

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Charlotte Turner Smith

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS.

THE little Poems which are here called Sonnets, have, I believe, no very just claim to that title: but they consist of fourteen lines, and appear to me no improper vehicle for a single sentiment. I am told, and I read it as the opinion of very good judges, that the legitimate Sonnet is ill calculated for our language. The specimens Mr Hayley has given, though they form a strong exception, prove no more, than that the difficulties of the attempt vanish before uncommon powers.

Some very melancholy moments have been beguiled by expressing in verse the sensations those moments brought. Some of my friends, with partial indiscretion, have multiplied the copies they procured of several of these attempts, till they found their way into the prints of the day in a mutilated state; which, concurring with other circumstances, determined me to put them into their present form. I can hope for readers only among the few, who, to sensibility of heart, join simplicity of taste.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH EDITIONS.

THE reception given by the public, as well as my particular friends, to the two first editions of these Poems, has induced me to add to the present such other Sonnets as I have written since, or have recovered from my acquaintance, to whom I had given them without thinking well enough of them at the time to preserve any copies myself. A few of those last written, I have attempted on the Italian model; with what success I know not; but I am persuaded that, to the generality of readers, those which are less regular will be more pleasing.

As a few notes were necessary, I have added them at the end. I have there quoted such lines as I have borrowed; and even where I am conscious the ideas were not my own, I have restored them to the original possessors.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

IN printing a list of so many noble, literal, and respectable names, it would become me, perhaps, to make my acknowledgments to those friends, to whose exertions in my favour, rather than to any merit of my own, I owe the brilliant assemblage. With difficulty I repress what I feel on this subject; but in the conviction that such acknowledgments would be painful to them, I forbear publicly to speak of those particular obligations, the sense of which will ever be deeply impressed on my heart.

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

When a sixth edition of these little Poems was lately called for, it was proposed to me to add such Sonnets, or other pieces, as I might have written since the publication of the fifth. Of these, however, I had only a few; and on showing them to a friend, of whose judgment I had a high opinion, he remarked that some of them, particularly "The Sleeping Woodman," and "The Return of the Nightingale," resembled in their subjects, and still more in the plaintive tone in which they are written, the greater part of those in the former editions, and that, perhaps, some of a more lively cast might be better liked by the public "*Toujours perdrix*," said my friend "*Toujours perdrix*," you know, '*ne vaut rien*.' I am far from supposing that *your* compositions can be neglected or disapproved, on whatever subject; but perhaps '*toujours rossignols, toujours des chansons tristes*,' may not be so well received as if you attempted, what you would certainly execute as successfully, a more cheerful style of composition." "Alas!" replied I, 'Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?' Or can the *effect* cease, while the *cause* remains? *You know* that when in the Beech Woods of Hampshire, I first struck the chords of the melancholy lyre, its notes were never intended for the public ear! It was unaffected sorrows drew them forth: I wrote mournfully because I was unhappy, and I have unfortunately no reason yet, though nine years have since elapsed, to *change my tone*. The time is indeed arrived, when I have been promised by '*the honourable men*' who, *nine years ago*, undertook to see that my family obtained the provision their grandfather designed for them, that 'all should be well, all should be settled. But still I am condemned to feel the '*hope delayed that maketh the heart sick*.' Still to receive not a repetition of promises indeed *but of scorn and insult*, when I apply to those gentlemen, who, though they acknowledge that all impediments to a division of the estate they have undertaken to manage, are done away will neither tell me *when* they will proceed to divide it, nor *whether they will ever do so at all*. You know the circumstances under which I have now so long been labouring; and you have done me the honour to say, that few women could so long have contended with them. With these, however as they are some of them of a domestic and painful nature, I will not trouble the public *now*; but while they exist in all their force, that indulgent public must accept all I am able to achieve '*Toujours des chansons tristes*!' "

Thus ended the short dialogue between my friend and me, and I repeat it as an apology for that apparent despondence, which, when it is observed for a long series of years, may look like affectation. *I shall be sorry*, if on some future occasion, I should feel myself compelled to detail its causes more at length; for, notwithstanding I am thus frequently appearing as an authoress, and have derived from thence many of the greatest advantages of my life, since it has procured me friends whose attachment is most invaluable, I am well aware that for a woman

"The post of honour is a private station."

PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

IT so rarely happens that a second attempt in any species of writing equals the first, in the public opinion, when the first has been remarkably successful; that I send this second volume of small Poems into the world with a considerable degree of diffidence and apprehension.

Whatever inferiority may be adjudged to it, I cannot plead want of *time* for its completion, if I should attempt any excuse at all; for I do not forget that more than three years have elapsed since I reluctantly yielded to the pressing instances of some of my friends; and accepted their offers to promote a subscription to another volume of Poems I say, accepted the offers of my friends, because, with a single exception, I never made any application myself.

Having once before had recourse to the indulgence of the public, in publishing a book by subscription, and knowing that it had been so often done by persons with whom it is honourable to be ranked, it was not pride that long withheld my consent from this manner of publication; and, certainly, the pecuniary inconveniences I had been exposed to for so many years, never pressed upon me *more* heavily than at the moment this proposal was urged by my friends; if then I declined it, it was because I even at *that* period doubted, whether from extreme

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depression of spirit, I should have the power of fulfilling, so as to satisfy myself, the engagement I must feel myself bound by, the moment I had accepted subscriptions.

Could any one of the misfortunes that so rapidly followed have been foreseen, nothing should have induced me to have consented to it; for what expectation could I entertain of resisting such calamities as the detention of their property has brought on my children? Of four sons, all seeking in other climates the competence denied them in this, two were, for that reason, driven from their prospects in the church to the army, where one of them was maimed during the first campaign he served in, and is now a lieutenant of invalids. The loveliest, the most beloved of my daughters, the darling of all her family, was torn from us for ever. The rest deprived of every advantage to which they are entitled; and the means of proper education for my youngest son denied me! while the money that their inhuman trustees have suffered yearly to be wasted, and what they keep possession of on false and frivolous pretences, would, if paid to those it belongs to, have saved me and them from all these now irremediable misfortunes.

I am well aware that the present is not a time when the complaints of individuals against private wrong are likely to be listened to; nor is this an opportunity fit to make those complaints; but I know so much has been said, so much more than so trifling a matter could be worth, of the *delay* of this publication, that it becomes in some measure a matter of self-defence, to account for that delay. Those who have expressed such impatience for it, were apprehensive, indeed they owned they were of the loss of the half guinea they had paid. I have more than once thought of returning their money, rather than have remained under any obligation to persons who could suspect me of a design to accumulate, by gathering subscriptions for a work I never meant to publish, a sum, which no contrivance, no success, was likely to make equal to one year of the income I ought to possess. Surely, any who have entertained and *expressed* such an opinion of me, must either never have understood, *or must have forgotten*, what I was, what I am, or what I ought to be.

To be suspected even by arrogant ignorance of such an intention to impose on public generosity, has not been the least among the mortifications I have within these last years been subjected to; I place them to the same long account of injuries, where this, however, is almost lost in the magnitude of others! Let not the censors of literary productions, or the fastidious in private life, again reprove me for bringing forward "with querulous egotism," the mention of myself, and the sorrows, of which the men, who have withheld my family property, have been the occasion. Had they never so unjustly possessed, and so shamelessly exercised the power of reducing me to pecuniary distress, I should never, perhaps, have had occasion to ask the consideration of the *reader*, or to deprecate the severity of the *critic*. Certainly I should never have been compelled to make excuses as a defaulter in point of *punctuality* to the *subscriber*. Nor should I to any of these have found it necessary to state the causes that have rendered me miserable as an *individual*, though *now* I am compelled to complain of those who have crushed the poor abilities of the *author*, and by the most unheard of acts of injustice, *for twice seven years*, have added the painful sensations of *indignation* to the inconveniences and deprivations of indigence; and aggravating by future dread, the present suffering, have frequently doubled the toil necessary for tomorrow, by palsying the hand and distracting the head, that were struggling against the evils of today!

It is passed! The injuries I have so long suffered under are not mitigated; the aggressors are not removed: but however soon they may be disarmed of their power, any retribution in this world is impossible they can neither give back to the maimed the possession of health, nor restore the dead. The time they have occasioned me to pass in anxiety, in sorrow, in anguish, they cannot recall to me to my children they can make no amends, but they would not if they could; nor have I the poor consolation of knowing that I leave in the callous hearts of these persons, *thorns* to

"goad and sting them,"

for they have conquered or outlived all sensibility of shame; they are alive neither to honesty, honour, or humanity; and at this moment, far from feeling compunction for the ruin they have occasioned, the dreadful misfortunes they have been the authors of, one shrinks from the very attempt to make such redress as he might yet give, and wraps himself up in the callous insolence of his imagined consequence; while the other uses such

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professional subterfuges as are the disgrace of his profession, to baffle me yet a little longer in my attempts to procure that restitution, that justice, which they dare not deny I am entitled to; and to insult me by a continuation of tormenting chicaneries, perpetuating to the utmost of their power the distresses they have occasioned, and which their perseverance in iniquity has already put it out of the power of Heaven itself to remedy!

Would to God I could dismiss these oppressors from my mind forever, as I now do from the notice of any future readers, whom I may engage to any work of mine; though very probably I may now take my last leave of the public. And let me, while I account for the delay of this work, and for many defects that may perhaps be found in it, assign the causes for both, and lament that such have been the circumstances under which I have composed it, as may rather render it a wonder I have produced it at all, than that it has been so long in appearing, and yet appears defective. Surely I shall be forgiven once more for "querulous egotism," when the disadvantages I have laboured under are considered; complaint may be pardoned when the consequences of what I deplore mingle themselves in all my feelings, embitter every hour of my life, and leave me no hope but in the oblivion of the grave.

Some degree of pride which

"Still travels on, nor leaves us till we die,"

makes me somewhat solicitous to account for the visible difference in point of numbers between the subscribers to this and the former volume. If I were willing to admit that these Poems are inferior to those that preceded them, I know that such a supposition would not have withheld a single subscription but I also know, that as party can raise prejudices against the colour of a ribband, or the cut of a cape, it generates still stranger antipathies, even in regard so things almost equally trifling. And *there are*, who can never forgive an author that has, in the story of a Novel, or the composition of a Sonnet, ventured to hint at any opinions different from those which these liberal-minded personages are determined to find the best.

I know, therefore, perfectly well, how I have sinned against some *ci-devant*, I was going to say friends, but I check myself, and change the word for acquaintance,

"*Since friendship should be made of stronger stuff*,"

acquaintance, who when my writing first obtained popularity, erected themselves into patrons and patronesses. To the favour they *then* conferred I am not insensible; and I hope they will accept it as a proof of my perfectly understanding the extent of the obligation, that I have so silently acquiesced in not expecting it to be repeated, and have never suffered them to be put under the painful necessity of avowing their dereliction in 1797, of the writer whom they affected so warmly to patronize in 1787. Ten years do indeed operate most wonderful changes in this state of existence.

Perhaps in addition to the friends, or *soi-disant tel*, whose notice and whose names have for some such causes as these, been withheld, I might add as *another cause*, that for many months past I have been so apprehensive of not having health enough to superintend the publication of even this small volume, that I had desired those few friends who had voluntarily engaged to collect subscriptions, not to persevere in their kind endeavours; and I had written to my elder sons, entreating them, should death overtake me before I could complete my engagements, to place, as soon afterwards as they could, in the hands of Messrs Cadell and Davies, a sum sufficient to reimburse them any expenses they might have incurred, and to repay the subscriptions.

I am at length enabled to send it into the world and have certainly omitted nothing that was in my power to make it not entirely unworthy the general favour, and of the particular kindness of *those* without whose support I believe it would have been impossible for me to have prepared the few verses I had by me, or to have composed others. That these are gloomy, none will surely have a right to complain; for I never engaged they should be gay. But I am unhappily exempt from the suspicion of *feigning* sorrow for an opportunity of showing the pathos with which it can be described a suspicion that has given rise to much ridicule, and many invidious remarks, among certain critics and others, who carry into their closets the same aversion to any thing tragic, as influences, at the present period, their theatrical taste.

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It is, indeed, a melancholy truth, that at this time there is so much tragedy in real life, that those who have escaped private calamity, can withdraw their minds a moment from that which is general, very naturally prefer to melancholy books, or tragic representations, those lighter and gayer amusements, which exhilarate the senses, and throw a transient veil over the extensive and still threatening desolation, that overspreads this country, and in some degree, every quarter of the world. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

May 15th , 1797.

SONNET I.

THE partial Muse, has from my earliest hours,
Smil'd on the rugged path I'm doom'd to tread,
And still with sportive hand has snatch'd wild flowers,
To weave fantastic garlands for my head:
But far, far happier is the lot of those
Who never learn'd her dear delusive art;
Which, while it decks the head with many a rose,
Reserves the thorn, to fester in the heart.
For still she bids soft Pity's melting eye
Stream o'er the ills she knows not to remove,
Points every pang, and deepens every sigh
Of mourning friendship or unhappy love.
Ah! then, how dear the Muse's favours cost,
If those paint sorrow best who feel it most!

SONNET II.

Written at the close of Spring.

THE garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nursed in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and hare-bell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah! poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness no second spring?

SONNET III.

TO A NIGHTINGALE.

POOR, melancholy bird that all night long
Tell'st to the Moon thy tale of tender woe;
From what sad cause can such sweet sorrow flow,

SONNET I.

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And whence this mournful melody of song?
Thy poet's musing fancy would translate
 What mean the sounds that swell thy little breast,
 When still at dewy eve thou leav'st thy nest,
Thus to the listening night to sing thy fate?
Pale Sorrow's victims wert thou once among,
 Though now released in woodlands wild to rove?
 Say hast thou felt from friends some cruel wrong,
Or died'st thou martyr of disastrous love?
Ah! songstress sad! that such my lot might be,
To sigh and sing at Liberty like thee!

SONNET IV.

TO THE MOON.

QUEEN of the silver bow! by thy pale beam,
 Alone and pensive, I delight to stray,
And watch thy shadow trembling in the stream,
 Or mark the floating clouds that cross thy way.
And while I gaze, thy mild and placid light
Sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast;
And oft I think fair planet of the night,
 That in thy orb, the wretched may have rest:
The sufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
 Released by death to thy benignant sphere,
And the sad children of despair and woe
 Forget in thee, their cup of sorrow here.
Oh! that I soon may reach thy world serene,
Poor wearied pilgrim in this toiling scene!

SONNET V.

TO THE SOUTH DOWNS.

AH! hills beloved! where once, a happy child,
 Your beechen shades, 'your turf, your flowers among,'
I wove your blue-bells into garlands wild,
 And woke your echoes with my artless song.
Ah! hills beloved! your turf, your flowers remain;
 But can they peace to this sad breast restore,
For one poor moment soothe the sense of pain,
 And teach a breaking heart to throb no more?
And you, Aruna! in the vale below,
 As to the sea your limpid waves you bear
Can you one kind Lethean cup bestow,
 To drink a long oblivion to my care?
Ah! no! when all, e'en Hope's last ray is gone,
There's no oblivion but in death alone!

SONNET IV.

SONNET VI.

TO HOPE.

OH, Hope! thou soother sweet of human woes.
How shall I lure thee to my haunts forlorn?
For me wilt thou renew the wither'd rose,
And clear my painful path of pointed thorn?
Ah, come sweet nymph! in smiles and softness drest,
Like the young hours that lead the tender year,
Enchantress, come! and charm my cares to rest:
Alas! the flatterer flies, and will not hear!
A prey to fear, anxiety, and pain,
Must I a sad existence still deplore
Lo! the flowers fade, but all the thorns remain,
'For me the vernal garland blooms no more.'
Come then, 'pale Misery's love!' be thou my cure,
And I will bless thee, who though slow art sure.

SONNET VII.

ON THE
DEPARTURE OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

SWEET poet of the woods a long adieu!
Farewell, soft minstrel of the early year!
Ah! 'twill be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
And pour thy music on 'the night's dull ear.'
Whether on Spring thy wandering flights await,
Or whether silent in our groves you dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
And still protect the song she loves so well.
With cautious step, the love-lorn youth shall glide
Thro' the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest;
And shepherd girls, from eyes profane shall hide
The gentle bird, who sings of pity best:
For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to sorrow, and to love!

SONNET VIII.

TO SPRING.

AGAIN the wood and long-withdrawing vale
In many a tint of tender green are drest,
Where the young leaves, unfolding, scarce conceal
Beneath their early shade, the half-form'd nest
Of finch or woodlark; and the primrose pale,
And lavish cowslip, wildly scatter'd round,
Give their sweet spirits to the sighing gale.

SONNET VI.

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Ah! season of delight! could aught be found
To soothe awhile the tortured bosom's pain,
Of sorrow's rankling shaft to cure the wound,
And bring life's first delusions once again,
'Twere surely met in thee! thy prospect fair,
Thy sounds of harmony, thy balmy air,
Have power to cure all sadness but despair.

SONNET IX.

BLEST is yon shepherd, on the turf reclined,
Who on the varied clouds which float above
Lies idly gazing while his vacant mind
Pours out some tale antique of rural love!
Ah! *he* has never felt the pangs that move
Th' indignant spirit, when with selfish pride
Friends, on whose faith the trusting heart relied,
Unkindly shun th' imploring eye of woe!
The ills they ought to soothe with taunts deride,
And laugh at tears themselves have forced to flow.
Nor *his* rude bosom those fine feelings melt,
Children of Sentiment and Knowledge born,
Through whom each shaft with cruel force is felt,
Empoison'd by deceit or barb'd with scorn.

SONNET X.

TO MRS. G.

AH! why will Mem'ry with officious care
The long lost visions of my days renew?
Why paint the vernal landscape green and fair,
When life's gay dawn was opening to my view?
Ah! wherefore bring those moments of delight,
When with my Anna, on the southern shore,
I thought the future, as the present bright?
Ye dear delusions! ye return no more!
Alas! how diff'rent does the truth appear,
From the warm picture youth's rash hand portrays!
How fades the scene, as we approach it near,
And pain and sorrow strike how many ways!
Yet of that tender heart, ah! still retain
A share for me and I will not complain!

SONNET XI.

TO SLEEP.

COME, balmy Sleep! tired nature's soft resort!
On these sad temples all thy poppies shed;

SONNET IX.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

And bid gay dreams, from Morpheus' airy court,
Float in light vision round my aching head!
Secure of all thy blessings, partial Power!
On his hard bed the peasant throws him down;
And the poor sea-boy, in the rudest hour,
Enjoys thee more than he who wears a crown.
Clasp'd in her faithful shepherd's guardian arms,
Well may the village girl sweet slumbers prove;
And they, O gentle Sleep! still taste thy charms,
Who wake to labour, liberty, and love.
But still thy opiate aid dost thou deny
To calm the anxious breast; to close the streaming eye.

SONNET XII.

Written on the Sea Shore, Oct. 1784.

ON some rude fragment of the rocky shore,
Where on the fractured cliff the billows break,
Musing, my solitary seat I take,
And listen to the deep and solemn roar.

O'er the dark waves the winds tempestuous howl;
The screaming sea-bird quits the troubled sea:
But the wild gloomy scene has charms for me,
And suits the mournful temper of my soul.

Already shipwreck'd by the storms of Fate,
Like the poor mariner methinks I stand,
Cast on a rock; who sees the distant land
From whence no succour comes or comes too late.
Faint and more faint are heard his feeble cries,
Till in the rising tide the exhausted sufferer dies.

SONNET XIII.

FROM PETRARCH.

OH! place me where the burning moon
Forbids the wither'd flower to blow;
Or place me in the frigid zone,
On mountains of eternal snow:
Let me pursue the steps of Fame,
Or Poverty's more tranquil road;
Let youth's warm tide my veins inflame,
Or sixty winters chill my blood:
Though my fond soul to Heaven were flown,
Or though on earth 'tis doom'd to pine,
Prisoner or free obscure or known,
My heart, oh Laura! still is thine.

SONNET XII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Whate'er my destiny may be,
That faithful heart still burns for thee!

SONNET XIV.

FROM PETRARCH.

LOOSE to the wind her golden tresses stream'd,
Forming bright waves with amorous Zephyr's sighs;
And though averted now, her charming eyes
Then with warm love, and melting pity beam'd,
Was I deceived? Ah! surely, nymph divine!
That fine suffusion on thy cheek was love;
What wonder then those beauteous tints should move,
Should fire this heart, this tender heart of mine!
Thy soft melodious voice, thy air, thy shape,
Were of a goddess not a mortal maid;
Yet though thy charms, thy heavenly charms should fade,
My heart, my tender heart could not escape;
Nor cure for me in time or change be found:
The shaft extracted does not cure the wound!

SONNET XV.

FROM PETRARCH.

WHERE the green leaves exclude the summer beam,
And softly bend as balmy breezes blow,
And where, with liquid lapse, the lucid stream
Across the fretted rock is heard to flow,
Pensive I lay: when she whom Earth conceals,
As if still living, to my eyes appears,
And pitying Heaven her angel form reveals,
To say 'Unhappy Petrarch, dry your tears:
'Ah! why, sad lover! thus before your time,
In grief and sadness should your life decay,
And like a blighted flower, your manly prime
In vain and hopeless sorrow fade away?
Ah! yield not thus to culpable despair,
But raise thine eyes to Heaven and think I wait thee there.'

SONNET XVI.

FROM PETRARCH.

YE vales and woods! fair scenes of happier hours!
Ye feather'd people, tenants of the grove!
And you, bright stream! befringed with shrubs and flowers,
Behold my grief, ye witnesses of love!

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

For ye beheld my infant passion rise,
And saw through years unchanged my faithful flame;
Now cold, in dust, the beauteous object lies,
And you, ye conscious scenes, are still the same!

While busy Memory still delights to dwell
On all the charms these bitter tears deplore,
And with a trembling hand describes too well
The angel form I shall behold no more!
To Heaven she's fled! and nought to me remains
But the pale ashes which her urn contains.

SONNET XVII.

FROM THE THIRTEENTH CANTATA OF METASTASIO.

ON thy grey bark, in witness of my flame,
I carve Miranda's cypher Beauteous tree!
Graced with the lovely letters of her name,
Henceforth be sacred to my love and me!
Though the tall elm, the oak, and darker pine,
With broader arms, may noon's fierce ardours break,
To shelter me, and her I love, be thine;
And thine to see her smile and hear her speak.
No bird, ill-omen'd, round thy graceful head
Shall clamour harsh, or wave his heavy wing,
But fern and flowers arise beneath thy shade.
Where the wild bees their lullabies shall sing.
And in thy boughs the murmuring Ring-dove rest;
And there the Nightingale shall build her nest.

SONNET XVIII.

TO THE EARL OF EGREMONT.

WYNDHAM! 'tis not thy blood, though pure it runs
Through a long line of glorious ancestry,
Percys and Seymours, Britain's boasted sons,
Who trust the honours of their race to thee:

'Tis not thy splendid domes, where science loves
To touch the canvass, and the bust to raise;
Thy rich domains, fair fields, and spreading groves;
'Tis not all these the Muse delights to praise:

In birth, and wealth, and honours, great thou art!
But nobler in thy independent mind;
And in that liberal hand and feeling heart
Given thee by Heaven a blessing to mankind!
Unworthy oft may titled fortune be;

SONNET XVII.

A soul like thine is true Nobility!

SONNET XIX.

TO MR. HAYLEY, *On receiving some elegant lines from him.*

FOR me the Muse a simple band design'd
Of 'idle' flowers that bloom the woods among,
Which, with the cypress and the willow join'd,
A garland form'd as artless as my song.
And little dared I hope its transient hours
So long would last; composed of buds so brief;
Till Hayley's hand among the vagrant flowers,
Threw from his verdant crown a deathless leaf.
For high in Fame's bright fane has Judgment placed
The laurel wreath Serena's poet won,
Which, woven with myrtles by the hands of Taste,
The Muse decreed for this her favourite son.
And those immortal leaves his temples shade,
Whose fair, eternal verdure shall not fade!

SONNET XX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF A *Written on the anniversary of her marriage.*

ON this blest day may no dark cloud, or shower,
With envious shade the Sun's bright influence hide!
But all his rays illumine the favour'd hour,
That saw thee, Mary! Henry's lovely bride!
With years revolving may it still arise,
Blest with each good approving Heaven can send!
And still, with ray serene, shall those blue eyes
Enchant the husband, and attach the friend!
For you fair Friendship's amaranth shall blow,
And love's own thornless roses bind your brow;
And when long hence to happier worlds you go,
Your beauteous race shall be what you are now!
And future Nevills through long ages shine,
With hearts as good, and forms as fair as thine!

SONNET XXI.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY WERTER.

GO! cruel tyrant of the human breast!
To other hearts thy burning arrows bear;
Go, where fond hope, and fair illusion rest;
Ah! why should love inhabit with despair!
Like the poor maniac I linger here,
Still haunt the scene where all my treasure lies;

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Still seek for flowers where only thorns appear,
 'And drink delicious poison from her eyes!'
Tow'rds the deep gulf that opens on my sight
 I hurry forward, Passion's helpless slave!
And scorning Reason's mild and sober light,
 Pursue the path that leads me to the grave!
So round the flame the giddy insect flies,
 And courts the fatal fire by which it dies!

SONNET XXII.

BY THE SAME. TO SOLITUDE.

OH, Solitude! to thy sequester'd vale
 I come to hide my sorrow and my tears,
And to thy echoes tell the mournful tale
 Which scarce I trust to pitying Friendship's ears.
Amidst thy wild-woods, and untrodden glades,
 No sounds but those of melancholy move;
And the low winds that die among thy shades,
 Seem like soft Pity's sighs for hopeless love.
And sure some story of despair and pain,
 In yon deep copse, thy murm'ring doves relate;
And, Hark! methinks in that long plaintive strain,
 Thine own sweet songstress weeps my wayward fate;
Ah, Nymph! that fate assist me to endure,
 And bear awhile what death alone can cure!

SONNET XXIII.

BY THE SAME. TO THE NORTH STAR.

TO thy bright beams I turn my swimming eyes,
 Fair, favourite planet, which in happier days
Saw my young hopes, ah, faithless hopes! arise,
 And on my passion shed propitious rays.
Now nightly wandering 'mid the tempests drear
 That howl the woods and rocky steeps among,
I love to see thy sudden light appear
 Through the swift clouds driven by the wind along:
Or in the turbid water, rude and dark,
 O'er whose wild stream the gust of Winter raves,
Thy trembling light with pleasure still I mark,
 Gleam in faint radiance on the foaming waves!
So o'er my soul short rays of reason fly,
 Then fade: and leave me to despair and die.

SONNET XXIV.

BY THE SAME.

MAKE there my tomb, beneath the lime-tree's shade,
Where grass and flowers in wild luxuriance wave;
Let no memorial mark where I am laid,
Or point to common eyes the lover's grave!
But oft at twilight morn, or closing day,
The faithful friend with fault'ring step shall glide,
Tributes of fond regret by stealth to pay,
And sigh o'er the unhappy suicide.
And sometimes, when the sun with parting rays
Gilds the long grass that hides my silent bed,
The tear shall tremble in my Charlotte's eyes;
Dear, precious drops! they shall embalm the dead!
Yes Charlotte o'er the mournful spot shall weep,
Where her poor Werter and his sorrows sleep.

SONNET XXV.

BY THE SAME. *Just before his Death.*

WHY should I wish to hold in this low sphere
'A frail and feverish being?' wherefore try
Poorly from day to day to linger here,
Against the powerful hand of Destiny?
By those who know the force of hopeless care
On the worn heart I sure shall be forgiven,
If to elude dark guilt, and dire despair,
I go uncall'd to mercy and to heaven!
O thou! to save whose peace I now depart,
Will thy soft mind thy poor lost friend deplore,
When worms shall feed on this devoted heart,
Where even thy image shall be found no more?
Yet may thy pity mingle not with pain,
For then thy hapless lover dies in vain!

SONNET XXVI.

TO THE RIVER ARUN.

ON thy wild banks, by frequent torrents worn,
No glittering fanes, or marble domes appear,
Yet shall the mournful muse thy course adorn,
And still to her thy rustic waves be dear.
For with the infant Otway, lingering here,
Of early woes she bade her votary dream,
While thy low murmurs sooth'd his pensive ear
And still the poet consecrates the stream.

SONNET XXIV.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Beneath the oak and birch that fringe thy side,
The first-born violets of the year shall spring;
And in thy hazles, bending o'er the tide,
The earliest nightingale delight to sing:
While kindred spirits, pitying, shall relate
Thy Otway's sorrows, and lament his fate.

SONNET XXVII.

SIGHING I see yon little troop at play,
By sorrow yet untouch'd; unhurt by care;
While free and sportive they enjoy to-day,
'Content and careless of to-morrow's fare!'
O happy age! when hope's unclouded ray
Lights their green path, and prompts their simple mirth,
Ere yet they feel the thorns that lurking lay
To wound the wretched pilgrims of the earth,
Making them rue the hour that gave them birth,
And threw them on a world so full of pain,
Where prosperous folly treads on patient worth,
And, to deaf pride, misfortune pleads in vain!
Ah! for their future fate how many fears
Oppress my heart and fill mine eyes with tears!

SONNET XXVIII.

TO FRIENDSHIP.

O THOU! whose name too often is profaned;
Whose charms celestial, few have hearts to feel;
Unknown to Folly and by Pride disdain'd!
To thy soft solace may my sorrows steal!
Like the fair moon, thy mild and genuine ray
Through life's long evening shall unclouded last;
While pleasure's frail attachments fleet away,
As fades the rainbow from the northern blast!
'Tis thine, O Nymph! with 'balmy hands to bind'
The wounds inflicted in misfortune's storm,
And blunt severe affliction's sharpest dart!
'Tis thy pure spirit warms my Anna's mind,
Beams through the pensive softness of her form,
And holds its altar on her spotless heart!

SONNET XXIX. TO MISS C . *On being desired to attempt writing a Comedy.*

WOULD'ST thou then have *me* tempt the comic scene
Of gay Thalia? used so long to tread
The gloomy paths of sorrow's cypress shade;
And the lorn lay with sighs and tears to stain?
Alas! how much unfit her sprightly vein,

SONNET XXVII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Arduous to try! and seek the sunny mead,
And bowers of roses, where she loves to lead
The sportive subjects of her golden reign!
Enough for me, if still, to sooth my days,
Her fair and pensive sister condescend,
With tearful smile to bless my simple lays;
Enough, if her soft notes she sometimes lend,
To gain for me of feeling hearts the praise,
And chiefly thine, my ever partial friend!

SONNET XXX.

TO THE RIVER ARUN.

BE the proud Thames of trade the busy mart!
Arun! to thee will other praise belong;
Dear to the lover's and the mourner's heart,
And ever sacred to the sons of song!
Thy banks romantic hopeless Love shall seek,
Where o'er the rocks the mantling bindwith flaunts;
And Sorrow's drooping form and faded cheek
Choose on thy willow'd shore her lonely haunts.
Banks, which inspired thy Otway's plaintive strain!
Wilds, whose lorn echoes learned the deeper tone
Of Collins' powerful shell! yet once again
Another poet Hayley is thine own!
Thy classic stream anew shall hear a lay,
Bright as its waves, and various as its way.

SONNET XXXI.

Written on Farm Wood, South Downs, May 1784.

SPRING'S dewy hand on this fair summit weaves
The downy grass, with tufts of Alpine flowers,
And shades the beechen slopes with tender leaves,
And leads the shepherd to his upland bowers,
Strewn with wild thyme; while slow-descending showers
Feed the green ear, and nurse the future sheaves.
Ah, blest the hind whom no sad thought bereaves
Of the gay Season's pleasures! All his hours
To wholesome labour given, or thoughtless mirth;
No pangs of sorrow past, or coming dread,
Bend his unconscious spirit down to earth,
Or chase calm slumbers from his careless head!
Ah, what to me can those dear days restore,
When scenes could charm that now I taste no more!

SONNET XXXII.

TO MELANCHOLY. *Written on the banks of the Arun, Oct. 1785.*

WHEN latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,
And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,
I love to listen to the hollow sighs,
Through the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:
For at such hours the shadowy phantom, pale,
Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;
Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,
As of night wanderers, who their woes bewail
Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,
Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,
And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!
O Melancholy! such thy magic power,
That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,
And sooth the pensive visionary mind!

SONNET XXXIII.

TO THE NAIAD OF THE ARUN.

GO, rural Naiad! wind thy stream along
Through woods and wilds: then seek the ocean caves
Where sea-nymphs meet their coral rocks among,
To boast the various honours of their waves!
'Tis but a little, o'er thy shallow tide,
That toiling trade her burden'd vessel leads;
But laurels grow luxuriant on thy side,
And letters live along thy classic meads.
Lo! where 'mid British bards thy natives shine!
And now another poet helps to raise
Thy glory high the poet of the MINE,
Whose brilliant talents are his smallest praise:
And who, to all that genius can impart,
Adds the cool head, and the unblemish'd heart.

SONNET XXXIV.

TO A FRIEND.

CHARM'D by thy suffrage, shall I yet aspire
(All inauspicious as my fate appears,
By troubles darken'd, that increase with years,
To guide the crayon, or to touch the lyre?
Ah me! the sister Muses still require
A spirit free from all intrusive fears,
Nor will they deign to wipe away the tears
Of vain regret, that dim their sacred fire.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

But when thy envied sanction crowns my lays,
A ray of pleasure lights my languid mind,
For well I know the value of thy praise;
And to how few the flattering meed confined,
That thou, their highly favour'd brows to bind;
Wilt weave green myrtle and unfading bays.

SONNET XXXV.

TO FORTITUDE.

NYMPH of the rock! whose dauntless spirit braves
The beating storm, and bitter winds that howl
Round thy cold breast; and hear'st the bursting waves
And the deep thunder with unshaken soul;
Oh come! and show how vain the cares that press
On my weak bosom and how little worth
Is the false fleeting meteor, Happiness,
That still misleads the wanderers of the earth!
Strengthen'd by thee, this heart shall cease to melt
O'er ills that poor humanity must bear;
Nor friends estranged, or ties dissolved be felt
To leave regret, and fruitless anguish there:
And when at length it heaves its latest sigh,
Thou and mild Hope shall teach me how to die.

SONNET XXXVI.

SHOULD the lone wanderer, fainting on his way,
Rest for a moment of the sultry hours,
And though his path through thorns and roughness lay,
Pluck the wild rose, or woodbine's gadding flowers,
Weaving gay wreaths beneath some sheltering tree,
The sense of sorrow he awhile may lose;
So have I sought thy flowers, fair Poesy!
So charm'd my way with Friendship and the Muse.
But darker now grows life's unhappy day,
Dark with new clouds of evil yet to come,
Her pencil sickening Fancy throws away,
And weary Hope reclines upon the tomb;
And points my wishes to that tranquil shore,
Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.

SONNET XXXVII.

SENT TO THE HON. MRS. O'NEILL, WITH
PAINTED FLOWERS.

The poet's fancy takes from Flora's realm
Her buds and leaves to dress fictitious powers,

SONNET XXXV.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

With the green olive shades Minerva's helm,
And give to Beauty's queen, the queen of flowers.
But what gay blossoms of luxuriant spring,
With rose, mimosa, amaranth entwined,
Shall fabled Sylphs and fairy people bring,
As a just emblem of the lovely mind?
In vain the mimic pencil tries to blend
The glowing dyes that dress the flowery race,
Scented and colour'd by a hand divine!
Ah! not less vainly would the Muse pretend,
On her weak lyre, to sing the native grace
And native goodness of a soul like thine!

SONNET XXXVIII.

FROM THE NOVEL OF EMMELINE.

WHEN welcome slumber sets my spirit free,
Forth to fictitious happiness it flies,
And where Elysian bowers of bliss arise,
I seem, my Emmeline to meet with thee!
Ah! Fancy then, dissolving human ties,
Gives me the wishes of my soul to see;
Tears of fond pity fill thy soften'd eyes:
In heavenly harmony our hearts agree.
Alas! these joys are mine in dreams alone,
When cruel Reason abdicates her throne!
Her harsh return condemns me to complain
Through life unpitied, unrelieved, unknown.
And as the dear delusions leave my brain,
She bids the truth recur with aggravated pain.

SONNET XXXIX.

TO NIGHT. FROM THE SAME.

I LOVE thee, mournful, sober-suited Night!
When the faint moon, yet lingering in her wane,
And veil'd in clouds, with pale uncertain light
Hangs o'er the waters of the restless main.
In deep depression sunk, the enfeebled mind
Will to the deaf cold elements complain,
And tell the embosom'd grief, however vain,
To sullen surges and the viewless wind.
Though no repose on thy dark breast I find,
I still enjoy thee cheerless as thou art;
For in thy quiet gloom the exhausted heart
Is calm, though wretched; hopeless, yet resigned.
While to the winds and waves its sorrows given,
May reach though lost on earth the ear of Heaven!

SONNET XXXVIII.

SONNET XL.

FROM THE SAME.

FAR on the sands, the low, retiring tide,
In distant murmurs hardly seems to flow;
And o'er the world of waters, blue and wide,
The sighing summer wind forgets to blow.
As sinks the day—star in the rosy west,
The silent wave, with rich reflection glows:
Alas! can tranquil nature give *me* rest,
Or scenes of beauty soothe me to repose?
Can the soft lustre of the sleeping main,
Yon radiant heaven, or all creation's charms,
"Erase the written troubles of the brain,"
Which memory tortures, and which guilt alarms?
Or bid a bosom transient quiet prove,
That bleeds with vain remorse and unextinguish'd love!

SONNET XLI.

TO TRANQUILLITY.

IN this tumultuous sphere, for thee unfit,
How seldom art thou found Tranquillity!
Unless 'tis when with mild and downcast eye
By the low cradles thou delight'st to sit
Of sleeping infants watching the soft breath,
And bidding the sweet slumberers easy lie;
Or sometimes hanging o'er the bed of death,
Where the poor languid sufferer hopes to die.
Oh, beautiful sister of the halcyon peace!
I sure shall find thee in that heavenly scene
Where care and anguish shall their power resign;
Where hope alike, and vain regret shall cease,
And memory lost in happiness serene,
Repeat no more that misery has been mine!

SONNET XLII.

Composed during a Walk on the Downs, Nov. 1787.

THE dark and pillowy cloud, the fallow trees,
Seem o'er the ruins of the year to mourn;
And, cold and hollow, the inconstant breeze
Sobs through the falling leaves and wither'd fern.
O'er the tall brow of yonder chalky bourn,
The evening shades their gather'd darkness fling,
While, by the lingering light, I scarce discern
The shrieking night—jar sail on heavy wing.

SONNET XL.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Ah! yet a little and propitious spring
Crown'd with fresh flowers shall wake the woodland strain;
But no gay change revolving seasons bring
To call forth pleasure from the soul of pain;
Bid Syren Hope resume her long-lost part,
And chase the vulture Care that feeds upon the heart.

SONNET XLIII.

THE unhappy exile, whom his fates confine
To the bleak coast of some unfriendly isle,
Cold, barren, desert, where no harvests smile,
But thirst and hunger on the rocks repine;
When, from some promontory's fearful brow,
Sun after sun he hopeless sees decline
In the broad shipless sea perhaps may know
Such heartless pain, such blank despair as mine;
And, if a flattering cloud appears to show
The fancied semblance of a distant sail,
Then melts away anew his spirits fail,
While the lost hope but aggravates his woe!
Ah! so for me delusive fancy toils,
Then, from contrasted truth my feeble soul recoils.

SONNET XLIV.

Written in the Church-yard at Middleton, in Sussex.

PRESS'D by the moon, mute arbitress of tides,
While the loud equinox its power combines,
The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides.
The wild blast, rising from the western cave,
Drives the huge billows from their heaving bed;
Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead,
And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!
With shells and sea-weed mingled, on the shore,
Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave;
But vain to them the winds and waters rave;
They hear the warring elements no more:
While I am doom'd by life's long storm oppress,
To gaze with envy on their gloomy rest.

SONNET XLV.

ON LEAVING A PART OF SUSSEX.

FAREWELL, Aruna! on whose varied shore
My early vows were paid to Nature's shrine,
When thoughtless joy, and infant hope were mine,

SONNET XLIII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

And whose lorn stream has heard me since deplore
Too many sorrows! Sighing I resign
Thy solitary beauties and no more
Or on thy rocks or in thy woods recline,
Or on the heath, by moonlight lingering, pore
On air-drawn phantoms while in Fancy's ear,
As in the evening wind thy murmurs swell,
The Enthusiast of the Lyre who wander'd here,
Seems yet to strike his visionary shell,
Of power to call forth Pity's tenderest tear,
Or wake wild Frenzy from her hideous cell!

SONNET XLVI.

Written at Penhurst, in Autumn 1788.

YE towers sublime! deserted now and drear!
Ye woods! deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past:
And startling from their haunts the timid deer,
To trace the walks obscured by matted fern,
Which Waller's soothing lyre were wont to hear,
But where now clamours the discordant hern!
The spoiling hand of Time may overturn
These lofty battlements, and quite deface
The fading canvass whence we love to learn
Sydney's keen look, and Sacharissa's grace;
But fame and beauty still defy decay,
Saved by the historic page the poet's tender lay!

SONNET XLVII.

TO FANCY.

THEE, queen of shadows! shall I still invoke,
Still love the scenes thy sportive pencil drew,
When on mine eyes the early radiance broke
Which show'd the beauteous rather than the true!
Alas! long since those glowing tints are dead,
And now 'tis thine in darkest hues to dress
The spot where pale Experience hangs her head
O'er the sad grave of murder'd Happiness!
Through thy false medium, then, no longer view'd,
May fancied pain and fancied pleasure fly,
And I, as from me all thy dreams depart,
Be to my wayward destiny subdued:
Nor suffer perfection with a poet's eye,
Nor suffer anguish with a poet's heart!

SONNET XLVIII.

TO MRS * * * *

NO more my wearied soul attempts to stray
From sad reality and vain regret,
Nor courts enchanting fiction to allay
Sorrows that sense refuses to forget:
For of calamity so long the prey,
Imagination now has lost her powers,
Nor will her fairy loom again essay
To dress affliction in a robe of flowers.
But if no more the bowers of Fancy bloom,
Let one superior scene attract my view,
Where heaven's pure rays the sacred spot illumine,
Let *thy* loved hand with palm and amaranth strew
The mournful path approaching to the tomb,
While Faith's consoling voice endears the friendly gloom.

SONNET XLIX.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA. *Supposed to have been written in a church-yard, over the grave of a young woman of nineteen.*

O THOU! who sleep'st where hazle-bands entwine
The vernal grass, with paler violets drest;
I would, sweet maid! thy humble bed were mine,
And mine thy calm and enviable rest.
For never more by human ills opprest
Shall thy soft spirit fruitlessly repine:
Thou canst not now thy fondest hopes resign
Even in the hour that should have made thee blest.
Light lies the turf upon thy virgin breast;
And lingering here, to love and sorrow true,
The youth who once thy simple heart possest
Shall mingle tears with April's early dew;
While still for him shall faithful Memory save
Thy form and virtues from the silent grave.

SONNET L.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA.

FAREWELL, ye lawns! by fond remembrance blest,
As witnesses of gay unclouded hours;
Where, to maternal friendships' bosom prest,
My happy childhood past among your bowers.
Ye wood-walks wild! where leaves and fairy flowers
By Spring's luxuriant hand are strewn anew;
Rocks! whence with shadowy grace rude nature low'rs

SONNET XLVIII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

O'er glens and haunted streams! a long adieu!
And you! O promised Happiness! whose voice
Deluded Fancy heard in every grove,
Bidding this tender, trusting heart, rejoice
In the bright prospect of unfailing love:
Though lost to me still may thy smile serene
Bless the dear lord of this regretted scene.

SONNET LI.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA. *Supposed to have been written in the Hebrides.*

ON this lone island, whose unfruitful breast
Feeds but the summer-shepherd's little flock
With scanty herbage from the half-clothed rock,
Where osprays, cormorants, and sea-mews rest;
Even in a scene so desolate and rude
I could with *thee* for months and years be blest;
And of thy tenderness and love possest,
Find all *my* world in this wild solitude!
When Summer suns these Northern seas illumine,
With thee admire the light's reflected charms,
And when drear Winter spreads his cheerless gloom,
Still find Elysium in thy shel'tring arms:
For thou to me canst sovereign bliss impart,
Thy mind my empire and my throne thy heart.

SONNET LII.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA. THE PILGRIM.

FAULTERING and sad the unhappy pilgrim roves,
Who, on the eve of bleak December's night,
Divided far from all he fondly loves,
Journeys alone, along the giddy height
Of these steep cliffs, and as the sun's last ray
Fades in the West, sees, from the rocky verge,
Dark tempests scowling o'er the shortened day,
And hears, with ear appall'd, the impetuous surge
Beneath him thunder! So, with heart oppress'd,
Alone, reluctant, desolate, and slow,
By Friendship's cheering radiance *now* unblest,
Along life's rudest path I seem to go;
Nor see where yet the anxious heart may rest,
That, trembling at the past recoils from future woe.

SONNET LIII.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA. THE LAPLANDER.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

THE shivering native, who by Tengllo's side
Beholds with fond regret the parting light
Sink far away, beneath the darkening tide,
And leave him to long months of dreary night,
Yet knows, that springing from the eastern wave
The sun's glad beams shall re-illuminate his way,
And from the snows secured within his cave
He waits in patient hope returning day.
Not so the sufferer feels, who, o'er the waste
Of joyless life, is destin'd to deplore
Fond love forgotten, tender friendship past,
Which, once extinguish'd, can revive no more!
O'er the blank void he looks with hopeless pain;
For him those beams of heaven shall never shine again.

SONNET LIV.

THE SLEEPING WOODMAN. *Written in April, 1790.*

YE corses wild, where April bids arise
The vernal grasses, and the early flowers;
My soul depress'd from human converse flies
To the lone shelter of your pathless bowers.

Lo! where the Woodman, with his toil oppress'd,
His careless head on bark and moss reclined,
Lull'd by the song of birds, the murmuring wind,
Has sunk to calm though momentary rest.

Ah! would 'twere mine in Spring's green lap to find
Such transient respite from the ills I bear!
Would I could taste, like this unthinking hind,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care,
Till the last sleep these weary eyes shall close,
And Death receive me to his long repose.

SONNET LV.

RETURN OF THE NIGHTINGALE. *Written in May, 1791.*

BORNE on the warm wing of the western gale,
How tremulously low is heard to float
Thro' the green budding thorns that fringe the vale
The early Nightingale's prelude note.
'Tis Hope's instinctive power that through the grove
Tells how benignant Heaven revives the earth;
'Tis the soft voice of young and timid love
That calls these melting sounds of sweetness forth.
With transport, once, sweet bird! I hail'd thy lay,
And bade thee welcome to our shades again,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

To charm the wandering poet's pensive way
And soothe the solitary lover's pain;
But now! such evils in my lot combine,
As shut my languid sense to Hope's dear voice and thine!

SONNET LVI.

THE CAPTIVE ESCAPED

In the wilds of America. ADDRESSED TO THE HON. MRS O'NEILL.

IF, by his torturing, savage foes untraced,
The breathless captive gain some trackless glade,
Yet hears the war—whoop howl along the waste,
And dreads the reptile—monsters of the shade;
The giant reeds that murmur round the flood,
Seem to conceal some hideous form beneath;
And every hollow blast that shakes the wood,
Speaks to his trembling heart of woe and death.
With horror fraught, and desolate dismay,
On such a wanderer falls the starless night;
But if, far streaming, a propitious ray
Leads to some amicable fort his sight,
He hails the beam benign that guides his way,
As I, my Harriet, bless thy friendship's cheering light.

SONNET LVII.

TO DEPENDENCE.

DEPENDENCE! heavy, heavy are thy chains,
And happier they who from the dangerous sea,
Or the dark mine, procure with ceaseless pains
A hard—earn'd pittance than who trust to thee!
More blest the hind, who from his bed of flock
Starts when the birds of morn their summons give,
And waken'd by the lark " the shepherd's clock,"
Lives but to labour labouring but to live.
More noble than the sycophant, whose art
Must heap with tawdry flowers thy hated shrine;
I envy not the meed thou canst impart
To crown *his* service while, tho' pride combine
With Fraud to crush me my unfetter'd heart
Still to the Mountain Nymph may offer mine.

SONNET LVIII.

THE GLOW-WORM.

WHEN on some balmy—breathing night of Spring
The happy child, to whom the world is new,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Pursues the evening moth, of mealy wing,
Or from the heath—bell beats the sparkling dew;
He sees before his inexperienced eyes
The brilliant Glow—worm, like a meteor, shine
On the turf—bank; amazed, and pleased, he cries,
"Star of the dewy grass! I make thee mine!"
Then, ere he sleep, collects "the moisten'd" flower,
And bids soft leaves his glittering prize enfold,
And dreams that Fairy—lamps illumine his bower:
Yet with the morning shudders to behold
His lucid treasure, rayless as the dust!
So turn the world's bright joys to cold and blank disgust.

SONNET LIX.

Written Sept. 1791, during a remarkable thunder storm, in which the moon was perfectly clear, while the tempest gathered in various directions near the earth.

WHAT awful pageants crowd the evening sky!
The low horizon gathering vapours shroud,
Sudden, from many a deep—embattled cloud
Terrific thunders burst and lightnings fly
While in serenest azure, beaming high,
Night's regent, of her calm pavilion proud,
Gilds the dark shadows that beneath her lie,
Unvex'd by all their conflicts fierce and loud.
So, in unsullied dignity elate,
A spirit conscious of superior worth,
In placid elevation firmly great,
Scorns the vain cares that give Contention birth;
And blest with peace above the shocks of Fate,
Smiles at the tumult of the troubled earth.

ODE TO DESPAIR.

FROM THE NOVEL OF EMMELINE.

THOU spectre of terrific mien!
Lord of the hopeless heart and hollow eye,
In whose fierce train each form is seen
That drives sick Reason to insanity!
I woo thee with unusual prayer,
"Grim visaged, comfortless Despair:"
Approach; in me a willing victim find,
Who seeks thine iron sway and calls thee kind!

Ah! hide for ever from my sight
The faithless flatterer Hope whose pencil, gay,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Portrays some vision of delight,
Then bids the fairy tablet fade away;
While in dire contrast, to mine eyes,
Thy phantoms, yet more hideous, rise,
And Memory draws from Pleasure's wither'd flower,
Corrosives for the heart of fatal power!

I bid the traitor Love adieu!
Who to this fond believing bosom came,
A guest insidious and untrue,
With Pity's soothing voice in Friendship's name;
The wounds *he* gave, nor Time shall cure,
Nor Reason teach me to endure.
And to that breast mild Patience pleads in vain,
Which feels the curse of meriting its pain.

Yet not to me, tremendous Power!
Thy worst of spirit-wounding pangs impart,
With which, in dark conviction's hour,
Thou strik'st the guilty unrepentant heart;
But of illusion long the sport,
That dreary, tranquil gloom I court,
Where my past errors I may still deplore,
And dream of long-lost happiness no more!

To thee I give this tortured breast,
Where Hope arises but to foster pain;
Ah! lull its agonies to rest!
Ah! let me never be deceived again!
But callous, in thy deep repose,
Behold, in long array, the woes
Of the dread future, calm and undismay'd,
Till I may claim the hope that shall not fade!

ELEGY.

"DARK gathering clouds involve the threatening skies,
The sea heaves conscious of the impending gloom,
Deep, hollow murmurs from the cliffs arise;
They come the Spirits of the Tempest come!

"Oh! may such terrors mark the approaching night
As reign'd on that these streaming eyes deplore!
Flash, ye red fires of heaven, with fatal light,
And with conflicting winds ye waters roar!

"Loud and more loud, ye foaming billows, burst!
Ye warring elements, more fiercely rave!
Till the wide waves o'erwhelm the spot accurst
'Where ruthless Avarice finds a quiet grave!' "

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Thus with clasp'd hands, wild looks, and streaming hair,
While shrieks of horror broke her trembling speech,
A wretched maid the victim of despair,
Survey'd the threatening storm and desert beech.

Then to the tomb where now the father slept
Whose rugged nature bade her sorrows flow,
Frantic she turn'd and beat her breast and wept,
Invoking vengeance on the dust below.

"Lo! rising there above each humbler heap,
Yon cypher'd stones *his* name and wealth relate,
Who gave his son remorseless to the deep,
While I, his living victim, curse my fate.

"Oh, my lost love! no tomb is placed for thee,
That may to strangers' eyes thy worth impart;
Thou hast no grave but in the stormy sea,
And no memorial but this breaking heart.

"Forth to the world, a widow'd wanderer driven,
I pour to winds and waves the unheeded tear,
Try with vain effort to submit to Heaven,
And fruitless call on him 'who cannot hear.'

"Oh! might I fondly clasp him once again,
While o'er my head the infuriate billows pour,
Forget in death this agonizing pain,
And feel his father's cruelty no more!

"Part, raging waters! part, and show beneath,
In your dread caves, his pale and mangled form;
Now, while the demons of despair and death
Ride on the blast, and urge the howling storm:

"Lo! by the lightning's momentary blaze,
I see him rise the whitening waves above,
No longer such as when in happier days
He gave the enchanted hours to me and love.

"Such, as when daring the enchafed sea,
And courting dangerous toil, he often said
That every peril, one soft smile from me,
One sigh of speechless tenderness o'erpaid.

"But dead, disfigured, while between the roar
Of the loud waves his accents pierce mine ear,
And seem to say Ah, wretch! delay no more,
But come, unhappy mourner meet me here.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

"Yet, powerful Fancy, bid the phantom stay,
Still let me hear him! 'Tis already past;
Along the waves his shadow glides away,
I lose his voice amid the deafening blast.

"Ah, wild delusion, born of frantic pain!
He hears not, comes not from his watery bed;
My tears, my anguish, my despair are vain,
The insatiate ocean gives not up its dead.

" 'Tis not his voice! Hark! the deep thunders roll;
Upheaves the ground; the rocky barriers fail;
Approach, ye horrors that delight my soul,
Despair, and Death, and Desolation, hail!"

The Ocean hears The embodied waters come
Rise o'er the land, and with resistless sweep
Tear from its base the proud aggressor's tomb,
And bear the injured to eternal sleep.

SONG.

FROM THE FRENCH OF CARDINAL BERNIS.

I.

FRUIT of Aurora's tears, fair rose,
On whose soft leaves fond zephyrs play,
Oh! queen of flowers, thy buds disclose,
And give thy fragrance to the day;
Unveil thy transient charms: ah, no!
A little be thy bloom delay'd,
Since the same hour that bids thee blow,
Shall see thee droop thy languid head.

II.

But go! and on Themira's breast
Find, happy flower! thy throne and tomb;
While, jealous of a fate so blest,
How shall I envy thee thy doom!
Should some rude hand approach thee there,
Guard the sweet shrine thou wilt adorn;
Ah! punish those who rashly dare,
And for my rivals keep thy thorn.

III.

Love shall himself thy boughs compose,

SONG.

And bid thy wanton leaves divide;
He'll show thee how, my lovely rose,
To deck her bosom, not to hide:
And thou shalt tell the cruel maid
How frail are youth and beauty's charms,
And teach her, ere her own shall fade,
To give them to her lover's arms.

THE ORIGIN OF FLATTERY.

WHEN Jove, in anger to the sons of the earth,
Bid artful Vulcan give Pandora birth,
And sent the fatal gift which spread below
O'er all the wretched race contagious woe,
Unhappy man, by vice and folly tost,
Found in the storms of life his quiet lost,
While Envy, Avarice, and Ambition, hurl'd
Discord and death around the warring world;
Then the blest peasant left his fields and fold,
And barter'd love and peace for power and gold;
Left his calm cottage and his native plain,
In search of wealth to tempt the faithless main;
Or, braving danger, in the battle stood,
And bathed his savage hands in human blood;
No longer then, his woodland walks among,
The shepherd lad his genuine passion sung,
Or sought at early morn his soul's delight,
Or grav'd her name upon the bark at night;
To deck her flowing hair no more he wove
The simple wreath, or with ambitious love
Bound his own brow with myrtle or with bay,
But broke his pipe, or threw his crook away.
The nymphs forsaken, other pleasures sought;
Then first for gold their venal hearts were bought,
And nature's blush to sickly art gave place,
And affectation seized the seat of grace:
No more simplicity by sense refined,
Or generous sentiment, possess'd the mind:
No more they felt each other's joy and woe,
And Cupid fled, and hid his useless bow.
But with deep grief propitious Venus pined,
To see the ills which threaten'd womankind;
Ills that she knew her empire would disarm,
And rob her subjects of their sweetest charm;
Good humour's potent influence destroy,
And change for lowering frowns the smile of joy,
Then deeply sighing at the mournful view,
She tried at length what heavenly art could do
To bring back Pleasure to her pensive train,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

And vindicate the glories of her reign.
A thousand little loves attend the task,
And bear from Mars's head his radiant casque,
The fair enchantress on its silver bound
Weaved with soft spells her magic cestus round,
Then shaking from her hair ambrosial dew,
Infused fair hope, and expectation new,
And stifled wishes, and persuasive sighs,
And fond belief, and 'eloquence of eyes,
And falt'ring accents, which explain so well
What studied speeches vainly try to tell;
And more pathetic silence, which imparts
Infectious tenderness to feeling hearts;
Soft tones of pity; fascinating smiles;
And Maia's son assisted her with wiles,
And brought gay dreams, fantastic visions brought,
And waved his wand o'er the seducing draught.
Then Zephyr came: to him the goddess cried,
"Go fetch from Flora all her flowery pride
To fill my charm, each scented bud that blows,
And bind my myrtles with her thornless rose;
Then speed thy flight to Gallia's smiling plain,
Where rolls the Loire, the Garonne, and the Seine;
Dip in their waters thy celestial wing,
And the soft dew to fill my chalice bring;
But chiefly tell thy Flora, that to me
She send a bouquet of her fleurs de lys;
That poignant spirit will complete my spell."
'Tis done: the lovely sorceress says 'tis well.
And now Apollo lends a ray of fire,
The caldron bubbles, and the flames aspire;
The watchful Graces round the circle dance,
With arms entwined to mark the work's advance;
And with full quiver sportive Cupid came,
Temp'ring his favourite arrows in the flame.
Then Venus speaks, the wavering flames retire,
And Zephyr's breath extinguishes the fire.
At length the goddess in the helmet's round
A sweet and subtile spirit duly found,
More soft than oil, than ether more refined,
Of power to cure the woes of womankind,
And call'd it Flattery: balm of female life,
It charms alike the widow, maid, and wife;
Clears the sad brow of virgins in despair,
And smooths the cruel traces left by care;
Bids palsied age with youthful spirit glow,
And hangs May's garlands on December's snow.
Delicious essence! howsoe'er applied,
By what rude nature is thy charm denied?
Some form seducing still thy whisper wears,
Stern Wisdom turns to thee her willing ears,

And Prudery listens and forgets her fears.
The rustic nymph whom rigid aunts restrain,
Condemn'd to dress, and practise airs in vain,
At thy first summons finds her bosom swell,
And bids her crabbed gouvernantes farewell;
While, fired by thee with spirit not her own,
She grows a toast, and rises into *ton* .
The faded beauty who, with secret pain,
Sees younger charms usurp her envied reign,
By thee assisted, can with smiles behold
The record where her conquests are enroll'd;
And dwelling yet on scenes by memory nursed,
When George the Second reign'd, or George the First;
She sees the shades of ancient beaux arise,
Who swear her eyes exceeded modern eyes,
When poets sung for her, and lovers bled,
And giddy fashion follow'd as she led.
Departed modes appear in long array,
The flowers and flounces of her happier day;
Again her locks the decent fillets bind,
The waving lappet flutters in the wind.
And then comparing with a proud disdain
The more fantastic tastes that now obtain,
She deems ungraceful, trifling and absurd,
The gayer world that moves round George the Third.
Nor thy soft influence will the train refuse,
Who court in distant shades the modest Muse,
Though in a form more pure and more refined,
Thy soothing spirit meets the letter'd mind.
Not death itself thine empire can destroy;
Tow'rd's thee, even then, we turn the languid eye;
Still trust in thee to bid our memory bloom,
And scatter roses round the silent tomb.

THE PEASANT OF THE ALPS.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA.

WHERE cliffs arise by winter crown'd,
And through dark groves of pine around,
Down the deep chasms the snow-fed torrents foam,
Within some hollow, shelter'd from the storms,
The Peasant of the Alps his cottage forms,
And builds his humble, happy home.

Unenvied is the rich domain,
That far beneath him on the plain
Waves its wide harvests and its olive groves;
More dear to him his hut with plantain thatch'd,

THE PEASANT OF THE ALPS.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Where long his unambitious heart attach'd,
Finds all he wishes, all he loves.

There dwells the mistress of his heart,
And *Love*, who teaches every art,
Has bid him dress the spot with fondest care;
When borrowing from the vale its fertile soil,
He climbs the precipice with patient toil,
To plant her favourite flowerets there.

With native shrubs, a hardy race,
There the green myrtle finds a place,
And roses there the dewy leaves decline;
While from the crags abrupt, and tangled steeps,
With bloom and fruit the Alpine berry peeps,
And, blushing, mingles with the vine.

His garden's simple produce stored,
Prepared for him by hands adored,
Is all the little luxury he knows.
And by the same dear hands are softly spread,
The Chamois' velvet spoil that forms the bed,
Where in her arms he finds repose.

But absent from the calm abode,
Dark thunder gathers round his road,
Wild raves the wind, the arrowy lightnings flash,
Returning quick the murmuring rocks among,
His faint heart trembling as he winds along;
Alarm'd he listens to the crash

Of rifted ice! Oh, man of woe!
O'er his dear cot a mass of snow,
By the storm sever'd from the cliff above,
Has fallen and buried in its marble breast,
All that for him lost wretch the world possest,
His home, his happiness, his love!

Aghast the heart-struck mourner stands,
Glazed are his eyes convulsed his hands,
O'erwhelming anguish checks his labouring breath;
Crush'd by despair's intolerable weight,
Frantic he seeks the mountain's giddiest height,
And headlong seeks relief in death.

A fate too similar is mine,
But I in lingering pain repine,
And still my lost felicity deplore;
Cold, cold to me is that dear breast become
Where this poor heart had fondly fix'd its home,
And love and happiness are mine no more.

THE PEASANT OF THE ALPS.

SONG.

DOES Pity give, though Fate denies,
And to my wounds her balm impart?
O speak with those expressive eyes!
Let one low sigh escape thine heart.

The gazing crowd shall never guess
What anxious, watchful Love can see;
Nor know what those soft looks express,
Nor dream that sign is meant for me.

Ah! words are useless, words are vain,
Thy generous sympathy to prove;
And well that sign, those looks explain,
That Clara mourns my hapless love.

THIRTY-EIGHT.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. H Y.

IN early youth's unclouded scene,
The brilliant morning of eighteen,
With health and sprightly joy elate
We gazed on life's enchanting spring ,
Nor thought how quickly time would bring
The mournful period Thirty-eight.

Then the starch maid, or matron sage,
Already at the sober age,
We view'd with mingled scorn and hate;
In whose sharp words, or sharper face,
With thoughtless mirth we loved to trace
The sad effects of Thirty-eight.

Till saddening, sickening at the view
We learn'd to dread what Time might do;
And then preferr'd a prayer to Fate
To end our days ere that arrived;
When (power and pleasure long survived)
We met neglect and Thirty-eight.

But time, in spite of wishes, flies
And Fate our simple prayer denies,
And bids us death's own hour await:
The auburn locks are mix'd with grey,
The transient roses fade away,
But reason comes at Thirty-eight.

SONG.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Her voice the anguish contradicts
That dying vanity inflicts;
Her hand new pleasures can create,
For us she opens to the view
Prospects less bright but far more true,
And bids us smile at Thirty-eight.

No more shall *scandal's* breath destroy
The social converse we enjoy
With bard or critic tete a tete;
O'er youth's bright blooms her blights shall pour,
But spare the improving friendly hour
That science gives to Thirty-eight.

Stripp'd of their gaudy hues by Truth,
We view the glitt'ring toys of youth,
And blush to think how poor the bait
For which to public scenes we ran
And scorn'd of sober sense the plan
Which gives content at Thirty-eight.

Though Time's inexorable sway
Has torn the myrtle bands away,
For other wreaths 'tis not too late,
The amaranth's purple glow survives,
And still Minerva's olive lives
On the calm brow of Thirty-eight.

With eye more steady we engage
To contemplate approaching age,
And life more justly estimate;
With firmer souls, and stronger powers,
With reason, faith, and friendship ours,
We'll not regret the stealing hours
That lead from Thirty even to Forty-eight.

VERSES.

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN PREFIXED TO THE NOVEL
OF EMMELINE, BUT THEN SUPPRESSED.

O'ERWHELM'D with sorrow, and sustaining long
"The proud man's contumely, th' oppressor's wrong,"
Languid despondency, and vain regret,
Must my exhausted spirit struggle yet?
Yes! Robb'd myself of all that fortune gave,
Even of all hope but shelter in the grave,
Still shall the plaintive lyre essay its powers
To dress the cave of Care with Fancy's flowers,
Maternal Love the fiend Despair withstand,

VERSES.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Still animate the heart and guide the hand.
May you, dear objects of my anxious care,
Escape the evils I was born to bear!
Round *my* devoted head while tempests roll,
Yet there, where I have treasured up my soul,
May the soft rays of dawning hope impart
Reviving patience to my fainting heart;
And when its sharp solitudes shall cease,
May I be conscious in the realms of peace
That every tear which swells my children's eyes,
From sorrows past, not present ills arise,
Then, with some friend who loves to share your pain,
For 'tis my boast that *some* such friends remain,
By filial grief, and fond remembrance prest,
You'll seek the spot where all my sorrows rest;
Recall my hapless days in sad review
The long calamities I bore for you,
And, with a happier fate, resolve to prove
How well you merited your mother's love.

SONNET LX.

TO AN AMIABLE GIRL.

MIRANDA! mark where shrinking from the gale,
Its silken leaves yet moist with early dew,
That fair faint flower, the Lily of the vale
Droops its meek head, and looks, methinks, like you!
Wrapp'd in a shadowy veil of tender green,
Its snowy bells a soft perfume dispense,
And bending as reluctant to be seen,
In simple loveliness it soothes the sense.
With bosom bared to meet the garish day,
The glaring Tulip, gaudy, undismay'd,
Offends the eye of taste; that turns away
To seek the Lily in her fragrant shade.
With such unconscious beauty, pensive, mild,
Miranda charms Nature's soft modest child.

SONNET LXI.

Supposed to have been written in America.

ILL-omen'd bird! whose cries portentous float
O'er yon savannah with the mournful wind;
While, as the Indian hears your piercing note,
Dark dread of future evil fills his mind;
Wherefore with early lamentation break
The dear delusive visions of repose?
Why from so short felicity awake

SONNET LX.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

My wounded senses to substantial woes?
O'er my sick soul thus rous'd from transient rest,
Pale Superstition sheds her influence drear,
And to my shuddering fancy would suggest
Thou com'st to speak of ev'ry woe I fear,
Ah! Reason little o'er the soul prevails,
When, from ideal ill, the enfeebled spirit fails!

SONNET LXII.

*Written on passing by Moon-light through a Village,
while the ground was covered with Snow.*

WHILE thus I wander, cheerless and unblest,
And find in change of place but change of pain;
In tranquil sleep the village labourers rest,
And taste that quiet I pursue in vain!
Hush'd is the hamlet now, and faintly gleam
The dying embers, from the casement low
Of the thatch'd cottage; while the Moon's wan beam
Lends a new lustre to the dazzling snow
O'er the cold waste, amid the freezing night,
Scarce heeding whither, desolate I stray;
For me, pale Eye of Evening, thy soft light
Leads to no happy home; *my* weary way
Ends but in sad vicissitudes of care:
I only fly from doubt to meet despair!

SONNET LXIII.

THE GOSSAMER.

O'ER faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze,
The filmy Gossamer is lightly spread;
Waving in every sighing air that stirs,
As Fairy fingers had entwined the thread:
A thousand trembling orbs of lucid dew
Spangle the texture of the fairy loom,
As if soft Sylphs, lamenting as they flew,
Had wept departed Summer's transient bloom:
But the wind rises, and the turf receives
The glittering web: So, evanescent, fade
Bright views that Youth with sanguine heart, believes:
So vanish schemes of bliss, by Fancy made;
Which, fragile as the fleeting dreams of morn,
Leave but the wither'd heath, and barren thorn!

SONNET LXIV.

Written at Bristol in the summer of 1794.

HERE from the restless bed of lingering pain
The languid sufferer seeks the tepid wave,
And feels returning health and hope again
Disperse 'the gathering shadows of the grave!'
And here romantic rocks that boldly swell,
Fringed with green woods, or stain'd with veins of ore,
Call'd native genius forth, whose Heaven-taught skill
Charm'd the deep echoes of the rifted shore.
But tepid waves, wild scenes, or summer air,
Restore they palsied Fancy, woe-deprest?
Check they the torpid influence of Despair,
Or bid warm Health re-animate the breast;
Where Hope's soft visions have no longer part,
And whose sad inmate is a broken heart?

SONNET LXV.

TO DR PARRY OF BATH. *With some botanic drawings which had been made some years.*

IN happier hours, ere yet so keenly blew
Adversity's cold blight, and bitter storms,
Luxuriant Summer's evanescent forms,
And Spring's soft blooms with pencil light I drew:
But as the lovely family of flowers
Shrink from the bleakness of the Northern blast,
So fail from present care and sorrow past
The slight botanic pencil's mimic powers
Nor will kind Fancy even by Memory's aid,
Her visionary garlands now entwine;
Yet while the wreaths of Hope and Pleasure fade,
Still is one flower of deathless blossom mine,
That dares the Lapse of Time, and Tempest rude,
The unfading Amaranth of Gratitude.

SONNET LXVI.

Written in a tempestuous night on the coast of Sussex.

THE night-flood rakes upon the stony shore;
Along the rugged cliffs and chalky caves
Mourns the hoarse Ocean, seeming to deplore
All that are buried in his restless waves
Mined by corrosive tides, the hollow rock
Falls prone, and rushing from its turfy height,
Shakes the broad beach with long-resounding shock,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Loud thundering on the ear of sullen Night;
Above the desolate and stormy deep,
Gleams the wan Moon by floating mist opprest;
Yet here while youth, and health, and labour sleep,
Alone I wander Calm untroubled rest,
"Nature's soft nurse," deserts the high-swoln breast,
And shuns the eyes, that only make to weep!

SONNET LXVII.

*On passing over a dreary tract of country, and near
the ruins of a deserted chapel, during a tempest.*

SWIFT fleet the billowy clouds along the sky,
Earth seems to shudder at the storm aghast;
While only beings as forlorn as I,
Court the chill horrors of the howling blast.
Even round yon crumbling walls, in search of food,
The ravenous Owl foregoes his evening flight,
And in his cave, within the deepest wood,
The Fox eludes the tempest of the night.
But to *my* heart congenial is the gloom
Which hides me from a World I wish to shun;
That scene where Ruin saps the mouldering tomb
Suits with the sadness of a wretch undone.
Nor is the deepest shade, the keenest air,
Black as my fate, or cold as my despair.

SONNET LXVIII.

Written at Exmouth, Midsummer, 1795.

FALL, dews of Heaven, upon my burning breast,
Bathe with cool drops these ever-streaming eyes,
Ye gentle Winds, that fan the balmy West,
With the soft rippling tide of morning rise,
And calm my bursting heart, as here I keep
The vigil of the wretched! Now away
Fade the pale stars, as wavering o'er the deep
Soft rosy tints announce another day,
The day of Middle Summer! Ah! in vain
To those who mourn like me, does radiant June
Lead on her fragrant hours; for hopeless pain
Darkens with sullen clouds the Sun of Noon,
And veil'd in shadows Nature's face appears
To hearts o'erwhelm'd with grief, to eyes suffused with tears.

SONNET LXIX.

*Written at the same place, on seeing a Seaman return
who had been imprisoned at Rochfort.*

CLOUDS, gold and purple, o'er the western ray
Threw a bright veil, and catching lights between,
Fell on the glancing sail, that we had seen
With soft, but adverse winds, throughout the day
Contending vainly: as the vessel nears,
Increasing numbers hail it from the shore;
Lo! on the deck a pallid form appears,
Half wondering to behold himself once more
Approach his home And now he can discern
His cottage thatch amid surrounding trees;
Yet, trembling, dreads lest sorrow or disease
Await him there, embittering his return:
But all he loves are safe; with heart elate,
Though poor and plunder'd, he absolves his fate!

SONNET LXX.

*On being cautioned against walking over a headland
overlooking the sea, because it was frequented by a
Lunatic.*

IS there a solitary wretch who hies
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or slow,
And, measuring, views with wild and hollow eyes
Its distance from the waves that chide below;
Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent sighs
Chills his cold bed upon the mountain turf,
With hoarse, half utter'd lamentation, lies
Murmuring responses to the dashing surf?
In moody sadness, on the giddy brink,
I see him more with envy than with fear;
He has no *nice felicities* that shrink
From giant horrors; wildly wandering here,
He seems (uncursed with reason) not to know
The depth or the duration of his woe.

SONNET LXXI.

Written at Weymouth in winter.

THE chill waves whiten in the sharp North-east;
Cold, cold the night-blast comes, with sullen sound,
And black and gloomy, like my cheerless breast:
Frowns the dark pier and lonely sea-view round.
Yet a few months and on the peopled strand

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Pleasure shall all her varied forms display;
Nymphs lightly tread the bright reflecting sand,
And proud sails whiten all the summer bay:
Then, from these winds that whistle keen and bleak,
Music's delightful melodies shall float
O'er the blue waters; but 'tis mine to seek
Rather, some unfrequented shade, remote
From sights and sounds of gaiety I mourn
All that gave *me* delight Ah! never to return

SONNET LXXII.

TO THE MORNING STAR. *Written near the sea.*

THEE! lucid arbiter 'twixt day and night,
The seaman greets, as on the ocean stream
Reflected, thy precursive friendly beam
Points out the long-sought haven to his sight.

Watching for thee, the lover's ardent eyes
Turn to the eastern hills; and as above
Thy brilliance trembles, hails the lights that rise
To guide his footsteps to expecting love!

I mark thee too, as night's dark clouds retire,
And thy bright radiance glances on the sea;
But never more shall thy heraldic fire
Speak of approaching morn with joy to me!
Quench'd in the gloom of death that heavenly ray
Once lent to light me on my thorny way!

SONNET LXXIII.

TO A QUERULOUS ACQUAINTANCE.

THOU! whom Prosperity has always led
O'er level paths, with moss and flow'rets strewn;
For whom she still prepares a downy bed
With roses scatter'd, and to thorns unknown,
Wilt thou yet murmur at a misplaced leaf?
Think, ere thy irritable nerves repine,
How many, born with feelings keen as thine,
Taste all the sad vicissitudes of grief;
How many steep in tears their scanty bread;
Or, lost to reason, Sorrow's victims! rave:
How many know not where to lay their head;
While some are driven by anguish to the grave!
Think; nor impatient at a feather's weight,
Mar the uncommon blessings of thy fate!

SONNET LXXIV.

THE WINTER NIGHT.

"SLEEP, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,"
Forsakes me, while the chill and sullen blast,
As my sad soul recalls its sorrows past,
Seems like a summons bidding me prepare
For the last sleep of death Murmuring I hear
The hollow wind around the ancient towers,
While night and silence reign; and cold and drear
The darkest gloom of middle winter lowers;
But wherefore fear existence such as mine,
To change for long and undisturb'd repose?
Ah! when this suffering being I resign
And o'er my miseries the tomb shall close,
By her, whose loss in anguish I deplore,
I shall be laid, and feel that loss no more!

SONNET LXXV.

WHERE the wild woods and pathless forests frown,
The darkling Pilgrim seeks his unknown way,
Till on the grass he throws him weary down,
To wait in broken sleep the dawn of day:
Through boughs just waving in the silent air,
With pale capricious light the summer moon
Chequers his humid couch; while Fancy there,
That loves to wanton in the night's deep noon,
Calls from the mossy roots and fountain edge
Fair visionary Nymphs that haunt the shade,
Or Naiads rising from the whispering sedge:
And, 'mid the beauteous group, his dear loved maid
Seems beckoning him with smiles to join the train:
Then, starting from his dream, he feels his woes again!

SONNET LXXVI.

TO A YOUNG MAN ENTERING THE WORLD.

GO now, ingenious youth! The trying hour
Is come: The world demands that thou shouldst go
To active life: There titles, wealth, and power,
May all be purchased Yet I joy to know
Thou wilt not pay their price. The base control
Of petty despots in their pedant reign
Already hast thou felt; and high disdain
Of tyrants is imprinted on thy soul
Not, where mistaken Glory, in the field
Rears her red banner, be thou ever found:

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

But, against proud Oppression raise the shield
Of patriot daring So shalt thou renown'd
For the best virtues *live* ; or that denied
May'st die, as Hampden or as Sydney died!

SONNET LXXVII.

TO THE INSECT OF THE GOSSAMER.

SMALL, viewless aeronaut, that by the line
Of Gossamer suspended, in mid air
Float'st on a sun beam Living atom, where
Ends thy breeze-guided voyage; with what design,
In ether dost thou launch thy form minute,
Mocking the eye? Alas! before the veil
Of denser clouds shall hide thee, the pursuit
Of the keen Swift may end thy fairy sail!
Thus on the golden thread that Fancy weaves
Buoyant, as Hope's illusive flattery breathes,
The young and visionary poet leaves
Life's dull realities, while sevenfold wreaths
Of rainbow-light around his head revolve.
Ah! soon at Sorrow's touch the radiant dreams dissolve!

SONNET LXXVIII.

SNOWDROPS.

WAN Heralds of the sun and summer gale!
That seem just fallen from infant Zephyrs' wing;
Not now, as once, with heart revived I hail
Your modest buds, that for the brow of Spring
Form the first simple garland Now no more
Escaping for a moment all my cares,
Shall I, with pensive, silent, step explore
The woods yet leafless; where to chilling airs
Your green and pencil'd blossoms, trembling, wave.
Ah! ye soft, transient, children of the ground,
More fair was she on whose untimely grave
Flow my unceasing tears! Their varied round
The Seasons go; while I through all repine:
For fix'd regret, and hopeless grief are mine.

SONNET LXXIX.

TO THE GODDESS OF BOTANY.

OF Folly weary, shrinking from the view
Of Violence and Fraud, allow'd to take
All peace from humble life; I would forsake

SONNET LXXVII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Their haunts for ever, and, sweet Nymph! with you
Find shelter; where my tired, and tear-swollen eyes
 Among your silent shades of soothing hue,
Your "bells and florrets of unnumber'd dyes"
Might rest And learn the bright varieties
 That from your lovely hands are fed with dew;
And every veined leaf, that trembling sighs
In mead or woodland; or in wilds remote,
 Or lurk with mosses in the humid caves,
Mantle the cliffs, on dimpling rivers float,
 Or stream from coral rocks beneath the ocean's waves.

SONNET LXXX.

TO THE INVISIBLE MOON.

DARK and conceal'd art thou, soft Evening's queen,
 And Melancholy's votaries that delight
To watch thee, gliding through the blue serene,
 Now vainly seek thee on the brow of night
Mild Sorrow, such as hope has not forsook,
 May love to muse beneath thy silent reign;
But *I* prefer from some steep rock to look
 On the obscure and fluctuating main,
What time the martial star with lurid glare,
 Portentous, gleams above the troubled deep;
Or the red comet shakes his blazing hair;
 Or on the fire-ting'd waves the lightnings leap;
While thy fair beams illumine another sky,
And shine for beings less accursed than I.

SONNET LXXXI.

HE may be envied, who with tranquil breast
 Can wander in the wild and woodland scene,
When summer's glowing hands have newly dress'd
 The shadowy forests, and the copses green;
Who, unpursued by care, can pass his hours
 Where briony and woodbine fringe the trees,
On thymy banks reposing, while the bees
Murmur "their fairy tunes, in praise of flowers;"
Or on the rock with ivy clad, and fern
 That overhangs the ozier-whispering bed
Of some clear current, bid his wishes turn
 From this bad world; and by calm reason led,
Knows, in refined retirement, to possess
By friendship hallow'd rural happiness!

SONNET LXXXII.

TO THE SHADE OF BURNS.

MUTE is thy wild harp, now, O bard sublime!

Who, amid Scotia's mountain solitude,
Great Nature taught to "build the lofty rhyme,"

And even beneath the daily pressure, rude,
Of labouring poverty, thy generous blood,
Fired with the love of freedom Not subdued

Wert thou by thy low fortune: but a time
Like this we live in, when the abject chime
Of echoing parasite is best approved,

Was not for thee Indignantly is fled
Thy noble spirit; and no longer moved
By all the ills o'er which thine heart has bled,
Associate, worthy of the illustrious dead,
Enjoys with them "the liberty it loved."

SONNET LXXXIII.

THE SEA VIEW.

THE upland shepherd, as reclined he lies

On the soft turf that clothes the mountain brow,
Marks the bright sea—line mingling with the skies;

Or from his course celestial, sinking slow,
The summer—sun in purple radiance low,

Blaze on the western waters; the wide scene
Magnificent, and tranquil, seems to spread

Even o'er the rustic's breast a joy serene,
When, like dark plague—spots by the demons shed,

Charged deep with death, upon the waves, far seen,
Move the war—freighted ships; and fierce and red,

Flash their destructive fires The mangled dead
And dying victims then pollute the flood.

Ah, thus man spoils Heaven's glorious works with blood!

SONNET LXXXIV.

TO THE MUSE.

WILT thou forsake me who in life's bright May

Lent warmer lustre to the radiant morn;

And even o'er summer scenes by tempests torn,
Shed with illusive light the dewy ray

Of pensive pleasure? Wilt thou, while the day
Of saddening autumn closes, as I mourn

In languid, hopeless sorrow, far away

Bend thy soft step, and never more return?

SONNET LXXXII.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Crush'd to the earth, by bitterest anguish press'd,
From my faint eyes thy graceful form recedes;
Thou canst not heal a heart like mine that bleeds;
But, when in quiet earth that heart shall rest,
Haply mayst thou one sorrowing vigil keep,
Where Pity and Remembrance bend and weep!

THE DEAD BEGGAR.

AN ELEGY. Addressed to a Lady, who was affected at seeing the Funeral of a nameless Pauper, buried at the expense of the Parish, in the Church-Yard at Bright-helmstone, in November 1792.

SWELLS then thy feeling heart, and streams thine eye
O'er the deserted being, poor and old,
Whom cold, reluctant, parish charity
Consigns to mingle with his kindred mould?

Mourn'st thou, that *here* the time-worn sufferer ends
Those evil days still threatening woes to come;
Here, where the friendless feel no want of friends,
Where even the houseless wanderer finds a home!

What though no kindred crowd in sable forth,
And sigh, or seem to sigh, around his bier;
Though o'er his coffin with the humid earth
No children drop the unavailing tear?

Rather rejoice that *here* his sorrows cease,
Whom sickness, age, and poverty oppress'd;
Where death, the leveller, restores to peace
The wretch who living knew not where to rest.

Rejoice, that though an outcast spurn'd by fate,
Through penury's rugged path his race he ran;
In earth's cold bosom, equall'd with the great,
Death vindicates the insulted rights of man.

Rejoice, that though severe his earthly doom,
And rude, and sown with thorns the way he trod,
Now, (where unfeeling fortune cannot come)
He rests upon the mercies of his God.

THE FEMALE EXILE.

Written at Brighthelmstone in Nov. 1792.

NOVEMBER'S chill blast on the rough beach is howling,
The surge breaks afar, and then foams to the shore,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Dark clouds o'er the sea gather heavy and scowling,
And the white cliffs re-echo the wild wintry roar.

Beneath that chalk rock, a fair stranger reclining,
Has found on damp sea-weed a cold lonely seat;
Her eyes fill'd with tears, and her heart with repining,
She starts at the billows that burst at her feet.

There, day after day, with an anxious heart heaving,
She watches the waves where they mingle with air;
For the sail which, alas! all her fond hopes deceiving,
May bring only tidings to add to her care.

Loose stream to wild winds those fair flowing tresses,
Once woven with garlands of gay summer flowers;
Her dress unregarded, bespeaks her distresses,
And beauty is blighted by grief's heavy hours.

Her innocent children, unconscious of sorrow,
To seek the gloss'd shell, or the crimson weed stray;
Amused with the present, they heed not to-morrow,
Nor think of the storm that is gathering to-day.

The gilt, fairy ship, with its ribbon sail spreading,
They launch on the salt pool the tide left behind;
Ah! victims for whom *their* sad mother is dreading
The multiplied miseries that wait on mankind!

To fair fortune born, she beholds them with anguish,
Now wanderers with her on a once hostile soil,
Perhaps doom'd for life in chill penury to languish,
Or abject dependence, or soul-crushing toil.

But the sea-boat, her hopes and her terrors renewing,
O'er the dim grey horizon now faintly appears;
She flies to the quay, dreading tidings of ruin,
All breathless with haste, half expiring with fears.

Poor mourner! I would that my fortune had left me
The means to alleviate the woes I deplore;
But like thine my hard fate has of affluence bereft me,
I can warm the cold heart of the wretched no more!

[OCCASIONAL ADDRESS.]

*Written for the benefit of a distressed Player, detained
at Brighthelmstone for Debt, November 1792.*

WHEN in a thousand swarms, the summer o'er,
The birds of passage quit our English shore,

[OCCASIONAL ADDRESS.]

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

By various routs the feather'd myriad moves;
The *Becca-Fica* seeks Italian groves,
No more a *Wheat-ear* ; while the soaring files
Of sea-fowl gather round the Hebrid isles.

But if by bird-lime touch'd, unplumed, confined,
Some poor ill-fated straggler stays behind,
Driven from his transient perch, beneath your eaves
On his unshelter'd head the tempest raves,
While drooping round, redoubling every pain,
His *mate* and nestlings ask his help in vain.

So we, the buskin and the sock who wear,
And "strut and fret," our little season here,
Dismiss'd at length, as fortune bids divide
Some (lucky rogues!) sit down on Thames's side;
Others to Liffy's western banks proceed,
And some driven far a-field, across the Tweed:
But, pinion'd here, alas! I cannot fly:
The *hapless, unplumed*, lingering straggler I!
Unless the healing pity you bestow,
Shall imp my shatter'd wings, and let me go.

Hard is *his* fate, whom evil stars have led
To seek in scenic art *precarious* bread,
While still, through wild vicissitudes afloat,
A hero now, and now a *Sans Culotte!*
That eleemosynary bread he gains
Mingling, with real distresses, mimic pains.

See in our group, a pale, lank Falstaff stare!
Much needs he stuffing: while young Ammon there
Rehearses in a garret ten feet square!
And as his soft *Statira* sighs consent,
Roxana comes not but a dun for rent!
Here shiv'ring Edgar, in his blanket roll'd,
Exclaims with too much reason, "*Tom's a-cold!* "
And vainly tries his sorrows to divert,
While *Goneril* or *Regan* wash his shirt!

Lo! fresh from Calais, Edward, mighty king!
Revolves a mutton chop upon a string!
And Hotspur, plucking "honour from the moon,"
Feeds a *sick infant* with a pewter spoon!

More bless'd the fisher, who undaunted braves
In his small bark, the impetuous winds and waves;
For though he plough the sea when others sleep,
He draws, like Glendower, spirits from the deep.
And while the storm howls round, amidst his trouble,
Bright *moonshine* still illuminates the cobble.

[OCCASIONAL ADDRESS.]

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Pale with her fears for him, some fair *Poissarde* ,
Watches his nearing boat; with fond regard
Smiles when she sees his little canvass hanging,
And clasps her dripping lover on his landing.

More bless'd the *peasant* , who, with nervous toil
Hews the rough oak, or breaks the stubborn soil:
Weary, indeed, he sees the evening come,
But then, the rude, yet tranquil hut, his home,
Receives its rustic inmate; then are his,
Secure repose, and dear domestic bliss.
The orchard's blushing fruit, the garden's store,
The pendant hop, that mantles round the door,
Are his: and while cheerful faggots burn,
"His lisping children hail their site's return."

But wandering Players, "unhousel'd, unanneal'd,"
And unappointed, scour life's common field,
A flying squadron! disappointments cross 'em,
And the campaign concludes, perhaps, at Horsham.

Oh! ye, whose timely bounty deigns to shed
Compassion's balm upon my luckless head,
Benevolence, with warm and glowing breast,
And soft, celestial mercy, doubly bless'd!
Smile on the generous act! where means are given,
To aid the wretched is to merit heaven.

INSCRIPTION

*On a Stone, in the Church–Yard at Boreham, in
Essex; raised by the Honourable Elizabeth Olmius,
to the memory of Ann Gardner, who died at New
Hall, after a faithful Service of Forty Years.*

WHATE'ER of praise, and of regret attend
The grateful servant, and the humble friend,
Where strict integrity and worth unite
To raise the lowly in their Maker's sight,
Are her's; whose faithful service, long approved,
Wept by the mistress whom through life she loved.
Here ends her earthly task; in joyful trust
To share the eternal triumph of the just.

A DESCRIPTIVE ODE,

*Supposed to have been written under the Ruins of
Rufus's Castle, among the remains of the ancient
Church on the Isle of Portland.*

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

CHAOTIC pile of barren stone,
That Nature's hurrying hand has thrown,
 Half finish'd, from the troubled waves;
On whose rude brow the rifted tower
Has frown'd, through many a stormy hour,
 On this drear site of tempest-beaten graves.

Sure Desolation loves to shroud
His giant form within the cloud
 That hovers round thy rugged head;
And as through broken vaults beneath,
The future storms low-muttering breathe,
 Hears the complaining voices of the dead.

Here marks the fiend with eager eyes,
Far out at sea the fogs arise
 That dimly shade the beacon'd strand,
And listens the portentous roar
Of sullen waves, as on the shore,
 Monotonous, they burst and tell the storm at hand.

Northward the demon's eyes are cast
O'er yonder bare and sterile waste,
 Where, born to hew and heave the block,
Man, lost in ignorance and toil,
Becomes associate to the soil,
 And his heart hardens like his native rock.

On the bleak hills, with flint o'erspread,
No blossoms rear the purple head;
 No shrub perfumes the zephyrs' breath,
But o'er the cold and cheerless down
Grim desolation seems to frown,
 Blasting the ungrateful soil with partial death.

Here the scathed trees with leaves half-dress'd,
Shade no soft songster's secret nest,
 Whose spring-notes soothe the pensive ear;
But high the croaking cormorant flies,
And mews and hawks with clamorous cries
 Tire the lone echoes of these caverns drear.

Perchance among the ruins grey
Some widow'd mourner loves to stray,
 Marking the melancholy main
Where once, afar she could discern
O'er the white waves *his* sail return
 Who never, never now, returns again!

On these lone tombs, by storms up-torn,
The hopeless wretch may lingering mourn,

INSCRIPTION

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Till from the ocean, rising red,
The misty moon with lurid ray
Lights her, reluctant, on her way,
To steep in tears her solitary bed.

Hence the dire spirit oft surveys
The ship, that to the western bays
With favouring gales pursues its course;
Then calls the vapour dark that blinds
The pilot, calls the felon winds
That heave the billows with resistless force.

Commixing with the blotted skies,
High and more high the wild waves rise,
Till, as impetuous torrents urge,
Driven on yon fatal bank accursed
The vessel's massy timbers burst,
And the crew sinks beneath the infuriate surge.

There find the weak an early grave,
While youthful strength the whelming wave
Repels; and labouring for the land,
With shorten'd breath and upturn'd eyes,
Sees the rough shore above him rise,
Nor dreams that rapine meets him on the strand.

And are there then in human form
Monsters more savage than the storm,
Who from the gasping sufferer tear
The dripping weed? who dare to reap
The inhuman harvest of the deep,
From half-drown'd victims whom the tempests spare?

Ah, yes! by avarice once possess'd,
No pity moves the rustic breast;
Callous he proves as those who haply wait
Till I (a pilgrim weary worn)
To my own native land return,
With legal toils to drag me to my fate!

VERSES

*Supposed to have been written in the New Forest,
in early Spring.*

AS in the woods, where leathery Lichen weaves
Its wint'ry web among the fallow leaves,
Which (through cold months in whirling eddies blown)
Decay beneath the branches once their own,
From the brown shelter of their foliage sear,

VERSES

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Spring the young blooms that lead the floral year:
When, waked by vernal suns, the Pilewort dares
Expand her spotted leaves, and shining stars
And (veins empurpling all her tassels pale)
Bends the soft Wind-flower in the tepid gale;
Uncultured bells of azure Jacynth's blow,
And the breeze-scenting Violet lurks below:
So views the wanderer, with delighted eyes,
Reviving hopes from black despondence rise,
When, blighted by adversity's chill breath,
Those hopes had felt a temporary death;
Then with gay heart he looks to future hours,
When love shall dress for him the summer bowers.
And, as delicious dreams enchant his mind,
Forgets his sorrows past, or gives them to the wind.

SONG.

FROM THE FRENCH.

I.

"AH! say," the fair Louisa cried,
"Say where the abode of Love is found?"
Pervading nature, I replied,
His influence spreads the world around.
When Morning's arrowy beams arise,
He sparkles in the enlivening ray,
And blushes in the glowing skies
When rosy evening fades away.

II.

The summer winds that gently blow,
The flocks that bleat along the glades,
The nightingale, that soft and low,
With music fills the listening shades:
The murmurs of the silver surf
All echo Love's enchanting notes,
From violets lurking in the turf,
His balmy breath through ether floats.

III.

From perfumed flowers and dewy leaves
Delicious scents he bids exhale,
He smiles amid autumnal sheaves,
And clothes with green the grassy vale;
But when that throne the god assumes

SONG.

Where his most powerful influence lies,
'Tis on Louisa's cheek he blooms,
And lightens from her radiant eyes!

APOSTROPHE

TO AN OLD TREE.

WHERE thy broad branches brave the bitter North,
Like rugged, indigent, unheeded, worth,
Lo! Vegetation's guardian hands emboss
Each giant limb with fronds of studded moss,
That clothes the bark in many a fringed fold
Begg'd with scarlet shields, and cups of gold,
Which, to the wildest winds their webs oppose,
And mock the arrowy sleet, or weltering snows.
But to the warmer *West* the woodbine fair
With tassels that perfumed the summer air,
The mantling clematis, whose feathery bowers
Waved in festoons with nightshade's purple flowers,
The silver weed, whose corded fillets wove
Round thy pale rind, even as deceitful love
Of mercenary beauty would engage
The dotard fondness of decrepit age;
All these, that during summer's halcyon days
With their green canopies conceal'd thy sprays,
Are gone for ever; or disfigured, trail
Their sallow relicts in the autumnal gale;
Or o'er thy roots, in faded fragments toss'd,
But tell of happier hours, and sweetness lost!
Thus in Fate's trying hour, when furious storms
Strip social life of Pleasure's fragile forms,
And awful *Justice*, as his rightful prey
Tears Luxury's silk, and jewel'd robe, away,
While reads *Adversity* her lesson stern,
And *Fortune's* minions tremble as they learn;
The crowds around her gilded car that hung,
Bent the lithe knee, and troul'd the honey'd tongue,
Desponding fall, or fly in pale despair;
And *Scorn* alone remembers that they were.
Not so *Integrity*; unchanged he lives
In the rude armour conscious Honour gives,
And dares with hardy front the troubled sky,
In *Honesty's* uninjured panoply.
Ne'er on Prosperity's enfeebling bed
Or rosy pillows, he reposed his head,
But given to useful arts, his ardent mind
Has sought the general welfare of mankind;
To mitigate *their* ills his greatest bliss,
While studying *them*, has taught him *what he is*;

He , when the human tempest rages worst,
And the earth shudders as the thunders burst,
Firm, as thy northern branch, is rooted fast,
And if he can't *avert* , endures the blast.

THE FOREST BOY.

THE trees have now hid at the edge of the hurst
The spot where the ruins decay
Of the cottage, where Will of the Woodland was nursed,
And lived so beloved, till the moment accursed
When he went from the woodland away.

Among all the lads of the plough or the fold;
Best esteem'd by the sober and good,
Was Will of the Woodlands; and often the old
Would tell of his frolics, for active and bold
Was William the boy of the wood.

Yet gentle was he, as the breath of the May,
And when sick and declining was laid
The woodman his father, young William away
Would go to the forest to labour all day,
And perform his hard task in his stead.

And when his poor father the forester died,
And his mother was sad, and alone,
He toil'd from the dawn, and at evening he hied
In storm or in snow, or whate'er might betide,
To supply all her wants from the town.

One neighbour they had on the heath to the west,
And no other the cottage was near,
But she would send Phoebe, the child she loved best,
To stay with the widow, thus sad and distress'd,
Her hours of dejection to cheer.

As the buds of wild roses, the cheeks of the maid
Were just tinted with youth's lovely hue,
Her form, like the aspen, wild graces display'd,
And the eyes, over which her luxuriant locks stray'd,
As the skies of the summer were blue.

Still labouring to live, yet reflecting the while,
Young William consider'd his lot;
'Twas hard, yet 'twas honest; and one tender smile
From Phoebe at night overpaid ev'ry toil,
And then all his fatigues were forgot.

By the brook where it glides through the copse of Arbeal,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

When to eat his cold fare he reclined,
Then soft from her home his sweet Phoebe would steal,
And bring him wood—strawberries to finish his meal,
And would sit by his side while he dined.

And though when employed in the deep forest glade,
His days have seem'd slowly to move,
Yet Phoebe going home, through the wood—walk has stray'd
To bid him good night! and whatever she said
Was more sweet than the voice of the dove.

Fair Hope, that the lover so fondly believes,
Then repeated each soul—soothing speech,
And touch'd with illusion, that often deceives
The future with light; as the sun through the leaves
Illumines the boughs of the beech.

But once more the tempests of chill winter blow,
To depress and disfigure the earth;
And now ere the dawn, the young woodman must go
To his work in the forest, half buried in snow,
And at night bring home wood for the hearth.

The bridge on the heath by the flood was wash'd down,
And fast fell the sleet and the rain,
The stream to a wild rapid river was grown,
And long might the widow sit sighing alone
Ere sweet Phoebe could see her again.

At the town was a market and now for supplies,
Such as needed her humble abode,
Young William went forth; and his mother with sighs
Watch'd long at the window, with tears in her eyes,
Till he turn'd through the fields to the road.

Then darkness came on; and she heard with affright
The wind every moment more high;
She look'd from the door; not a star lent its light,
But the tempest redoubled the gloom of the night,
And the rain pour'd in sheets from the sky.

The clock in her cottage now mournfully told
The hours that went heavily on;
'Twas midnight: her spirits sank hopeless and cold,
And it seem'd as each blast of wind fearfully told
That long, long would her William be gone.

Then heart—sick and cold to her sad bed she crept,
Yet first made up the fire in the room
To guide his dark steps; but she listen'd and wept,
Or if for a moment forgetful she slept,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Soon she started! and thought he was come.

'Twas morn; and the wind with a hoarse sullen moan
Now seem'd dying away in the wood,
When the poor wretched mother still drooping, alone,
Beheld on the threshold a figure unknown,
In gorgeous apparel who stood.

"Your son is a soldier," abruptly cried he,
"And a place in our corps has obtain'd,
Nay, be not cast down; you perhaps may soon see
Your William a captain, he now sends by me
The purse he already has gain'd."

So William entrapp'd 'twixt persuasion and force,
Is embark'd for the isles of the West,
But he seem'd to begin with ill omens his course,
And felt recollection, regret, and remorse
Continually weigh on his breast.

With useless repentance he eagerly eyed
The high coast as it faded from view,
And saw the green hills, on whose northernmost side
Was his own silvan home: and he falter'd, and cried,
"Adieu! ah! for ever adieu!

"Who now, my poor mother, thy life shall sustain,
Since thy son has thus left thee forlorn?
Ah! canst thou forgive me? And not in the pain
Of this cruel desertion, of William complain,
And lament that he ever was born?

"Sweet Phoebe! if ever thy lover was dear,
Now forsake not the cottage of woe,
But comfort my mother; and quiet her fear,
And help her to dry up the vain fruitless tear,
That too long for my absence will flow.

"Yet what if my Phoebe another should wed,
And lament her lost William no more?"
The thought was too cruel; and anguish now sped
The dart of disease With the brave numerous dead
He has fall'n on the plague-tainted shore.

In the lone village church-yard, the chancel-wall near,
High grass now waves over the spot,
Where the mother of William, unable to bear
His loss, who to her widow'd heart was so dear,
Has both him and her sorrows forgot.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

By the brook where it winds through the wood of Arbeal,
Or amid the deep forest, to moan,
The poor wandering Phoebe will silently steal;
The pain of her bosom no reason can heal,
And she loves to indulge it alone.

Her senses are injured; her eyes dim with tears;
She sits by the river and weaves
Reed garlands, against her dear William appears,
Then breathlessly listens, and fancies she hears
His step in the half wither'd leaves.

Ah! such are the miseries to which ye give birth,
Ye statesmen! ne'er dreading a scar;
Who from pictured saloon, or the bright sculptured hearth
Disperse desolation and death through the earth,
When ye let loose the demons of war.

ODE TO THE POPPY.

Written by a deceased friend.

NOT for the promise of the labour'd field,
Not for the good the yellow harvests yield,
I bend at Ceres' shrine;
For dull, to human eyes, appear
The golden glories of the year,
Alas! a melancholy worship's mine,

I hail the goddess for her scarlet flower;
Thou brilliant weed,
That dost so far exceed
The richest gifts gay Flora can bestow:
Heedless I pass'd thee, in life's morning hour,
(Thou comforter of woe)
Till sorrow taught me to confess thy power.

In early days, when Fancy cheats,
A varied wreath I wove,
Of laughing Spring's luxuriant sweets,
To deck ungrateful Love:
The rose, or thorn, my labours crown'd;
As Venus smiled, or Venus frown'd;

But Love and Joy, and all their train, are flown;
E'en languid Hope no more is mine,
And I will sing of thee alone,
Unless, perchance, the attributes of Grief,
The cypress bud, and willow leaf,

ODE TO THE POPPY.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Their pale funereal foliage blend with thine.

Hail, lovely blossom! thou canst ease
The wretched victims of Disease;
Canst close those weary eyes in gentle sleep,
Which never open but to weep;
For, oh! thy potent charm
Can agonizing Pain disarm;
Expel imperious Memory from her seat,
And bid the throbbing heart forget to beat.

Soul-soothing plant! that can such blessings give,
By thee the mourner bears to live!
By thee the hopeless die!
Oh! ever "friendly to despair,"
Might Sorrow's pallid votary dare,
Without a crime, that remedy implore,
Which bids the spirit from its bondage fly,
I'd court thy palliative aid no more;

No more I'd sue that thou shouldst spread,
Thy spell around my aching head,
But would conjure thee to impart
Thy balsam for a broken heart;
And by thy soft Lethean power,
(Inestimable flower)
Burst these terrestrial bonds, and other regions try.

[VERSES]

*Written by the same lady on seeing her two sons
at play.*

SWEET age of bless'd delusion! blooming boys,
Ah! revel long in childhood's thoughtless joys,
With light and pliant spirits, that can stoop
To follow, sportively, the rolling hoop;
To watch the sleeping top with gay delight,
Or mark, with raptured gaze, the sailing kite;
Or, eagerly pursuing Pleasure's call,
Can find it center'd in the bounding ball.
Alas! the day *will* come, when sports like these
Must lose their magic, and their power to please:
Too swiftly fled, the rosy hours of youth
Shall yield their fairy charms to mournful Truth;
Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear
Sees the dark train of human ills appear;
Views various fortune for each lovely child,
Storms for the bold, and anguish for the mild;
Beholds already those expressive eyes

[VERSES]

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Beam a sad certainty of future sighs;
And dreads each suffering those dear breasts may know
In their long passage through a world of woe;
Perchance predestined every pang to prove,
That treacherous friends inflict, or faithless love;
For, ah! how few have found existence sweet,
Where grief is sure, but happiness deceit.

VERSES

On the Death of the same Lady, written in Sept. 1794.

LIKE a poor ghost the night I seek;
Its hollow winds repeat my sighs;
The cold dews mingle on my cheek
With tears that wander from mine eyes.

The thorns that still my couch molest,
Have robb'd these heavy eyes of sleep;
But though deprived of tranquil rest,
I here at last am free to weep.

Twelve times the moon, that rises red
O'er yon tall wood of shadowy pine,
Has fill'd her orb, since low was laid
My Harriet! that sweet form of thine!

While each sad month, as slow it pass'd,
Brought some new sorrow to deplore;
Some grief more poignant than the last,
But thou canst calm those griefs no more.

No more thy friendship soothes to rest
This wearied spirit tempest-toss'd;
The cares that weigh upon my breast
Are doubly felt since thou art lost.

Bright visions of ideal grace
That the young poet's dreams inflame,
Were not more lovely than thy face;
Were not more perfect than thy frame.

Wit, that no sufferings could impair,
Was thine, and thine those mental powers
Of force to chase the fiends that tear
From Fancy's hands her budding flowers.

O'er what, my angel friend, thou wert,
Dejected Memory loves to mourn;
Regretting still that tender heart,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Now withering in a distant urn.

But ere that wood of shadowy pine
Twelve times shall yon full orb behold,
This sickening heart, that bleeds for thine,
My Harriet! may like thine be cold!

FRAGMENT,

*Descriptive of the miseries of War; from a Poem
called "The Emigrants," printed in 1793.*

TO a wild mountain, whose bare summit hides
Its broken eminence in clouds; whose steeps
Are dark with woods: where the receding rocks
Are worn with torrents of dissolving snow;
A wretched woman, pale and breathless, flies,
And, gazing round her, listens to the sound
Of hostile footsteps: No! they die away
Nor noise remains, but of the cataract,
Or surly breeze of night, that mutters low
Among the thickets, where she trembling seeks
A temporary shelter Claspings close
To her quick throbbing heart her sleeping child,
All she could rescue of the innocent group
That yesterday surrounded her Escaped
Almost by miracle! Fear, frantic Fear,
Wing'd her weak feet; yet, half repenting now
Her headlong haste, she wishes she had staid
To die with those affrighted Fancy paints
The lawless soldiers' victims Hark! again
The driving tempest bears the cry of Death;
And with deep, sudden thunder, the dread sound
Of cannon vibrates on the tremulous earth;
While, bursting in the air, the murderous bomb
Glares o'er her mansion Where the splinters fall
Like scatter'd comets, its destructive path
Is mark'd by wreaths of flame! Then, overwhelm'd
Beneath accumulated horror, sinks
The desolate mourner!
The feudal chief, whose gothic battlements
Frown on the plain beneath, returning home
From distant lands, alone, and in disguise,
Gains at the fall of night his castle walls,
But, at the silent gate no porter sits
To wait his lord's admittance! In the courts
All is drear stillness! Guessing but too well
The fatal truth, he shudders as he goes
Through the mute hall; where, by the blunted light
That the dim moon through painted casement lends,

FRAGMENT,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

He sees that devastation has been there;
Then, while each hideous image to his mind
Rises terrific, o'er a bleeding corse
Stumbling he falls; another intercepts
His staggering feet All, all who used to
With joy to meet him, all his family
Lie murder'd in his way! And the day dawns
On a wild raving maniac, whom a fate
So sudden and calamitous has robb'd
Of reason; and who round his vacant walls
Screams unregarded, and reproaches Heaven!

APRIL.

GREEN o'er the copses spring's soft hues are spreading,
High wave the reeds in the transparent floods,
The oak its sear and fallow foliage shedding,
From their moss'd cradles start its infant buds.

Pale as the tranquil tide of summer's ocean,
The willow now its slender leaf unveils;
And through the sky with swiftly fleeting motion,
Driv'n by the wind, the rack of April sails.

Then, as the gust declines, the stealing showers
Fall fresh and noiseless; while at closing day
The low sun gleams on moist and half-blown flowers,
That promise garlands for approaching May.

Bless'd are yon peasant children, simply singing,
Who through the new-sprung grass rejoicing rove;
More bless'd! to whom the *time*, fond thought is bringing,
Of friends expected, or returning love.

The pensive wanderer bless'd, to whom reflection
Points out some future views that soothe his mind;
Me how unlike! whom cruel recollection
But tells of comfort I shall never find!

Hope, that on Nature's youth is still attending,
No more to me her syren song shall sing;
Never to *me* her influence extending,
Shall I again enjoy the days of Spring!

Yet, how I loved them once these scenes remind me,
When light of heart, in childhood's thoughtless mirth,
I reck'd not that the cruel lot assign'd me
Should make me curse the hour that gave me birth!

Then, from thy wild-wood banks, Aruna! roving,

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Thy thymy downs with sportive steps I sought,
And Nature's charms, with artless transport loving,
Sung, like the birds, unheeded and untaught.

But now the springtide's pleasant hours returning,
Serve to awaken me to sharper pain;
Recalling scenes of agony and mourning,
Of baffled hope and prayers preferr'd in vain.

Thus shone the sun, his vernal rays displaying,
Thus did the woods in early verdure wave,
While dire disease on all I loved was preying,
And flowers seem'd rising but to strew her grave.

Now, 'mid reviving blooms, I coldly languish,
Spring seems devoid of joy to me alone;
Each sound of pleasure aggravates my anguish,
And speaks of beauty, youth, and sweetness gone.

Yet, as stern duty bids, with faint endeavour
I drag on life, contending with my woe,
Though conscious misery still repeats, that never
My soul one pleasurable hour shall know.

Lost in the tomb, when Hope no more appeases
The fester'd wounds that prompt the eternal sigh,
Grief, the most fatal of the heart's diseases,
Soon teaches, whom it fastens on, to die.

The wretch undone, for pain alone existing,
The abject dread of death shall sure subdue,
And far from his decisive hand resisting,
Rejoice to bid a world like this, adieu.

ODE TO DEATH.

FRIEND of the wretched! wherefore should the eye
Of blank Despair, whence tears have ceased to flow,
Be turn'd from thee? Ah! wherefore fears to die
He, who compell'd each poignant grief to know,
Drains to its lowest dregs the cup of woe?

Would Cowardice postpone thy calm embrace,
To linger out long years in torturing pain?
Or not prefer thee to the ills that chase
Him, who too much impoverish'd to obtain
From British Themis *right*, implores her aid in vain!

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Sharp goading Indigence who would not fly,
That urges toil the exhausted strength above?
Or shun the *once* fond friend's *averted* eye?
Or who to *thy* asylum not remove,
To lose the wasting anguish of ungrateful love?

Can then the wounded wretch, who must deplore
What most she loved, to thy cold arms consign'd,
Who hears the voice that soothed her soul no more,
Fear *thee* , O Death! Or hug the chains that bind
To joyless, cheerless life, her sick, reluctant mind?

Oh, Misery's cure! who e'er in pale dismay
Has watch'd the angel form they could not save,
And seen their dearest blessing torn away,
May well the terrors of *thy* triumph brave,
Nor pause in fearful dread before the opening grave!

QUOTATIONS AND NOTES.

QUOTATIONS, NOTES,
AND
EXPLANATIONS.

- **SONNET I. line 13.**

Ah! then, how dear the Muse's favours cost,
If those paint sorrow best who feel it most!

"The well-sung woes shall soothe my pensive ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most."
Pope's Eloisa to Abelard, 366th line.

- **SONNET II. line 3.**

Anemonies, that spangled every grove.

Anemony Nemeroso. The wood Anemony.

- **SONNET III. line 1.**

The idea from the 43d Sonnet of Petrarch. Secondo parte. "*Quel rosignuol, che si soave piagne.*"

- **SONNET V. line 2.**

Your turf, your flowers among. "Whose turf, whose shades, whose flowers among."

QUOTATIONS AND NOTES.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

Gray.

- **Line 9.** Aruna!

The river Arun.

- **SONNET VI. line 12.**

"For me the vernal garland blooms no more."

Pope's Imit. 1st Ode 4th Book of Horace.

- **Line 13.** "Misery's love."
Shakspeare's King John.

- **SONNET VII. line 4.** "On the night's dull ear."
Shakspeare.

- **Line 5.**

Whether on Spring

alludes to the supposed migration of the nightingale.

- **Line 7.**

The pensive Muse shall own thee for her mate.

"Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate.
Both them I serve, and of their train am I."
Milton's First Sonnet.

- **SONNET VIII. line 14.**

Have power to cure all sadness but despair.

"To the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair."

Paradise Lost, Fourth Book.

- **SONNET IX. line 10.**

And laugh at tears themselves have forced to flow.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

"And hard unkindness' alter'd eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow."

Gray.

- **SONNET XI. line 4.**

Float in light vision round my aching head!

"Float in light vision round the poet's head."
Mason.

- **Line 7.**

And the poor sea boy, in the rudest hour,
Enjoys thee more than he who wears a crown.

"Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude impetuous surge?" &c.
Shakspeare's Henry IV.

- **SONNET XII. line 8.** "And suits the mournful temper of my soul."
Young.

- **SONNET XIII. line 1.** "*Pommi ove'l sol, occide i fiori e l'erba.*"
Petrarch, Sonnetto 112. Parte primo.

- **SONNET XIV. line 1.** "*Erano i capei d'oro all'aura sparsi.*"
Sonnetto 69. Parte primo.

- **SONNET XV. line 1.** "*Se lamentar augelli o verdi fronde.*"
Sonnetto 21. Parte secondo.

- **SONNET XVI. line 1.** "*Valle che de lamenti miei se piena.*"
Sonnetto 33. Parte secondo.

- **SONNET XVII. line 1.**

*"Scrivo in te l'amato nome
Di colei, per cui, mi moro."*

This is not meant as a translation; the original is much longer, and full of images, which could not be introduced in a Sonnet. And some of them, though very beautiful in the Italian, would not appear to advantage in an English dress.

- **SONNET XXI. line 5.**

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

"Poor maniac."

See the story of the lunatic.

"Is this the destiny of man? Is he only happy before he possesses his reason, or after he has lost it? Full of hope you go to gather flowers in winter, and are grieved not to find any, and do not know why they cannot be found." *Sorrows of Werter. Volume second.*

•

Line 8. "And drink delicious poison from thine eye."

Pope.

•

SONNET XXII. line 1.

"I climb steep rocks, I break my way through copses, among thorns and briars which tear me to pieces, and I feel a little relief." *Sorrows of Werter. Volume first.*

•

SONNET XXIII. line 1.

"The greater Bear, favourite of all the constellations; for when I left you of an evening it used to shine opposite your window." *Sorrows of Werter. Volume second.*

•

SONNET XXIV. line 1.

"At the corner of the church-yard which looks towards the fields, there are two lime trees it is there I wish to rest." *Sorrows of Werter. Volume second.*

•

SONNET XXV. line 1.

"May my death remove every obstacle to your happiness. Be at peace, I intreat you, be at peace." *Sorrows of Werter. Volume second.*

•

Line 11.

When worms shall feed on this devoted heart,
Where even thy image shall be found no more.

From a line in Rousseau's Eloisa.

•

SONNET XXVI. line 5. For with the infant Otway, lingering here.

Otway was born at Trotten, a village in Sussex. Of Woolbeding, another village on the banks of the Arun (which runs through them both), his father was rector. Here it was therefore that he probably passed many of his early years. The Arun is here an inconsiderable stream, winding in a channel deeply worn, among meadow, heath, and wood.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

- **SONNET XXVII. line 4.** "Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare."
Thomson.

- **SONNET XXVIII. line 9.**

"Balmy hand to bind."

Collins.

- **SONNET XXX. line 6.**

Bindwith.

The plant Clematis, Bindwith, Virgin's Bower, or Traveller's Joy, which, towards the end of June, begins to cover the hedges and sides of rocky hollows with its beautiful foliage, and flowers of a yellowish white, of an agreeable fragrance; these are succeeded by seed pods that bear some resemblance to feathers or hair, whence it is sometimes called Old Man's Beard.

- **Line 9.**

Banks, which inspired thy Otway's plaintive strain!
Wilds, whose lorn echoes learn'd the deeper tone
Of Collins' powerful shell!

Collins, as well as Otway, was a native of this country, and probably at some period of his life an inhabitant of this neighbourhood, since in his beautiful Ode on the death of Colonel Ross, he says,

"The muse shall still, with social aid,
Her gentlest promise keep;
E'en humble Harting's cottaged vale
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep."

And in the Ode to Pity;

"Wild Arun too has heard thy strains,
And Echo, 'midst thy native plains,
Been soothed with Pity's lute."

- **SONNET XXXI. line 2.**

Alpine flowers.

An infinite variety of plants are found on these hills, particularly about this spot: many sorts of Orchis and Cistus of singular beauty, with several others.

- **SONNET XXXIII. line 9.**

Thy natives. Otway, Collins, Hayley.

- **SONNET XLII. line 8.**

The shrieking night-jar sail on heavy wing.

The night-jar or night hawk, a dark bird not so big as a rook, which is frequently seen of an evening on the downs. It has a short heavy flight, then rests on the ground, and again, uttering a mournful cry, flits before the traveller, to whom its appearance is supposed by the peasants to portend misfortune. As I have never seen it dead, I know not to what species it belongs.

- **SONNET XLIV. line 7.**

Middleton is a village on the margin of the sea, in Sussex, containing only two or three houses. There were formerly several acres of ground between its small church and the sea, which now, by its continual encroachments, approaches within a few feet of this half ruined and humble edifice. The wall, which once surrounded the church-yard, is entirely swept away, many of the graves broken up, and the remains of bodies interred washed into the sea: whence human bones are found among the sand and shingles on the shore.

- **SONNET XLV. line 11.**

The enthusiast of the lyre who wander'd here.

Collins. See note to Sonnet XXX.

- **SONNET XLVI. line 8.**

But where now clamours the discordant hern.

In the park at Penshurst is a heronry. The house is at present uninhabited, and the windows of the galleries and other rooms, in which there are many invaluable pictures, are never opened but when strangers visit it.

- **Line 12.**

Algernon Sidney.

- **SONNET LI. line 4.**

Ospray.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

The sea-eagle.

•

SONNET LIV. line 12.

A sweet forgetfulness of human care.

Pope.

•

SONNET LVII. line 7.

The lark the shepherd's clock.

Shakspeare.

•

line 14.

"The mountain goddess, Liberty."

Milton.

•

SONNET LVIII. line 8.

"Star of the earth."

Dr Darwin.

•

Line 9.

"The moisten'd blade "

Walcot's beautiful Ode to the Glow-worm.

ELEGY.

This elegy is written on the supposition that an indigent young woman had been addressed by the son of a wealthy yeoman, who, resenting his attachment, had driven him from home, and compelled him to have recourse for subsistence to the occupation of a pilot, in which, in attempting to save a vessel in distress, he perished.

The father dying, a tomb is supposed to be erected to his memory in the church-yard mentioned in Sonnet XLIV. And while a tempest is gathering, the unfortunate young woman comes thither; and courting the same death as had robbed her of her lover, she awaits its violence, and is at length overwhelmed by the waves.

•

Verse 8. line 4.

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

And fruitless call on him 'who cannot hear.'

"I fruitless mourn to him who cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain."

Gray's exquisite Sonnet; in reading which it is impossible not to regret that he wrote only one.

- **THE ORIGIN OF FLATTERY.**

This little poem was written almost extempore on occasion of a conversation where many pleasant things were said on the subject of flattery; and some French gentlemen who were of the party enquired for a synonym in English to the French word *fleurette*. The poem was inserted in the two first editions, and having been asked for by very respectable subscribers to the present, it is reprinted. The Sonnets have been thought too gloomy; and the author has been advised to insert some of a more cheerful cast. This poem may by others be thought too gay, and is indeed so little in unison with the present sentiments and feelings of its author, that it had been wholly omitted but for the respectable approbation of those to whose judgment she owed implicit deference.

- **SONNET LXI. line 1.**

Ill-omen'd bird, whose cries portentous float.

This Sonnet, first inserted in the novel called the Old Manor House, is founded on a superstition attributed (vide Bertram's Travels in America) to the Indians, who believe that the cry of this night hawk (*Caprimulgus Americanus*) portends some evil, and when they are at war, assert that it is never heard near their tents or habitations but to announce the death of some brave warrior of their tribe, or some other calamity.

- **SONNET LXII.**

First published in the same work.

- **SONNET LXIII. line 1.**

O'er faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze.

The web, charged with innumerable globules of bright dew, that is frequently on heaths and commons in autumnal mornings, can hardly have escaped the observation of any lover of nature. The slender web of the field spider is again alluded to in Sonnet LXXVII.

- **SONNET LXIV.**

First printed in the novel of "The Banished Man."

- **SONNET LXV.**

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To the excellent friend and physician to whom these lines are addressed, I was obliged for the kindest attention, and for the recovery from one dangerous illness, of that beloved child whom a few months afterwards his skill and most unremitting and disinterested exertions could not save!

- **SONNET LXVI.**

Written on the coast of Sussex during very tempestuous weather in December 1791, but first published in the novel of Montalbert.

- **SONNET LXVII.**

Printed in the same work.

- **SONNET LXX. line 11.**

He has "no nice felicities that shrink." " 'Tis delicate felicity that shrinks
When rocking winds are loud."
Walpole.

- **SONNET LXXII. line 1.**

Thee! "lucid arbiter 'twixt day and night."

Milton.

- **SONNET LXXIII. line 5.**

"Wilt thou yet murmur at a misplaced leaf?"

From a story (I know not where told) of a fastidious being, who, on a bed of rose leaves, complained that his or her rest was destroyed because one of those leaves was doubled.

- **SONNET LXXIV. line 1.**

"Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care."

Shakspeare.

- **Line 5.**

Murmuring I hear
The hollow wind around the ancient towers.

These lines were written in a residence among ancient public buildings.

- **SONNET LXXV.**

First published in the novel of Marchmont.

- **SONNET LXXVI. line 5.**

The base control
Of petty despots in their pedant reign
Already hast thou felt;

This was not addressed to my son, who suffered with many others in an event which will long be remembered by those parents who had sons at a certain public school, in 1793, but to another young man, not *compelled* as he was, in consequence of that dismissal, to abandon the fairest prospects of his future life.

- **SONNET LXXVII. line 1.**

Small, viewless aeronaut, &c. &c.

The almost imperceptible threads floating in the air, towards the end of summer or autumn, in a still evening, sometimes are so numerous as to be felt on the face and hands. It is on these that a minute species of spider convey themselves from place to place; sometimes rising with the wind to a great height in the air. Dr Lister, among other naturalists, remarked these insects. "To fly they cannot strictly be said, they being carried into the air by external force; but they can, in case the wind suffer them, steer their course, perhaps mount and descend at pleasure: and to the purpose of rowing themselves along in the air, it is observable that they ever take their flight backwards, that is, their head looking a contrary way like a sculler upon the Thames. It is scarcely credible to what height they will mount; which is yet precisely true, and a thing easily to be observed by one that shall fix his eye some time on any part of the heavens, the white web, at a vast distance, very distinctly appearing from the azure sky. But this is in autumn only, and that in very fair and calm weather." *From the Encyclop. Britan.*

Dr Darwin, whose imagination so happily applies every object of natural history to the purposes of poetry, makes the goddess of Botany thus direct her Sylphs

"Thin clouds of Gossamer in air display,
And hide the vale's chaste lily from the ray."

These filmy threads form a part of the equipage of Mab:

"Her waggon spokes are made of spiders' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The traces of the smallest spider's web."

Juliet, too, in anxiously waiting for the silent arrival of her lover, exclaims,

" Oh! so light of foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint;
A lover may bestride the gossamer

Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems

That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall "

•

SONNET LXXIX.

To the goddess of Botany.

"Rightly to spell,"

as Milton wishes, in *Il Penseroso* ,

"Of every herb that sips the dew,"

seems to be a resource for the sick at heart for those who, from sorrow or disgust, may without affectation say

"Society is nothing to one not sociable!"

and whose wearied eyes and languid spirits find relief and repose amid the shades of vegetable nature. *I* cannot now turn to any other pursuit that for a moment soothes my wounded mind.

"Je pris gout a cette récreation des yeux, qui dans l'infortune, repose, amuse, distraît l'esprit, et suspend le sentiment des peines."

Thus speaks the singular, the unhappy Rousseau, when in his "Promenades" he enumerates the causes that drove him from the society of men, and occasioned his pursuing with renewed avidity the study of Botany. "I was," says he, "*Forcé de m'abstenir de penser, de peur de penser a mes malheurs malgré moi; forcé de contenir les restes d'une imagination riante, mais languissante, que tant d'angoisses pourroient effaroucher a la fin* "

Without any pretensions to these talents which were in him so heavily taxed with that excessive irritability, too often, if not always the attendant on genius, it has been my misfortune to have endured real calamities that have disqualified me for finding any enjoyment in the pleasures and pursuits which occupy the generality of the world. I have been engaged in contending with persons whose cruelty has left so painful an impression on my mind, that I may well say "*Brillantes fleurs, émail des pres, ombrages frais, bosquets, verdure, venez purifier mon imagination de teus ces hideux objets!* "

Perhaps, if any situation is more pitiable than that which compels us to wish to escape from the common business and forms of life, it is that where the sentiment is forcibly felt, while it cannot be indulged; and where the sufferer, chained down to the discharge of duties from which the wearied spirit recoils, feels like the wretched Lear, when Shakspeare makes him exclaim

"Oh! I am bound upon a wheel of fire,
Which my own tears do scald like melted lead."

•

SONNET LXXX.

To the Invisible Moon.

I know not whether this is correctly expressed I suspect that it is not. What I mean, however, will surely be understood I address the Moon when not visible at night in our hemisphere.

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"The sun to me is dark,
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her secret interlunar cave."

Milton, Samps. Agon.

•

SONNET LXXXI.

First printed in a publication for the use of young persons, called "Rambles Farther."

•

Line 6.

Where *briony* and woodbine fringe the trees.

Briony, *Bryonia dioica, foliis palmatis, &c.* White Briony, growing plentifully in woods and hedges, and twisting around taller plants.

•

Line 8.

"Murmur their fairy tunes in praise of flowers,"

a line taken, I *believe*, from a poem called "Vacuna," printed in Dodsley's collection.

•

SONNET LXXXII.

To the Shade of Burns.

Whoever has tasted the charm of original genius so evident in the composition of this genuine poet,

A poet "of nature's own creation,"

cannot surely fail to lament his unhappy life, (latterly passed, as I have understood, in an employment to which such a mind as his must have been averse,) nor his premature death. For one, herself made the object of *subscription*, is it proper to add, that whoever *has* thus been delighted with the wild notes of the Scottish bard, must have a melancholy pleasure in relieving by their benevolence, the unfortunate family he has left?

•

Line 14.

"Enjoys the liberty it loved " *Pope.*

•

SONNET LXXXIII. line 1.

The upland shepherd, as reclined he lies.

Suggested by the recollection of having seen, some years since, on a beautiful evening of summer, an engagement between two armed ships, from the high Down called the Beacon Hill, near Brighthelmstone.

- **SONNET LXXXIV. line 15.**

Haply may'st thou one sorrowing vigil keep,
Where Pity and Remembrance *bend and weep*.

"Where melancholy friendship bends and weeps."

Gray.

- **THE DEAD BEGGAR.**

I have been told that I have incurred blame for having used in this short composition, terms that have become obnoxious to certain persons. Such remarks are hardly worth notice; and it is very little my ambition to obtain the suffrage of those who suffer party prejudice to influence their taste; or of those who desire that because they have themselves done it, every one else should be willing to sell their best birth-rights, the liberty of thought, and of expressing thought, for the *promise* of a mess of pottage.

It is surely not too much to say, that in a country like ours, where such immense sums are annually raised for the poor, there ought to be some regulation which should prevent any miserable deserted being from perishing through want, as too often happens to such objects as that on whose interment these stanzas were written.

It is somewhat remarkable that a circumstance exactly similar is the subject of a short poem called the Pauper's Funeral, in a volume lately published by Mr Southey.

- **THE FEMALE EXILE.**

This little poem, of which a sketch first appeared in blank verse in a poem called "The Emigrants," was suggested by the sight of the group it attempts to describe a French lady and her children. The drawing from which the print is taken I owe to the taste and talents of a lady, whose pencil has bestowed the highest honor this little book can boast.

- **OCCASIONAL ADDRESS.
WRITTEN FOR A PLAYER.
Line 4.**

The becca-fica seeks Italian groves,
No more a wheat-ear

From an idea that the wheat-ear of the southern Downs is the becca-fica of Italy. I doubt it; but have no books that give me any information on the subject.

- **Page 58. line 22.**

A hero now, and now a *sans culotte* .

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At this time little else was talked of.

•

Last line.

For though he plough the sea when others sleep,
He draws, like Glendower, spirits from the deep.

"*Glen* . I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
Hotsp . But will they come when you do call for them?"

Shakespeare.

The *spirits* that animate the night voyages of the Sussex fishermen are often sunk in their kegs, on any alarm from the Custom–House officers; and being attached to a buoy, the adventurers go out when the danger of detection is over, and draw them up. A coarse sort of white brandy which they call *moonshine* , is a principal article of this illegal commerce.

•

Page 59. line 16.

His lisping children hail their sire's return.

"No children run to lisp their sire's return."

Gray.

•

Line 20.

And the campaign concludes, perhaps, at Horsham.

At Horsham is the county jail.

•

Line 24.

And soft, celestial mercy, doubly bless'd.

"It is twice blessed,
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Shakspeare.

•

DESCRIPTIVE ODE.

The singular scenery here attempted to be described, is almost the only part of this rock of stones worth seeing. On a high broken cliff hang the ruins of some very ancient building, which the people of the island call Bow and Arrow Castle, or Rufus' Castle. Beneath, but still high above the sea, are the half–fallen arches and pillars of an old church, and around are scattered the remains of tomb–stones, and

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almost obliterated memorials of the dead. These verses were written for, and first inserted in, a Novel, called Marchmont; and the close alludes to the circumstance of the story related in the Novel.

•

VERSES

*Supposed to have been written in the New Forest
in early Spring.*

These are from the Novel of Marchmont.

Line 1.

As in the woods where leathery lichen weaves
Its wintry web among the fallow leaves.

Mosses and lichens are the first efforts of Nature to clothe the earth: as they decay, they form an earth that affords nourishment to the larger and more succulent vegetables: several species of lichen are found in the woods, springing up among the dead leaves, under the drip of forest trees; these, and the withered foliage of preceding years, afford shelter to the earliest wild flowers about the skirts of woods, and in hedge-rows and copses.

The Pile-wort (*Ranuncula Ficaria*) and the Wood Anemone (*Anemone Nemerosa*) or Windflower, blow in the woods and copses. Of this latter beautiful species there is in Oxfordshire a blue one, growing wild, (*Anemone pratensis pedunculo involucreto, petalis apice reflexis foliis bipinnatis* Lin. Sp. Pl. 760.) It is found in Whichwood Forest, near Cornbury quarry. (*Vide Flora Oxoniensis*). I do not mention this by way of exhibiting botanical knowledge (so easy to possess in appearance) but because I never saw the Blue Anemone wild in any other place, and it is a flower of singular beauty and elegance.

•

Line 11.

Uncultured bells of azure Jacynths blow.

Hyacinthus non scriptus a Hare-bell.

•

Line 12.

And the breeze-scenting Violet lurks below.

To the Violet there needs no note, it being like the nightingale and the rose, in *constant requisition* by the poets.

•

SONG.

FROM THE FRENCH.

A free translation of a favourite French song.

*"Un jour me demandoit Hortense
Ou se trouve le tendre amour?"*

- **APOSTROPHE
TO AN OLD TREE.**

The philosophy of these few lines may not be very correct, since mosses are known to injure the stems and branches of trees to which they adhere; but the images of Poetry cannot always be exactly adjusted to objects of Natural History.

- **Line 4.**

fronds of studded moss.

The foliage, if it may be so called, of this race of plants, is termed fronds; and their flowers, or fructification, assume the shapes of cups and shields; of those of this description, more particularly adhering to trees, is *Lichen Pulmonarius* ; Lungwort Lichen, with *shields* ; the *Lichen Caperatus* , with red cups; and many others which it would look like pedantry to enumerate.

- **Line 9.**

The Woodbine and the Clematis are well known plants, ornamenting our hedge-rows in summer with fragrant flowers.

- **Line 12.**

Nightshade, (*Solanum Lignosum*) woody Nightshade, is one of the most beautiful of its tribe.

- **Line 13.**

The silver weed, whose corded fillets wove.

The silver weed, *Convolvulus Major* (Raii Syn. 275) or greater Bind-weed, which, however the beauty of the flowers may enliven the garden or the wilds, is so prejudicial to the gardener and farmer that it is seen by them with dislike equal to the difficulty of extirpating it from the soil. Its cord-like stalks, plaited together, can hardly be forced from the branches round which they have twined themselves.

- **THE FOREST BOY.**

Late circumstances have given rise to many mournful histories like this, which may well be said to be founded in truth! *I* , who have been so sad a sufferer in this miserable contest, may well *endeavour* to associate myself with those who apply what powers they have to deprecate the horrors of war. Gracious God! will mankind never be reasonable enough to understand that all the miseries which our condition subjects us to, are light in comparison of what we bring upon ourselves, by indulging the folly and wickedness of those who make nations destroy each other for *their* diversion, or to administer to their senseless ambition.

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If the stroke of war
Fell certain on the guilty head, none else
If they that make the cause might taste th' effect,
And drink themselves the bitter cup they mix;
Then might the bard (the child of peace) delight
To twine fresh wreaths around the conqueror's brow;
Or haply strike his high-toned harp, to swell
The trumpet's martial sound, and bid them on
When *Justice* arms for vengeance; but, alas!
That undistinguishing and deathful storm
Beats heaviest on the exposed and innocent;
And they that stir its fury, while it raves,
Safe and at distance, send their mandates forth
Unto the mortal ministers that wait
To do their bidding!

Crowe.

I have in these stanzas, entitled the Forest Boy, attempted the measure so successfully adopted in one of the poems of a popular novel, and so happily imitated by Mr Southey in "Poor Mary."

• **ODE TO THE POPPY.**

This and the following poem were written (the first of them at my request, for a Novel) by a lady whose death in her thirty-sixth year was a subject of the deepest concern to all who knew her.

Would to God the last line which *my* regret on that loss, drew from me, had been prophetic and that *my* heart had indeed been cold, instead of having suffered within the next twelve months after that line was written, a deprivation which has rendered *my* life a living death.

• **APRIL.**

Line 4.

From their moss'd cradles, &c.

The oak, and, in sheltered situations, the beech, retain the leaves of the preceding year till the new foliage appears.

The return of the spring, which awakens many to new sentiments of pleasure, now serves only to remind *me* of past misery.

This sensation is common to the wretched and too many poets have felt it in all its force.

*"Zefiro torno, e'l bel tempo rimena,
E i fiori, e l'erbe, sua dolce famiglia; &c. &c.
"Ma per me lasso!"*

Petrarch on the Death of Laura.

And these lines of Guarini have always been celebrated.

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*"O primavera gioventù dell' anno,
Bella madre di fiori
D'erbe noveile e di novelli amori;
Tu torni ben, ma teco
Non tornano i sereni
E fortunati di, delle mie gioje;
Tu torni ben, tu torni,
Ma teco altro non torna
Che del perduto mio caro tesoro,
La rimembranza misera e dolente."*

•

ODE TO DEATH.

From the following sentence in Lord Bacon's Essays.

"Death is no such formidable enemy, since a man has so many champions about him that can win the combat of him Revenge triumphs over Death; Love slights it; Honour courts it; dread of Disgrace chooses it; Grief flies to it; Fear anticipates it."

THE END.
