscribe to Cowper's monument, without subscribing to the intended Milton, it is presumed such persons will be gratified in being informed, that the two booksellers above-mentioned will receive any smaller sum as a contribution to the monument, and either faithfully devote whatever may be received to that purpose, or return the sum so advanced to every subscriber, if the purpose should be relinquished: It may, however, be reasonably hoped, that a purpose where the feelings of national esteem and love are so perfectly in unison with those of private friendship, will be happily accomplished, and that many who feel how justly the pre-eminent character of Cowper is endeared to our country, will delight in contributing to perpetuate his renown, by the most honourable memorial of public affection.

FINIS.

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