

The Project Gutenberg eBook of An Essay on War, in Blank Verse; Honington Green, a Ballad; the Culprit, an Elegy; and Other Poems, on Various Subjects, by Nathaniel Bloomfield

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN ESSAY ON WAR, IN BLANK VERSE; HONINGTON GREEN, A BALLAD; THE CULPRIT, AN ELEGY; AND OTHER POEMS, ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS ***

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**AN ESSAY ON WAR, IN BLANK VERSE;
HONINGTON GREEN, A BALLAD;
THE CULPRIT, AN *ELEGY*;
AND
OTHER POEMS, ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS:
BY
NATHANIEL BLOOMFIELD.
1803.**

Transcriber's Note: The page headers in the original text contained one-line summaries of what appears on that page within each poem. Due to the difficulty of interleaving these lines without completely disrupting the flow of the poetry, they have been collected and placed in a single square-bracketed paragraph at the start of each poem, and separated by em-dashes.

PREFACE.

Whoever has read the *Preface* to the FARMER'S BOY will hardly fail of recollecting the Name of NATHANIEL BLOOMFIELD; the Author of the POEMS here offer'd to The Public.

It will be recollected that he there appears, with his Brother GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, standing in the place of the Father, whom they had early lost, to their younger Brother ROBERT.

It is natural to suppose that this brotherly interference, and its consequences, greatly and advantageously influenc'd the dispositions, pursuits, and habits of thought and conduct, of all three of the Brothers.—And it is the more exemplary when it is consider'd how young the two eldest were at that time.

It is an encouraging instance how much may be effected for each other by the poor and uneducated, if they have prudence, activity, and kind affections; and how unexpectedly, and to an extent far beyond apparent probability, success is given by Providence to virtuous and benevolent efforts.

Beyond question, the Brothers of this Family are all extraordinary Men: and perhaps every one of them is more so than he would have been without the fraternal concord which has animated them all, and multiplied the powers of all by union and sympathy.

Of NATHANIEL, as of ROBERT, my Account shall be taken from communications by Letter, made at my request by Mr. GEORGE BLOOMFIELD.

NATHANIEL BLOOMFIELD was born 23d Feb.¹ 1759.

He was the 3d Child and 2d Son of GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, of *Honington*: and was deprived of his Father, by the Small-pox, when he was *eight* years old. Like ROBERT, he learnt to read and write of his MOTHER: and had, like him, his farther instructions in *Writing*, and was taught the first Rules of *Arithmetic*, by Mr. RODWELL, of *Ixworth*²: where also he seems to have had some instruction in *Grammar*. But his Mother being then a *widow*, his Grandfather (Mr. ROBIN MANBY) kindly bound him Apprentice to Mr. HAYLETT, a *Tailor* of *Market-Harling*: of which business the Father of the BLOOMFIELDS had been.

He was here very kindly treated: and was found to be an excellent Apprentice.

While here he learnt *Church Music*, (one of the great consolations of energetic and pensive minds) and sung in a company which was conducted by Mr. SYDER. But when his voice broke, he could make no figure among them: for it was not only a Bass of extremely narrow compass, but *weak* and *tremulous*.

This latter defect of voice was observ'd in THOMSON: and perhaps it may arise sometimes not from a fault in the natural quality of the voice, but from exceeding sensibility to *Poetry* and *Music*.

When about 16 or 17 years of age he entered with the fervor of a vigorous and thoughtful mind into the study of *Religion*, on the principles of the *Church of England*: and added to his study of it what is the great end, the *practice* of Religion as a rule of conduct and life.

At a stall at *Harling Fair* he met with a *Practical Catechism*: the Author's name, PRATT: and at the same time he made the acquisition of a large volume of TILLOTSON'S Sermons. Probably the Folio Edition of the Sermons of that excellent Man and *Writer*: so distinguish'd by his Piety, uniform, mild, and rational; the morality of his excellent Discourses; their simplicity and clearness; and the sweetness and persuasiveness of manner. These, and other religious Tracts, he bought: and "the last" (*Tillotson*) "he lent," says Mr. GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, "to me. I receiv'd many excellent Letters from him on that subject: and they had greater weight on my mind than if they had been written by an elder hand."

When his *Apprenticeship* expir'd he came to LONDON: and expected to find his Brother GEORGE there. But GEORGE had taken a trip, "or tramp, as it is called," into *Kent*. They however soon met in LONDON: "and there never lived" (adds GEORGE) "a more pleasant acquaintance than he prov'd."

It was some years before he could procure work in LONDON sufficient to support him through the *dead* Months. He us'd therefore, when he found trade dull in Town, to go into the Country.

And thus, while at *Woolwich*, he became acquainted with CHARLOTTE NOBLE, whom he MARRIED 4th March, 1787; he being then in his 28th, and she in her 17th year. Her Mother was a Widow: who kept a small General Shop. Her Brother-in-law GEORGE, in speaking of this union, says, "There perhaps never liv'd a Woman who possess'd a better temper: and he has, though very poor, been exceedingly happy." For myself, I wish, in transcribing this account, that those who think riches so essential to happiness that they will take no step in life, nor suffer their hearts or their understandings to have any influence with them, if the acquisition of riches seems likely to be delayed or endanger'd, would consider that the Family of the BLOOMFIELDS has been happy, and has excell'd, upon very different principles. And if we would compare the thousands in every situation of Life to whom what is called *prosperity* is a snare, a burthen and a curse, with those who are happy with mere necessaries, and those with difficulty obtain'd; ... happy by their Affections and their Virtues; by improv'd and generous and tender Feelings; by Hope amid difficulties, and Confidence in Heaven amid trials and distresses, ... it might be seen and felt that there is more of folly in the wisdom of the world, than those who place Wisdom in the accumulation of superfluities, to the neglect of the most natural Blessings, and often in violation of the clearest Duties, either of *Justice* or of *Benevolence*, may be willing to acknowledge.

He has *two* Children living:—ELIZABETH; born 11th *Jul.* 1789; GEORGE; 4th *Febr.* 1797. "He lost," adds his Brother, "two sweet Boys: who both died within a few days of each other, by that dreadful disease the SMALL-POX;" which, while this Preface was in the Press, has been fatal to another promising Child, THOMAS; born *Aug.* 1799. The Father, oppress'd with grief, reproaches himself for not having inoculated this Child with the Small-Pox. But when it is consider'd how formidable, after two such Losses, the SMALL-POX in any form must appear to affectionate Parents, I think it will be evident that he is too severe to himself in this reproach. The inoculated SMALL-POX is sometimes fatal: had he inoculated the Child he would have reproach'd himself, and still with more feeling than justice, for so doing.

He had read but little Poetry when he came to LONDON: but he had not been long there before he was struck, looking, as was his custom, at Books on a stall, with the Title of NIGHT THOUGHTS. "He had never heard of it before: but its name was an irresistible charm to his melancholy, enquiring mind. This has been ever his favourite Book. He would

have bought it had it been double the price. And as he possesses an uncommonly retentive memory, he us'd to repeat great part of it by rote in his walks with his Brothers. He afterwards read MILTON."

Such a Memory, and the study of two such Authors with poetic enthusiasm, may in part account for what exceedingly surpriz'd me in reading the MSS. of THE ESSAY ON WAR:—a greater mastery in the mechanism, and greater power of numbers, than I should have almost thought possible in the first attempt in BLANK VERSE; even to a person of the best education.

He read too, GOLDSMITH and FIELDING. And he added to these some of our English Poets as they fell in his way. Among these THOMSON could hardly fail to be: but Mr. G. BLOOMFIELD remarks, "he never was so struck with THOMSON as I should have expected."

While single, he made it the amusement of his evenings to read *Entick's Dictionary*, and write down every word of which he wish'd to remember the spelling or the meaning. He has often said that since his buying of the Sermons in his early youth, he had never bought for his own reading any but *poetical* Books: and when he could get hold of any miscellaneous Book, he read first the Poetry, and after look'd at no other part.

With this turn of Mind and habit of reading, that he has through Life indulg'd in poetical effusions will be no matter of surprize. But he has more than once said to his Brother GEORGE in Letters, that it was the success of ROBERT that encouraged him to attempt an *Essay on War*: a subject on which he had occupied his thoughts a great length of time.

"I remember," says his Brother, "nothing particular of his infancy: except the great share of bashfulness (or, as a Philosopher perhaps would say, pride) which he possess'd in common with the rest of the Family.... Exceedingly mild in his temper and kind to his play-mates, he was very apt in learning."

For the last 15 years his own Account is that he has certainly read but little: his Family having claim'd his utmost exertions; and his business allowing little leisure. And what leisure he had being generally employed in walking with his Children. Untill last Summer he was a *Journeyman* Tailor: but has since been a MASTER in a small way. If therefore he appears to possess any knowledge of a literary nature, it must be all from the stores of Memory.

He at present lives at No. 19, *Dagget Court, Broker Row, Moorfields, London*. He is (says Mr. G. BLOOMFIELD) about 5F. 3I. high³: of a dark complexion, and dark gray eyes: he has lost the hair from the top of his head, which gives him the appearance of Age. Though remarkable for talking little, so as to have the name of a man of few words, he is, on occasion, a cheerful companion: and though generally pensive and melancholy, ever kind-hearted.

"As a Husband and Father, his character is certainly exemplary. And few men pass through Life so smoothly. Though commonly working with a number of shop-mates, he has such a philosophical command of temper, that he never disputes; nor concerns himself with the disputes of others, unless they refer to him for a decision."

Thus far the Account by his Brother: who had observ'd in a former Letter, that with respect to *Temper*, what he should otherwise have to speak of NATHANIEL, he had in a great measure said already of ROBERT. Such a coincidence in mild and simple manners, amiable and good disposition, is pleasing to remark any where: and additionally so when it relates to Men who have each original and characteristic Genius; and when the testimony is given by a Brother so capable of judging, and who has had such continued experience from their very early Life, of the Disposition and Character of both.

Having spoken thus far of the AUTHOR, from the best authority, it remains for me to say something briefly of these his WORKS.

Early in the *Spring* of 1801, I saw in MSS. HONINGTON-GREEN, and the ESSAY ON WAR⁴. I communicated them to Mr. GEDGE, *Printer*, of BURY; who had been a zealous and active Friend to THE FARMER'S BOY: on reading them, he wanted no time for deliberation, but offer'd at once to print them for the benefit of the Author, at his own risque. I had known his accuracy as a Printer: of which, and of neat Typography, I flatter myself this Publication will be a proof. I had no difficulty to adopt the proposal: and gladly offer'd, on my part, what little preparation (very little indeed it was) might be necessary of the MSS. for the Press; (or rather in it's progress through it); and to revise and correct the Proofs.

My province has been quite of a similar kind in this instance as it was in that of Mr. ROBERT BLOOMFIELD: little corrections, in point of Orthography; and still fewer of Grammar: sometimes of Diction; and sometimes of Versification. For some of the best of these emendations I have been indebted to one, in mentioning of whom I should have had an affectionate Pride: and have more in that Modesty which forbids the mention. They are, as I have said, few of any kind: For of emendations I have been anxiously sparing. Little was requisite: and more than was so would have been blameable. I rely on the original MSS. being preserv'd: which on this, as on the former occasion, will speak for itself.

I have said what I thought of THE FARMER'S BOY. It is a truly agricultural Poem: it's originality and vivid representation of immediate Nature manifest themselves in the whole Design, and in every page. It will live with the works of HESIOD and THEOCRITUS; of VIRGIL and THOMSON. I was nearly as much assur'd of this from the first, and so express'd myself, as the event could assure me. I will now say with the same freedom what I think of the ESSAY ON WAR.

I regard it as a Poem of extraordinary vigor and originality: in Thought, Plan, Conduct, Language, and Versification. I think it has much indeed of the philosophic character, poetic spirit, force of coloring, energy and pathos, which distinguish LUCRETIUS. Of the justness and spirit of the VERSIFICATION I have already spoken.

The PRINCIPLE of the ESSAY ON WAR appears to me, I will own, more paradoxical than I should think, to judge from their conduct, it can appear to the ruling part at least of Mankind in general. I indulge the hope and expectation that

WAR shall one day be universally and finally extinguish'd. But I will confess also, that appearances would tempt us to apprehend that day is far distant. And while we make War for Sport on useful, generous, inoffensive Animals, it is not easy to imagine that we shall cease to make War on one another.

But whether the Principle of the Poem be well or ill-founded, I can hardly imagine any abstract proposition to be more poetically, more forcibly, or more comprehensively maintain'd. And I am either ignorant wherein Genius consists, or it is manifest in the Idea, the Style and Numbers, the Design and Conduct of this Poem.

Of HONINGTON GREEN I am to speak next. And here it may be right to obviate some prejudice against the Poem, which, in the minds of several, may arise from the subject. I am not an Enemy to Enclosures: if the RIGHTS and INTERESTS of the POOR, and of SMALL OWNERS, be very carefully guarded, an ENCLOSURE may be a common Benefit. However, it is very liable to become otherwise. But be an Enclosure good or bad, (and every Man has a right to his opinion, and to support it by argument, on this subject and every other) there are particular circumstances and considerations which stand clear of the scope of the general question. The Spot which is the subject of the Ballad is less, I believe, than Half an Acre. It did certainly ornament the Village; independent of a just and laudable partiality in the Author. Thus it would have seem'd to the casual glance of a stranger. To the BLOOMFIELDS every circumstance gave it peculiar endearment. There the Author of 'THE FARMER'S BOY,' and of these POEMS, first drew breath. There grew the first Daisies which their feet pressed in childhood. On this little Green their Parents look'd with delight: and the Children caught the affection; and learn'd to love it as soon as they lov'd any thing. By it's smallness and it's situation it was no object: and could have been left out of Enclosure without detriment to the General Plan, or to any individual Interest. I wish it had: and most who love Poetry, and respect Genius, and are anxious to preserve the little innocent Gratifications of the Poor, will have the same wish.

As a poetical effusion, it strikes me that it has the tone, simplicity, and sweetness, and pleasing Melancholy of the Ballad. There is a stroke or two of indignant severity: but the general character is such as I have describ'd. And with filial Gratitude and Love there is blended, in the close, that turn for Reflection which is so remarkable in this Author.... I wish'd and recommended that some at least of the ornaments of 'THE FARMER'S BOY' should be sketches of *local scenery*: knowing how much more interesting they would have been, and how much more appropriate to the Poem. In that recommendation I was not successful: but I am glad, in this instance, to see a faithful and agreeable Sketch of *Honington-Green* from a very young pencil⁵. It will be remember'd, at a far remote Period, that the double Cottage at the end of the Green was the Birth-place of the BLOOMFIELDS. It is still, (and may it yet be long so) the habitation of their *Mother*: and has been repair'd lately by ROBERT. And I much doubt whether any House or Green will see two such Poets born of the same Parents.

THE CULPRIT is the next in this Collection, and I had not seen it, nor was it written, when I saw the two first. They decided my Opinion; and had no more appeared, they would have been publish'd alone; as they abundantly deserved.

THE CULPRIT strikes me as an original and highly affecting Poem. The very attempt to sketch the successive conflicting feelings of one thus circumstanc'd is no common effort. And what compass of thought; what energy of expression! ... I do not always admit the justness of the arguments. But it is a Soliloquy in *character*: and in judging of it, as in all pieces of *representative* Poetry (as Mr. DYER, in his lately publish'd ESSAY has well term'd it) the imagin'd situation ought to be consider'd. And it strikes me as closing with a true and awful Pathos: not often equall'd.

The YORKSHIRE DIP is, I think, the result of that active but melancholy Fancy, which can travel far into views of Life and Nature from a slight occasion. It has a mixture of the Sportive which deepens the impression of it's melancholy Close. I could have wish'd, as I have said in a short Note, the Conclusion had been otherwise. The sours of Life less offend my Taste than its sweets delight it. But when I think what NATHANIEL must have felt in passing through Life, I more respect the Chearfulness and habitual Vigor of his Mind, than I am dispos'd to be out of humor with occasional gloom.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH differs as much in manner as in subject from those which precede it. Yet a vein of pensive and philosophic thought flows here also. The SONG OF BALDWIN is well adapted to soothe the fears and the discontents of Poverty: and to convince those who have not learnt it, that wealth, and rank, and power, and unlimited indulgence, are not such Blessings as they are imagin'd to be at a distance: nor Poverty such an Evil, that the first and best Blessings of Nature should be therefore thrown aside in despair.

I may doubt on the *expediency* of the SONG OF BALDWIN being in a different measure; but I can not doubt of the general merit of the Poem.

The PROVERBS, like other compositions of this kind, must rest chiefly on their moral Justness, Utility, Simplicity, and Conciseness, rather than on poetic Excellence: though neither in form nor coloring are they deficient of that compos'd and grave Beauty which the Nature of the Subject and Composition admits.

MORE BREAD AND CHEESE contains the Principle of the ESSAY ON WAR, and of a celebrated ESSAY ON POPULATION, which I dare say the Author never saw. It is strong, characteristic; and original: and although in the measure of the *humorous* Ballad, has much nerve and energy⁶.

I have now a Remark to make which relates generally to the Versification. We may observe of HONINGTON GREEN, and most of the Poems in rhyme in this Collection, that they are strongly accentuated: and if read with a close attention to accent and emphasis, the rhythm is musical and energetic; where to a careless Reader it might appear harsh and untuneable.

The LYRIC ELEGY which concludes this little Collection is, I think, animated and pathetic in no common degree. On the Merits of VACCINE INOCULATION I do not think myself qualify'd to offer an opinion. Great Doubts have been entertain'd concerning it by *medical* Men of Abilities and Experience. Objections apparently strong were urg'd; and of various kinds. At present it has had Declarations in it's favor from among the most distinguish'd of it's Opposers. And it

seems to have little short of a general reception in the *medical World*.... Time and Experience, the great Test of Truth in such instances, must determine for or against it. But, important as the Question is, poetical Merit is comparatively independent on the correctness of a philosophic System or Hypothesis. And reflecting on his former Losses and present Calamities, the Author could not but feel a deep Interest in whatever seem'd likely to obviate such an Evil to others.

I have observ'd some rather striking *coincidences* with VIRGIL and LUCRETIUS. I might have pointed out more; and to other *classic* Authors. But I should have extended this Preface too far. At the same time, such a concurrence in the Sentiments and Expressions of Genius in very distant Ages, and under widely different Circumstances, is always interesting, even where it can be resolv'd with Certainty, or Probability, into IMITATION: and much more so, when, as in these Poems, it is certain that it CAN NOT.

I have very few Words more to say in presenting this little Volume to the PUBLIC. Specimens they will find in it of such different kinds of Composition, as the same individual rarely can attempt with success. Yet through great diversity of Style, Dissimilarity of Measure, and Variety of Sentiment and Subject, may be seen the same Mind: and Traces of the same Manner, and that manner peculiarly characteristic...a mixture of contemplative equanimity, of incidental gleams of vivacity; of energy frequently pathetic, sometimes sarcastic, and not seldom sublime. And we have here an additional proof, that a true poetic Spirit, in whatever Breast it inhabits, will create Thoughts, Language, and Numbers, worthy of the Muse, however unfavourable the occupation and habits of Life.

Mr. NATHANIEL BLOOMFIELD was not without his fears, however, lest it should be thought, that, although THE MUSE can visit a SHEPHERD'S BOY, there may be some employments which exclude her influence. That a TAYLOR should be a POET, he doubted, might appear too startling an Assertion. And he had said accordingly to his Brother GEORGE, in a Letter, when this Publication was first going to Press, "I want you to exclude the word *Taylor*. Let there be no such Word in the Book. But perhaps I am too late. I know there is in the public Mind as great contempt for him who bears the appellation of *Taylor*, as STERNE has made old SHANDY have for SIMKIN, NECKEY, or TRISTRAM. How many CAESARS and POMPEYS, says he, by mere inspiration of the names, have been rendered worthy of them? And how many are there who might have done exceedingly well in the World, had not their Characters and Spirits been totally depress'd and *Nicodemiz'd*; and I will add (says Mr. N. BLOOMFIELD) *taylor'd* into nothing? In the REHEARSAL, the Author, to make the most ridiculous part of it still more ridiculous, tells us, that it was written to a *Taylor*, and by a *Taylor's Wife*. And even the discerning SPECTATOR has given into this common-place raillery in the Monkey's Letter to her Mistress. He has made the Soul which inhabited Pug's Body, in recounting the humiliating State it had formerly been in, say, that he had been a *Taylor*, a Shrimp, and a Tom-tit. It is from these causes, as well as from the habits and appearance contracted by a recluse and sedentary Life, that, in the enlighten'd, as well as the ignorant, the ideas of *Taylor* and *Insignificance* are inseparably link'd together."

I prevail'd, notwithstanding, that this word, whose *anti-poetic* influence is so dreaded, should be in the Book. About half a Century ago, there seem'd a degree of incredulity as to the possibility of Courage in a *Taylor*. ELLIOT'S LIGHT HORSE, at that time compos'd of *Taylor-Volunteers*. effectually overcame that prejudice. It remain'd to dissolve another still more irrational prepossession, that a *Taylor cannot be a Poet*. And this Volume will be a victorious Host against an Army of such Prejudices. Indeed the Force is greater than such a Combat requires: for stubborn as other Prejudices may still be, our literary Prejudices have, in this Age, been rapidly giving way to Candour, Reason, Common-Sense, and the Evidence of Fact. We have long known that a Scotch *Plough-Boy* and a *Milk-Woman*⁷ could still be Poets of high and almost singular Excellence. And if Improbability were any thing against Fact, it would be far more improbable, that two Brothers should be such Poets as ROBERT and NATHANIEL BLOOMFIELD are, than that a Taylor should be a Poet. It remains then for Prejudice to vanish like Mists before the Sun: while the two BROTHERS sociably ascend PARNASSUS together; higher than ever Brothers have climbed before: I might add, each of them to an height which but few have ever reach'd⁸.

CAPEL LOFFT.
Troston-Hall, 2 Jan: 1803.

Footnote 1: [\(return\)](#)

I had said, and certainly upon full authority, 23rd April; which the Author his-self believ'd to be the Day: and had remarked accordingly it was a Day distinguish'd by the *Birth* and *Death* of SHAKESPERE. But Mr. N. BLOOMFIELD discover'd and immediately communicated the mistake as to the Day. Thus we lose an interesting coincidence: but we gain what is of greater value; a just and prompt sacrifice to truth and candor. C.L.

Footnote 2: [\(return\)](#)

Who is mention'd in the *Preface to the Farmer's Boy*. C.L.

Footnote 3: [\(return\)](#)

If "*True natural Greatness all consists in height*," the Family of the *Bloomfields*, is most unfortunate. The Father Mr. *George Bloomfield* had 2 Inches less of this Greatness.

Footnote 4: [\(return\)](#)

I had a hint from both the Brothers, GEORGE and ROBERT, that NATHANIEL had a turn for Poetry, and had written what they believ'd would much please me. C.L.

Footnote 5: [\(return\)](#)

A name-sake and relation of the Author: of the Age, as I understand, of about 14.

Footnote 6: [\(return\)](#)

I am half tempted to say of it

A Fist may hit him who a Sermon flies.

Ridiculum aeri Fortius et melius magnas quandoque fecat res. C.L.

Footnote 7: [\(return\)](#)

BURNS, and Mrs. YEARSLEY.

Footnote 8: [\(return\)](#)

Pauci quos aequus amavit Jupiter, atque ardens evexit ad aethera Virtus, Felices, potuere!

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Man's sad necessity, destructive War,
Sweeps to the grave the surplus of his sons,
Where'er the kindly clime and soil invite
To Love; and multiply the Human Race.
 Around the World, in every happier spot
Where Earth spontaneous gives nutritious fruits.
Her softest verdure courting human feet,
And mossy grot's, beneath protecting shades,
The Stranger's envy, the Possessor's pride;
There, as increasing numbers throng each bower.
Frequent and fatal rivalships arise;
And ruthless War erects his hideous crest.
 Soon as Appropriation's iron hand
Assays to grasp the Produce of the Earth;
And youths assert hereditary power,
Propriety exclusive, and in arms
League to defend their patrimonial rights,
Indisputable claim of Fruits and Fields
Contending, oft their massive clubs they raise
Against each other's life: often, alas,
The needy cravings of the unportion'd poor
Provoke their jealous wrath; relentlessly
Tenacious of their store, they shut him out,
'Midst desart Famine, and ferocious Beasts,
To guard his life and till the steril soil;
And thus extend the range of human feet.
 Still as Experience, in her tardy school,
Instructs the Shepherd and the Husbandman
To great increase their flocks and herds to rear,

To till the ground, and plant the fruitful tree
In slow progression rising into use,
Nurtur'd by Her the infant Arts appear.
While sage Experience thus teaches Man
The useful and the pleasant Arts of Life,
She in harsh lectures, in the frequent broil,
Enjoins her Pupil still to cultivate
The fatal, necessary Art of War.

The Artizan, who from metallic ores
Forms the sharp implements to dress the glebe,
And prune the wild luxuriance of the tree; ...
By him is made the sword, the spear, the shaft,
By Man worn to defend him against Man.

Most bless'd the country where kind Nature's face
In unsophisticated Freedom smiles:
Happy the tenants of primeval days
When young society is in it's spring:
Where there is room and food for millions more,
Love knows no check, the votaries of Love,
The happy votaries of Wedded Love,
Know not the curse of peopled, polish'd, times:
The curse to wish their children may be few.

Sweet converse binds the cords of social love;
When the rude noise and gestures that ere while
Imperfectly express'd the labouring thought;
By social concourse are improv'd to Speech:
Speech, reasoning Man's distinguishing perfection;
Speech, the inestimable vehicle
Of mental light, and intellectual bliss;
Whence the fair fruits of Holy Friendship grow,
Presenting to fond Hope's enamour'd sight
The fairy prospect of perpetual Peace.
Advanc'd Society's prudential Laws,
The moral virtues of the enlighten'd mind,
And all the ties of Interest and of Love,
In vain conspire to nurse their favourite Peace,
And banish dire Immanity and War.
Strong Nature's bent, continual increase,
Still counteracts Humanity's fond wish,
The perpetuity of Peace, and Love;
Alas! progressive Increase cannot last.
Soon mourns the encumber'd land it's human load:
Too soon arrives the inauspicious hour;
The Natal Hour of the unhappy Man,
Who all his life goes mourning up and down
That there is neither bough, nor mud, nor straw
That he may take to make himself a hut;
No, not in all his native land a twig
That he may take, nor spot of green grass turf,
Where without trespass he may set his foot.
Now Want and Poverty wage War with Love;
And hard the conflict: horrible the thought,
That Love, who boasts of his all-conquering impulse,
Should have to mourn abortive energies...
But in proportion as Mankind increase,
So evils multiply: till Nature's self,
(The native passions of the human mind)
Engender War; which thins, and segregates,
And rectifies the balance of the world:
As thick-sown plants in the vegetable world,
With stretching branches wage continual War;
Each tender bud shrinks from the foreign touch
With a degree of sensitive perception;
Till one deforms, o'er-tops, and kills the other.

Like Summer swarms, that quit their native hives,
The offspring of increasing families,
Who find no room beneath their father's roofs,
No patrimony nor employ at home,
Colleagu'd in bands explore the desert wilds,
To seek adventures; or to seek their food:
If chance they meet with rovers (like themselves)
Whose home is far away in distant vales,
Behind the mountains, or beyond the lake;
Instinctively they war where'er they meet:
The friendly parley cannot intervene;

The unknown tongue does but create alarm:
With jealous fears, stern looks, and brandish'd arms,
They stand aloof: as birds of distant groves
At the strange note prepare for instant War.

At first they skirmishing dispute the right
Of hunting in the unappropriate waste:
But every onset aggravates their hate;
Till each increasing force, whetting their swords,
With purpos'd malice seeking out the foe,
Alternate by reprisal and revenge,
Doubly compensate each discomfiture,
Yet seek not to attack each-other's home,
Where Age, and Infancy, in safety dwell:
They war but with freebooters: private Peace
And Female Covert, Valour scorns to assail.
But when in evil hour some female hand,
Whether by force of Love, or force of Arms,
Is led across the desert by the Foe;
The jealous fury kindles to a flame:
No longer sacred the domestic hearth:
Fire, Death, and Devastation, mark their way,
And all the horrid crimes of savage War.

Now War becomes the business of the State:
The most humane, the most pacific men,
Must arm for War, or lose all they hold dear:
The sorrows of the Aged, Infant cries,
And Female Tears, resistlessly prevail:
Can gentlest natures be in love with Peace,
When Love, most tender Love, excites to War?
No.... When some lov'd and honour'd youth distrest'd,
Raising his head amongst his arm'd compeers,
Tells that the well-known honourable Maid,
The Virgin Mistress of his dearest hopes,
Is ravish'd from him, borne by force away;
Though pierc'd with grief, yet nobly he exclaims,
'Think not I wish to embroil you in my fate:
'For though not one of you espouse my cause,
'I singly will attempt the desperate deed.
'Farewell: I go to find my Love, or die!'

Silent and motionless the legions stand,
By looks examining each-other's heart:
But soon a murmur through the ranks proceeds,
Swelling as quickly a terrific roar;
Like heavy waters breaking from their mounds,
A long, and loud, and inarticulate shout,
While every weapon vibrates in the air,
And hisses it's fierce vengeance at the foe.

The righteous cause admits of no delay;
No tardy foot impedes the immediate march:
The Enemy, not taken by surprise,
Wak'd by the watchful fears of conscious guilt,
On their frontiers await the coming foe.

Now at the near approach of threatening Death,
Full many a thinking, sighing, aching heart,
Indulges secretly the hopeless wish
For Life, and Peace.... Alas! it cannot be:
To advance is to encounter dreadful danger;
But to recede, inevitable death;
His own associates would deal the blow:

Thus led by Fate, behold upon the plain,
The adverse bands in view, and in advance.
Now Fear, Self-pity, and affected Courage,
Speak in their hideous shouts with voice scarce human;
Like that which issues from his hollow throat
Who sleeping bellows in a frightful dream.
More near their glaring eye-balls flashing meet;
Terror and Rage distorting every face,
Inflame each-other into trembling fury.

Soft-ey'd Humanity, oh! veil thy sight!
Tis not in Rationality to view
(Even in thought) the dire ensuing scene;
For Madness, Madness reigns, and urges men
To deeds that Rationality disowns.

Now here and there about the horrid Field,
Striding across the dying and the dead,

Stalks up a man by strength superior,
Or skill and prowess in the arduous fight,
Preserv'd alive: ... fainting he looks around;
Fearing pursuit, nor caring to pursue.
The supplicating voice of bitterest moans,
Contortions of excruciating pain,
The shriek of torture and the groan of death,
Surround him; and as Night her mantle spreads,
To veil the horrors of the mourning Field,
With cautious step shaping his devious way,
He seeks a covert where to hide and rest:
At every leaf that rustles in the breeze
Starting, he grasps his sword; and every nerve
Is ready strain'd, for combat or for flight.

Thus list'ning to ward off approaching foes,
A distant whispering, fighting, murmuring sound
Salutes his ear, and to his throbbing heart
Soft tidings tells of tenderness and love.
For on that fatal day of vengeful ire.
At fearful distance following the host,
From either country came a female throng;
And now beneath the covert of the night
Advancing, guided by the voice of woe,
Where on the earth the wounded mourners lay,
With trembling steps and fearful whispering voice,
Each seeks, and calls him whom she came to seek:
And many a fugitive, whom force or fear
Had driven from the Field, steals softly back,
Anxious to know the fate of some lov'd friend.
Mutual fears appal the mingled group,
Starting alternate at the unknown tongue:
They fear a foe in each uncertain form
That through the gloom imperfectly appears.
The mournful horrors of the doleful night
Melt every heart: ... and when the morning's beam
Shews the sad scene, and gives an interview,
Resentment, that worst torment of the mind,
Resentment ceases, satiate wrath subsides.
Woman is present: and so strong the charm
Of weeping Woman's fascinating tears,
That though surviving Heroes' unwash'd hands
Still grasp the falchion of horrid hue,
And though their fallen brethren from the ground
May seem to call for Vengeance from their hands,
The impulse of Revenge is felt no more;
No more the strange attire, the foreign tongue
Creates alarm: for Nature's-self has writ
In every face; where every eye can read
Repentant Sorrow, and forgiving Love.
Their mingled tears wash the lamented dead:
On every wound they pour soft Pity's balm:
Ere Sorrow's tears are dried, they feel the spring
Of new-born joys, and each expanding heart
Contemplates future scenes of Peace and Love.

Long, even as long as room and food abound,
They interchange their friendly offices
For mutual good; reciprocally kind:
And much they wonder that they e'er were foes.
Still War's terrific name is kept alive:
Tradition, pointing to the rusty arms
That hang on high, informs each list'ning youth
How erst in fatal fields their Grandsires fell;
Childhood attentive hears the tragic tale;
And learns to shudder at the name of War.

GUNPOWDER! let the Soldier's Pean rise,
Where e'er thy name or thundering voice is heard:
Let him who, fated to the needful trade,
Deals out the adventitious shafts of Death,
Rejoice in thee; and hail with loudest shouts
The auspicious era when deep-searching Art
From out the hidden things in Nature's store
Cull'd thy tremendous powers, and tutor'd Man
To chain the unruly element of Fire
At his controul, to wait his potent touch:
To urge his missile bolts of sudden Death,

And thunder terribly his vengeful wrath.
Thy mighty engines and gigantic towers
With frowning aspect awe the trembling World.
Destruction, bursting from thy sudden blaze
Hath taught the Birds to tremble at the sound;
And Man himself, thy terror's boasted lord,
Within the blacken'd hollow of thy tube,
Affrighted sees the darksome shades of Death.
Not only mourning groves, but human tears,
The weeping Widow's tears, the Orphan's cries,
Sadly deplore that e'er thy powers were known.
Yet let thy Advent be the Soldier's song,
No longer doom'd to grapple with the Foe
With Teeth and Nails—When close in view, and in
Each-other's grasp, to grin, and hack, and stab;
Then tug his horrid weapon from one breast
To hide it in another:—with clear hands
He now expertly poizing thy bright tube,
At distance kills, unknowing and unknown;
Sees not the wound he gives, nor hears the shriek
Of him whose breast he pierces.... GUNPOWDER!
(O! let Humanity rejoice) how much
The Soldier's fearful work is humaniz'd,
Since thy momentous birth—stupendous power.

In Britain, where the hills and fertile plains,
Like her historic page, are overspread
With vestiges of War, the Shepherd Boy
Climbs the green hillock to survey his flock;
Then sweetly sleeps upon his favourite hill,
Not conscious that his bed's a Warrior's Tomb.

The ancient Mansions, deeply moated round,
Where, in the iron Age of Chivalry,
Redoubted Barons wag'd their little Wars;
The strong Entrenchments and enormous Mounds,
Rais'd to oppose the fierce, perfidious Danes;
And still more ancient traces that remain
Of Dykes and Camps, from the far distant date
When minstrel Druids wak'd the soul of War,
And rous'd to arms old Albion's hardy sons,
To stem the tide of Roman Tyranny: ...
War's footsteps, thus imprinted on the ground,
Shew that in Britain he, from age to age,
Has rear'd his horrid head, and raging reign'd.

Long on the margins of the silver Tweed
Opposing Ensigns wav'd; War's clarion
Dreadfully echo'd down the winding stream,
Where now sweet Peace and Unity reside:
The happy peasant of Tweed's smiling dale,
Whene'er his spade disturbs a Soldier's bones,
With shudd'ring horror ruminates on War;
Then deeper hides the awful spectacle,
Blessing the peaceful days in which he lives

Since Peace has bless'd the villages on Tweed,
And War has ceas'd to drive his iron car
On Britain's shore, what myriads of men
Over the Eastern and the Western Seas
Have follow'd War, and found untimely graves.
Where'er the jarring interests of States
Excite the brave to' advance their native land
By deeds of arms, Britons are foremost found.
The sprightly bands, hast'ning from place to place,
Gayly carousing in their gay attire,
Invite, not force the train of heedless youths,
Who croud to share their jollity and joy:
To martial music dancing into death,
They fell their Freedom for a holiday;
And with the Rich and Great 'tis Glory charms,
And Beauty's favour that rewards the Brave.

All the historic Records of the World
Are little more than histories of Wars;
Shewing how many thousands War destroy'd,
The time, the place, and some few great ones' names.
The mournful remnants of demolished States,
The Greek, the Roman, and long-exil'd Jew;
Are living monuments of wasting War's

Annihilating power: and while they mourn
Their Grandeur faded, and their Power extinct,
To every State *memento mori* sounds.
From age to age the habitable World
Has been a constant theatre of War:
In every land with Nature's gifts most blest,
Frequent and fatal Wars destructive rage.
So bland is fair Britannia's genial clime,
So liberal her all-protecting Laws,
So generous the spirit of her Sons,
So fond, so chaste, her Daughters virtuous love,
That human offspring still redundant grows,
And free-born Britons must contend for life.

O! envy not the lands where Slaves reside,
Though their proud Tyrants boast of *peaceful* reign,
Where hard Oppression, freezing genial love,
Performs the work of War in embryo:
Let not mistaken fondness doat on Peace,
Preserv'd by arts more horrid far than War! ...
Let the dull languor of the pale Chinese
Desert their Infants, and their *Peace* enjoy!
But, O! let Britons still in Love and War
Exert the generous ardour of the soul;
Protect the Fair, and foster Infancy.

By strenuous enterprize, and arduous toils,
Is public safety purchas'd and secur'd.
Negative merit, "I have done no harm,"
Is an inglorious boast: shall he who sits
Secure, enjoying Plenty in the lap
Of Ease, vaunt his recumbent Virtues? ... He
Brand with harsh epithets the Warrior's toils?
While 'tis to them he owes sincerest thanks
For Peace and Safety, that are earn'd in War....
As well might he who eats the flesh of Lambs,
And smacks the ichor in a savoury dish,
Boast his humanity, and say "My hand
Ne'er slew a Lamb;" and censure as a crime,
The Butcher's cruel, necessary trade.

In Battle, the chance-medley game of Death,
Where every one still hopes 'till he expires,
Less horror shocks the mind contemplative,
Than where, in slow procession's solemn pace,
Doom'd wretches meet their destin'd fate in bonds,
Who know the moment to expect the blow,
And count the moments 'till that moment comes:
Or where Oppression wages War, in Peace,
On the defenceless: on the hapless man
Who holds his breath but by another's will:
Whose Life is only one long cruel Death! ...
Hardly he fares, and hopelessly he toils;
And when his driver's anger, or caprice,
Or wanton cruelty, inflicts a blow,
Not daring to look angry at the whip,
Oh! see him meekly clasp his hands and bow
To every stroke: no lurid deathful scene
In Battle's rage, so racks the feeling heart;
Not all the thunders of infuriate War,
Disploding mines, and crafting, bursting bombs,
Are half so horrid as the sounding lash
That echoes through the Carribean groves.

Incessant is the War of Human Wit,
Oppos'd to bestial strength; and variously
Successful: in these happy fertile climes,
Man still maintains his surreptitious power;
Reigns o'er the Brutes, and, with the voice of Fate,
Says "This to-day, and that to-morrow dies."
Though here our Shambles blazon the Renown,
The Victory, and Rule, of lordly Man;
Far wider tracts within the Torrid Zone
Own no such Lord: where Sol's intenser rays
Create in bestial hearts more fervid fires,
And deadlier poisons arm the Serpent's tooth;
In gloomy shades, impassable to Man,
Where matted foliage exclude the Sun,
The torpid Birds that crawl from bough to bough

Utter their notes of terror: while beneath
Fury and Venom, couch'd in murky dens,
Hissing and yelling, guard the hideous gloom.
O'er dreary wastes, untrod by human feet,
Without controul the lordly Lion reigns;
And every creature trembles at his voice:
When risen from his den, he prances forth,
Extends his talons, shakes his flaky mane,
Then whurrs his tufted tail, and stooping low
His wide mouth near the ground, his dreadful roar
Makes all the desert tremble: he proclaims
His ire—proclaims his strong necessity;
And that surprise or artifice he scorns.

Unskill'd, alas! in philosophic lore,
Unbless'd with scientific erudition;
How can I sing of elemental War,
Or the contending powers of opposite
Attractions, that impel, and poize, and guide,
The ever-rolling Spheres: Animal War,
The flux of Life, devouring and devour'd,
Ceaseless in every tribe, through Earth, and Air,
And Ocean, transcends my utmost ken.

From obvious truths my Song has aim'd to shew
That War is an inevitable Ill;
An Ill through Nature's various Realms diffus'd;
An Ill subservient to the General Good.

With sympathetic sense of human woes
Deeply impress'd, the melancholy Muse
With modesty asserts this mournful Truth:
'Tis not in human wisdom to avert,
Though every feeling heart must sure lament,
The SAD NECESSITY of FATAL WAR.

ELEGY

ON THE ENCLOSURE OF HONINGTON GREEN.

[Motives of Enclosure.—Natural Pleasures and humble Convenience lost by it.—Recollections of the Spot.... The Mother.—The Father.—Character of his Mind.—The Widow.... Maternal Cares.—The Green.... It's Beauties and Pleasures.—The Enclosure in general less an object to the Poor.—Under whatever Change the Man will adapt itself.—The new Scene will find it's Admirers.—Pleasures are as the Mind and it's Habits.]

1

Improvement extends it's domain;
The Shepherds of Britain deplore
That the Coulter has furrow'd each plain,
And their calling is needful no more.
"Enclosing Land doubles its use;
When cultur'd, the heath and the moor
Will the Riches of Ceres produce,
Yet feed as large flocks as before."

2

Such a lucrative maxim as this
The Lords of the Land all pursue,
For who such advantage wou'd miss?
Self-int'rest we all keep in view.
By it, they still more wealth amass,
Who possess'd great abundance before;
It gives pow'r to the Great, but alas!
Still poorer it renders the Poor.

3

Taste spreads, her refinements around,
Enriching her favourite Land
With prospects of beautified ground,
Where, cinctur'd, the spruce Villas stand;
On the causeways, that never are foul,
Marshal'd bands may with measur'd pace tread;

The soft Car of Voluptuousness roll,
And the proud Steed of Greatness parade.

4

Those fenc'd ways that so even are made,
The pedestrian traveler bemoans;
He no more the green carpet may tread,
But plod on, 'midst the gravel and stones:
And if he would rest with his load,
No green hillock presents him a seat,
But long, hard, tiresome sameness of road
Fatigues both the eye and the feet.

5

Sighs speak the poor Labourers' pain,
While the new mounds and fences they rear,
Intersecting their dear native plain,
To divide to each rich Man his share;
It cannot but grieve them to see,
Where so freely they rambled before,
What a bare narrow track is left free
To the foot of the unportion'd Poor.

6

The proud City's gay wealthy train.
Who nought but refinements adore,
May wonder to hear me complain
That Honington Green is no more;
But if to the Church you e'er went,
If you knew what the village has been,
You will sympathize, while I lament
The Enclosure of Honington Green.

7

That no more upon Honington Green
Dwells the Matron whom most I revere,
If by pert observation unseen,
I e'en now could indulge a fond tear.
E'er her bright Morn of Life was o'er cast,
When my senses first woke to the scene,
Some short happy hours she had past
On the margin of Honington Green.

8

Her Parents with Plenty were blest,
And nume'rous her Children, and young,
Youth's Blossoms her cheek yet possest,
And Melody woke when she sung:
A Widow so youthful to leave,
(Early clos'd the blest days he had seen)
My Father was laid in his grave,
In the Church-yard on Honington Green.

9

I faintly remember the Man,
Who died when I was but a Child;
But far as my young mind could scan,
His manners were gentle and mild:
He won infant ears with his lore,
Nor let young ideas run wild,
Tho' his hand the severe rod of pow'r
Never sway'd o'er a trembling Child.

10

Not anxiously careful for pelf,
Melancholic and thoughtful, his mind
Look'd inward and dwelt on itself,
Still pensive, pathetic, and kind;
Yet oft in despondency drown'd,
He from friends, and from converse would fly.

In weeping a luxury found,
And reliev'd others' woes with a sigh.

11

In solitude long would he stay,
And long lock'd in silence his tongue;
Then he humm'd an elegiac lay,
Or a Psalm penitential he sung:
But if with his Friends he regal'd,
His Mirth, as his Griefs, knew no bounds;
In no Tale of Mark Sargent he sail'd,
Nor in all Robin Hood's Derry-downs.

12

Thro' the poor Widow's long lonely years,
Her Father supported us all:
Yet sure she was loaded with cares,
Being left with six Children so small.
Meagre Want never lifted her latch;
Her cottage was still tight and clean;
And the casement beneath it's low thatch
Commanded a view o'er the Green.

13

O'er the Green, where so often she blest
The return of a Husband or Son,
Coming happily home to their rest,
At night, when their labour, was done:
Where so oft in her earlier years,
She, with transport maternal, has seen
(While plying her housewifely cares)
Her Children all safe on the Green.

14

The Green was our pride through the year,
For in Spring, when the wild flow'rets blew,
Tho' many rich pastures were near,
Where Cowslips and Daffodils grew;
And tho' such gallant flow'rs were our choice,
It was bliss interrupted by Fear—
The Fear of their Owner's dread voice,
Harshly bawling "You've no business here."

15

While the Green, tho' but Daisies it's boast,
Was free as the Flow'rs to the Bee;
In all seasons the Green we lov'd most,
Because on the Green we were free;
'Twas the prospect that first met my eyes,
And Memory still blesses the scene;
For early my heart learnt to prize
The Freedom of Honington Green.

16

No Peasant had pin'd at his lot,
Tho' new fences the lone Heath enclose:
For, alas! the blest days are forgot,
When poor Men had their Sheep and their Cows.
Still had Labour been blest with Content,
Still Competence happy had been,
Nor Indigence utter'd a plaint,
Had Avarice spar'd but the Green.

17

Not Avarice itself could be mov'd
By desire of a morsel so small:
It could not be lucre he lov'd;
But to rob the poor folk of their all.
He in wantonness ope'd his wide jaws,
As a Shark may disport with the Fry;

Or a Lion, when licking his paws,
May wantonly snap at a Fly.

18

Could there live such an envious Man,
Who endur'd not the halcyon scene?
When the infantine Peasantry ran,
And roll'd on the daisy-deck'd Green:
Ah! sure 'twas fell Envy's despite,
Lest Indigence tasted of Bliss,
That sternly decreed they've no right
To innocent pleasure like this.

19

Tho' the Youth of to-day must deplore—
The rough mounds that now sadden the scene,
The vain stretch of Misanthropy's Power,
The Enclosure of Honington Green.
Yet when not a green turf is left free,
When not one odd nook is left wild,
Will the Children of Honington be
Less blest than when I was a Child?

20

No! ... Childhood shall find the scene fair,
Then here let me cease my complaint;
Still shall Health be inhal'd with the Air,
Which at Honington cannot be taint:
And tho' Age may still talk of the Green,
Of the Heath, and free Commons of yore,
Youth shall joy in the new-fangled scene,
And boast of *that* change we deplore.

21

Dear to me was the wild-thorny Hill,
And dear the brown Heath's sober scene;
And Youth shall find Happiness still,
Tho' he roves not on Common or Green:
Tho' the pressure of Wealth's lordly hand
Shall give Emulation no scope,
And tho' all the' appropriate Land
Shall leave Indigence nothing to hope.

22

So happily flexile Man's make.
So pliantly docile his mind,
Surrounding impressions we take,
And bliss in each circumstance find.
The Youths of a more polish'd Age
Shall not wish these rude Commons to see;
To the Bird that's inur'd to the Cage,
It would not be Bills to be free.

THE CULPRIT.

*"Man hard of heart to Man! ... of horrid things
Most horrid; midst stupendous highly strange:
Yet oft his courtesies are smoother wrongs;
Pride brandishes the favours he confers,
And contumelious his Humanity.
What then his vengeance? hear it not, ye Stars,
And thou, pale Moon, turn paler at the sound: ...
Man is to Man the sorest, surest Ill."*

YOUNG.

Jury withdrawn.... His Reflections.—Full of apprehension.... effect of Pride in maintaining an opinion.—His fears from the diminished regard of an Oath.—This idea pursued.—Instance of false Shame.... of contempt of Shame.—Perjury.—Duty of Deliberation.... Misbodings.—Hopes from mild and conscientious feelings.—Conflict of Hope, Doubt, and Fear.—The Verdict.]

'Man hard of heart! of horrid things
Most horrid! and of strange most strange:'...
Thus the mournful Poet sings,
Experienc'd in Life's various range.

In the hopeful morn of Youth,
This serious Song I lov'd and learn'd,
Nor ever thought the mournful truth
Would ever thus by me be mourn'd.

Ne'er thought I ever thus should stand,
The butt of every tearful eye;
To raise the Culprit's trembling hand,
To heave the Culprit's anxious sigh.

Now the mournful truth to prove,
Gazing crouds around I see,
For sure 'tis cruel selfish love
That brings them here to gaze on me.

'Tis thus wherever human woe,
Wherever deep distress appears;
Thither curious gazers go,
To' insult the wretched with their tears.

E'en where hostile armies join
In the horrid frightful fray,
Where groaning mortals life resign,
I've heard their fellow-mortal say—

'Oh! for a safe and lofty stand,
Where I the Battle's rage might see;
When Carnage, with relentless hand,
Strews the Ground, or stains the Sea.'⁹

When list'ning, with suspended breath,
A wretch his dreadful sentence hears,
In Martial Court, where worse than Death
The Military Culprit fears.

And when encircled by the band,
Lingering torments, public shame,
Severity's most ruthless hand
Lacerates his manly frame:

When many a hardy Soldier weeps,
And grieves that he's compell'd to stay;
Who perforce his station keeps,
Or would soon be far away;

Yet see beyond the circling guard,
Idle gazers flocking round,
To see and hear are pressing hard,
As if the spot were fairy ground.

What is it that a charm imparts?
Why do they press to hear and see?
Can it be that human hearts
Delight in human misery?

When the inexorable hour
Chills the hopeless convict's blood;
When sunk and drown'd his eve'ry power,
In sorrow's overwhelming flood:

To view the scene the many run,
And o'er the hapless wretch to sigh:
Nor once enquire the crime he' has done; ...
They only come to see him die.

Various cares mankind employ;

But to gaze on human woe
Seems the universal joy,
For which they all their cares forego.

Each from his pursuit departs,
Suffering, dying Man to see;
Surely there are human hearts
That joy in human misery.

Where fictitious tragic woe
Entertains the gaudy ring,
Each the horror can forego,
And instant mental comfort bring.

When the spirits take alarm,
Prompt to anger, grief, or spleen,
Reason can dissolve the charm,
And say, 'tis a fictitious scene.

But to scenes of real woe,
Where a wretch is truly dying,
Wherefore do such numbers go,
What can be the joy of sighing?

Men of thought, who soar serene,
And loftily philosophize,
Will say they seek the solemn scene,
To contemplate and sympathize.

And all the throng will tell you so: ...
'Tis sympathy that brings them there;
They love to weep for others' woe,
And come but to enjoy a tear.

If to *enjoy* the tear that starts,
They run the sorrow'd scene to see—
Alas! for pity ... human hearts
Delight in human misery.

Still my wretched thought thus strays,
'Midst gloomy scenes and prospects drear;
My weary mind, in various ways
Seeking Hope, still finds Despair.

This thought a weight of woe imparts,
At once to sink a wretch like me;
What can I hope, if human hearts
Delight in human misery?

Tortur'd by severe suspense,
I the Jurors' Verdict wait,
Ere I may depart from hence,
Their decision seals my fate.

Now withdrawn, their close debate
Admits no curious, list'ning ear,
But the result's so big with fate,
The Culprit must in thought be there.

And now, led on by sad despair,
Does a frightful form obtrude;
Vindictive Spleen assumes the air
Of noble, manly Fortitude.

And thus I hear the Demon say,
'Let us not abuse our trust;
'We must not be led away
'For mercy's sake, to be unjust.'

Yet he'll profess no wrath to feel
'Gainst such a hapless wretch as I;
No! ... but for the public weal,
'Tis expedient that I die.

And this his judgment once made known,
Self-love and self-conceit's so strong,
He'll rather let me die than own

That his opinion could be wrong.

Ye who the lore of distant climes
Canvass, latent truth to find;
Who hail our philosophic times,
And Man's emancipated mind:

Oh! ye who boast the enlighten'd age,
Who boast your right of thinking free ...
If e'er ye learn the lessons sage,
Taught in affliction's school like me,

Should you e'er a Culprit stand,
You'll wish mankind all Christians then;
If e'er you raise the Culprit's hand,
You'll wish the Jurors Christian Men.

When at the dread Confessional,
Men trembled from their early youth,
Taught to fear, on pain of Hell,
To utter more or less than Truth.

Then Faith could sharpest trials stand,
Man at threat'ning Death could smile,
If but his Pastor's lenient hand
Toucht him with the Holy Oil.

Full faith the solemn Oath obtain'd,
Man's mind was aw'd by priestly rule;
Steady to Truth he still remain'd,
Unless to priestly fraud a tool.

But where Church Discipline has ceas'd
To train men's minds in early youth,
Hard indeed the Culprit's case,
Whose fate depends on others' truth.

Even the man whose ways are wise,
Whose life is rul'd by Honour's laws;
Who owns, in philosophic guise,
A Deity ... a first great cause: ...

Yet boasts his mind no shackles wears: ...
'Tis hard his solemn Oath to trust;
For, without future hopes and fears,
Know I if Conscience makes him just? ...

And then, the' admitted evidence ...
Ye Jurors, can his word be true?
Tempted, in his own defence,
To feign another's crime to you.

When venial crimes in Love's gay spring,
Prompt the youthful Female's sigh;
When her roses all take wing,
And Matrons sage her plight descry;

Blushing, weeping, she'll confess
The fault her faded cheeks discover:
But, to make her crime the less,
Imputes an outrage to her Lover.

So strong the power of pride and shame,
Her frailty she will still deny;
Rather than own herself to blame,
She lets the hapless Lover die.

Is Merit from his right debarr'd;
Or guiltless charg'd with foul offence?
A Knave but speaks the perjur'd word,
And laughs at injur'd Innocence.

Laughs he at detection too?
Yes ... for he'll be but expos'd;
But set up to public view,
Should his falshood be disclos'd.

He such exposure dares defy,
Public shame is not his fear;
He who can vouch the solemn lie,
Would shew his forehead any where.

While Innocence meets punishment,
While Falshood can produce such woes,
Mercy's self must needs lament
Perjury not more punish'd goes.

Dubious may be the Culprit's case,
Though clear and open all his ways;
What Life is proof 'gainst dire disgrace,
If guileful hate his act pourtrays?

Ye Jurors cautiously proceed,
When the question's left to you,
Not 'Has the Culprit done the deed?'
But 'Was the deed a crime to do?'¹⁰

Grudge not deliberation's time,
Lest you should be too severe;
When Justice must believe a crime,
She lends it her most tardy ear.

How short is this momentous hour!
O! how swift the minutes fly!
Soon the Jurors, arm'd with power,
Will come to bid me live or die.

Pointed thoughts of Life and Death,
Anxious sore solicitude,
Shake my frame, suspend my breath,
When Terror's gloomy shades protrude.

But when Hope cheers me with the sound
Of Mercy's voice, of Mercy's plea,
And tells me Mercy will be found
Amongst the twelve to speak for me,

Rapt Fancy hears the Cherub plead: ...
Propitious is the Culprit's fate,
If one, by tender mercy sway'd,
Amongst the Jurors takes his seat.

One who will meek-ey'd Mercy's laws
Oppose to Rigour's doubtful rule ...
Nor quit the hapless Culprit's cause,
Though sterner Judgements deem him fool.

Blessings that wait his heart, his tongue,
Cannot elate his tranquil breast:
He courts no blessing from the throng;
He is, and ever will be, blest.

He shall win the Jury's ear,
Pity glist'ning in his eye;
Let us not be too severe....
If we let the Culprit die,

Fruitlessly we may bewail
In future, should our hearts relent:
O! then let Mercy's voice prevail;
Mercy we can ne'er repent.

Mercy smiles, and every face
Reflects the Cherub's aspect meek;
Glowing with her resistless grace,
Mercy beams on every cheek.

Hope, thy presage cannot fail.
Bid my Mary cease to mourn;
Surely Mercy shall prevail,
And I to Love and Life return.

Shall I the lenient Verdict hear,
Thrilling through my shivering frame?

Ye Jurors, clad in smiles appear,
To realize this happy dream.

Their Deliberation's o'er,
How shall I the Crisis meet?
Hark! I hear the opening door: ...
Silence and Awe attend their feet!

They enter ... though no voice is heard,
Mercy in each face I see;
They speak ... and in the single word
Is Life, and Love, and Liberty!

Footnote 9: ([return](#))

The sentiment of Lucretius—

*Suave etiam Martis certamina magna tueri
Per campos instructa, tuo fine parte percli.*

Sweet to behold the Martial Contest spread
Wide o'er the Plains, without thy share of Ill.

But the Philosophic Poet accounts for it by the heightened sense of safety; and not on the principle of Malevolence.

Footnote 10: ([return](#))

This Question may come before the Jury in Cases of *Homicide, Assault and Battery*, and other charges of that nature, which may be justifiable on circumstances: but in many if the fact is found, as in *Forgery*, &c. the criminality, with some very rare exceptions, is a legal inference necessarily resulting from the fact. C.L.

YORKSHIRE DIP.

[The Country Ramble of Jupiter.—The Feast: ... It's Music, and Gaiety.—The Dip makes it's appearance.—The Consequence.]

Once on a time, old Legends say,
'Twas on a sultry Summer's day,
A Grecian God forsook the Skies,
To taste of Earth's felicities.
Clad like a rusticated elf,
(Perhaps *incog.* 'twas Jove himself)
He travers'd hills, and glens, and woods,
And verdant lawns, by crystal floods;
For sure, said he, if Earth has joys,
They dwell remote from pomp and noise.
He loitering pass'd the vacant hour,
For Strawberries stoop'd, or pluck'd a Flower,
And snuff'd the Zephyrs as they play'd,
In wanton curves beneath the shade.
'Till having every sweet pursued,
That leisure finds in solitude,
Resolving now to seek Mankind,
And new delights in converse find,
He left the woods, he cross'd the plain,
And join'd the Reapers' jolly train;
With Men and Maids he talk'd and toil'd,
While jocund mirth the hours beguil'd;
For Maids the cheerful labour shar'd,
And blooming health their rich reward.
When noon advanc'd, Sol's downward rays
Shedding intolerable blaze,
Compel the Labourers' retreat,
To shelter from the fervent heat;
The copse that skirts the irriguous mead
Affords a welcome cooling shade.
A Damsel from the careful Dame
With wholesome viands loaded came;
Though coarse and homely was their meal,
Though brown their bread, and mild their ale,
Gladly they view'd the plenteous store,
Dispos'd on Nature's verdant floor.
The aerial Stranger soon made free,
Nor miss'd Apollo's minstrelsy;

For chirping Grasshoppers were heard,
With dulcet notes of many a Bird
That sought at noon the umbrageous glade
And softly sung beneath the shade.
He took his place upon the ground,
With Lads and Lasses circling round;
He sat as they sat, fed as they fed,
Drank ale, and laugh'd, and talk'd, as they did;
Each playful wile, by Love employ'd,
He by kind sympathy enjoy'd;
The Lover's extasies he caught,
When looks convey'd th' enamour'd thought;
From breast to breast while raptures bound,
He prais'd the varied prospects round,
Compar'd each Lass to Beauty's Queen,
And own'd it an Elysian scene,

The jolly God smil'd all propitious,
But ah! how fatally capricious...
It chanc'd, amidst this humble Feast,
A cup of YORKSHIRE DIP was plac'd ...
A pudding-sauce well-known of yore,
When folks were frugal, though not poor;
An olio mixt of *sweet and sour*.
Soon as this touch'd his laughing lip,
That unmixt Nectar us'd to sip,
He rose, and with a threat'ning frown
Of direful Anger¹¹, dash'd it down,
And swore, departing in a huff,
I'll make your lives like that d—d stuff.

Too sure the Malediction fell,
As every mortal wight can tell:
For HUMAN LIFE, to this bless'd hour,
Like *Yorkshire Dip*, is SWEET AND SOUR.

Footnote 11: [\(return\)](#)

Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust.¹² POPE.]

Footnote 12: [\(return\)](#)

The Poet has drawn his Jupiter according to the Homeric Model, in it's least divine features. Yet I wish he had not. The *Yorkshire Dip* (the mixture of sweet and sour) might have remained a type of Life, temper'd in like manner: not by the wrath but by the *benevolence* of Jupiter.

... Who hath will'd
That Pleasure be co-mate of Toil and Pain,
Lest Joy should sink in listless apathy.

... *Curit acuens mortalia corda,
Nec torpere gravi passus sua Regna Veterno.*

GEORG. I.

And accordingly the next Poem. C.L.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH: AN ELEGIAC BALLAD.

[The Expostulation.—Continued.—Fears of Poverty.—Encouragement.—Baldwin's Song.—Deceitfulness of visions indulgence.—Tormenting distressing Passions.—Comforts of a low Fortune.—Poverty in England contrasted with other Countries.—The Question.... The Conclusion.]

1

Come, let us seek the woodland shade,
And leave this view of towns and towers:
Sweeter far the verdant mead,
And lonely dell's sequester'd bowers.

2

Why does my Love this walk prefer;
This hill, so near the public way?

Why is this prospect dear to her?
Where Villas proud their pomp display?

3

Ah! why does Mary sometimes sigh,
Surveying this magnificent scene;
The seats of Grandeur tow'ring high,
With Rivers, Groves, and Lawns between?

4

On splendid Cars, that smoothly move,
With high-born Youths gay Damsels ride;
By the encircling arm of Love
Press'd to the wealthy Lover's side.

5

Why turn to view their easy state,
As the long glittering train moves by?
And when they reach the pompous gate,
Ah! why does youthful Mary sigh?

6

Doth Envy that fond bosom heave?
Repining at her humble lot ...
Alas! does Mary long to leave
The lonely Dale and lowly Cot?

7

Pure and sincere is Mary's Love:
Words were superfluous to tell;
A thousand tendernesses prove
That Mary loves her Stephen well.

8

When list'ning to the Stockdove's moan,
Far in the deep sequester'd grove,
The blush that whisper'd, 'We're alone,'
Sweetly confess the power of Love.

9

Exalted Love concealment mocks,
This feign'd indifference does but prove
That was I Lord of Fields and Flocks,
My Mary's Lips would own her Love.

10

Doth Poverty create the fears
That o'er your love their shadows fling? ...
The silence of those falling tears
Confesses all the truth I sing.

11

O! Mary, let not empty shew,
Let not the pride of gaudy dress,
Thus cloud thy morn of life with woe,
And blight it's future happiness.

12

Trust the monition Baldwin gave,
Our future bliss it's truth shall prove,
Life's cares the Lovers who dare brave,
Shall find their rich reward in Love:

13

Baldwin, the hoary-headed Bard,
I still consult when cares annoy:
He own'd for me a fond regard;

And calls me still his darling Boy.

14

His mind is fraught with spoils of Time;
He's wise and good, though known to few;
He gave me this advice in rhyme,
And here I'll read the Song to you:—

15

"Though envious Age affects to deem thee Boy,
Lose not one day, one hour, of proffer'd bliss;
In youth grasp every unoffending joy,
And wing'd with rapture snatch the bridal kiss.

16

"Let not this chief of blessings be deferr'd,
Till you your humble fortunes can improve;
None's poor but he, by sordid fears deterr'd,
Who dares not claim the matchless wealth of Love.

17

"Virtue can make most rich thy little store;
Virtue can make most bright thy lowly state:
Murmur not then that virtuous thou art poor,
While prosperous Vice can make men rich and great.

18

"The bad man may, his every sense to please,
Each soft indulging luxury employ:
The plenitude of elegance and ease
He may possess; but never can enjoy.

19

"No ... though his goods, and flocks, and herds abound;
His wide demesne to fair profusion grown;
Though proud his lofty mansion looks around,
On hills, and fields, and forests, all his owns

20

"Tho' this may tempt thee, murmuring to complain,
With conscience clear, and life void of offence,
'Verily, then, I've cleans'd my heart in vain;
In vain have wash'd my hands in Innocence.'

21

"Yet could'st thou closely mark the envied Man,
See how desires ungovern'd mar his peace;
Or had'st thou power his inward mind to scan,
How soon in pity would thy envy cease!

22

"Envenom'd Passions all his thoughts un hinge!
The Slave of Vice must thy companion move;
If still he burns with thirst of dire Revenge,
Lawless Ambition, or unhallow'd Love.

23

"Midst gayest scenes he wean a gloomy frown:
Vain is the splendour that his dome adorns;
While he reclines on silky heaps of down,
His tortur'd mind is weltering on thorns.

24

"To prove that man opprest with mental pain,
The goods of Fortune have no power to please,
Even Suicide has oft been known to stain
The downy couch of most luxurious case.

25

"The active life of Labour gives no room
To that dull spleen the Indolent endure;
Generous cares dispel our mental gloom,
And Industry is Melancholy's cure.

26

"Repine not then, that low thy lot is cast;
Health gives to life or high or low it's zest;
'Tis Appetite that seasons our repast,
And Weariness still finds the softest rest.

27

"For all thy blessings thankfulness to wake,
Think of less cultur'd lands, less peaceful times;
Our coarsest fare, when sparingly we take,
'Tis luxury, compar'd with other climes.

28

"Think of the poor Greenlanders' dismal caves,
Where thro' their long, long Night they buried lie;
Or the more wretched lands where hapless slaves
Hopelessly toil beneath the fervid Sky.

29

"In Britain ... blest with peace and competence,
Rich Fortune's favours could impart no more: ...
Heaven's blessings equal happiness dispense;
Believe my words, for I am old and poor.

30

"Many who drudge in Labour's roughest ways,
By whom Life's simplest, lowliest walks are trod,
Happily live, to honor'd length of days,
Blessing kind Nature, and kind Nature's God."

31

What think you, is sage Baldwin right?
Should Spring-tide Love endure delay?
And shall our bliss be seal'd ere Night?
Say, lovely Mary, softly say?

32

Why starts my Love? ... why rise to go?
Will Mary then my suit deny?
Sweet is the smile that answers, No!
By Heaven, there's rapture in her eye!

THE PROVERBS OF THREESCORE:

AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO EIGHTEEN.

[The Contrast.—Encouragement.—The Admonition.]

1

Have you seen the delightless abode,
Where Penury nurses Despair;
Where comfortless Life is a load,
Age wishes no longer to bear.
Ah! who, in this lazerhouse pent,
His lone wailings sends up to the skies?
'Tis the Man whose young prime was mispent;
'Tis he who so bitterly sighs.

2

His Youth, sunk in profligate waste,
Lest no Comforts Life's evening to cheer;
He must only it's bitterness taste,
No Friend, no kind relative near.
His Children by want forc'd to roam,
Are aliens wherever they are:
They have long left his desolate home;
Have left him alone to despair.

3

Have you seen the delectable place,
Where honor'd Age loves to abide;
Where Plenty, and Pleasure, and Peace,
With Virtue and Wisdom reside?
Autumn's Fruits he has carefully stor'd;
His Herds willing tributes abound:
And the smiles of his plenteous board,
By his Children's Children are crown'd.

4

And his is the Godlike delight,
The power to relieve the distress'd! ...
Who can contemplate blessings so bright,
And not wish to be equally bless'd.
Then let not the means be forgot:
Remember, and mark this great truth;
'Twas not Chance fix'd his prosp'rous Lot,
'Twas the Virtues of provident Youth.

5

If such a bright prospect can charm,
If you feel emulation arise,
If your juvenile bosom is warm,
With the hope to be wealthy and wise;
O cherish the noble design,
The maxims of Prudence pursue,
Application and Industry join,
'Tis the way fickle Fortune to woo.

6

Early cultivate Virtue's rich seeds;
These will fruits in Life's winter display:
Ne'er defer till to-morrow good deeds,
That as well might be finish'd to-day.
For Age and Experience can tell,
And you'll find, when you grow an old man,
Though it's never too late to do well,
You will wish you had sooner began.

MORE BREAD AND CHEESE.

A NEW SONG,

Written in the Beginning of the Year 1793.

[The Balance of Population and Supply.—The Overstock'd Hive.—The Source of War.]

TO THE TUNE OF "NOTTINGHAM ALE."

1

My Brothers of this world, of ev'ry Nation,
Some maxims of prudence the Muse would inspire.
Now restlessness reigns throughout every station;
The low would be high, and the high would be higher;
Now Freedom's the word,
That unsheaths ev'ry sword,
But don't be deceiv'd by such pretexts as these:
'Tis not Freedom, nor Slavery,

That calls for your Bravery;
'Tis, only a Scramble for more Bread and Cheese.

2

When others some party are venting their rage on,
Inflam'd by the news from Versailles or the Hague,
Let Mum be your maxim ... beware of contagion ...
For Anger is catching as Fever or Plague:
Now Victuals is scanty,
And Eaters are plenty,
The former must rise, or the latter decrease;
If in War they're employ'd,
Till one half are destroy'd,
The few that are left will have more Bread and Cheese.

3

Think not that Employment's the grand requisition;
That if men had work it would make the times good;
No man would want work if he lack'd not provision;
The cry for Employ is the cry for more Food.
Now every Trade,
From the Gown to the Spade,
Oppress'd by it's numbers feels Scarcity's squeeze;
From the Prince to the Peasant,
'Tis true, tho' unpleasant,
There must be fewer mouths, or else more Bread and Cheese.

4

Now our Hive is so pinch'd, both for room and for honey,
The industrious Bees would fain kick out the Drones:
But expose not your Life, for victuals nor money;
'Tis better you supperless sleep with whole bones,
Then shuffle, and hustle,
Keep clear of the bustle,
Step out of the way-when they kick up a breeze:
Preserve your own Life,
Till the end of the strife:
Then the few that are left will have more Bread and Cheese.

5

Think not Hell is let loose with a terrible mission,
To punish a world for incor'gible Sin.
Not from angry Gods, nor from deep Politicians,
War nat'rally springs from the Passions of Men¹³:
'Tis for room and for food,
That Men fight and shed blood¹⁴;
When sufficiently thinn'd the inducement will cease:
There'll be room for us all,
When our numbers are small:
And the few that are left will have more Bread and Cheese.

Footnote 13: [\(return\)](#)

So hath said the APOSTLE. *Ja*: iv. 1 But then these warring Passions are something very like national Sins. C.L.

Footnote 14: [\(return\)](#)

Bad as this would be, it would be well if they made not War on Motives less naturally urgent than these: "*glandem atque ambilia propter*." It is worse to make Wars of Heroical, still worse of Ministerial, and worst of all of Commercial Speculation. C.L.

LYRIC ADDRESS TO DR. JENNER.

[Vaccine Inoculation.—Distress and Terrors of the Small Pox.—Dangers of Delay.]

1

Rejoice, rejoice, Humanity!
The fell, destructive, sore Disease,

The pest of ages, now can be,
Repell'd with safety and with ease.

2

He well deserves his Country's Meed,
By whom the peerless blessing came;
And thousands from destruction freed,
Shall raptur'd speak of JENNER'S name.

3

Yes, JENNER'S vigilance is crown'd;
A sovereign antidote is given:
The Blessing flows the Nations round;
Free he diffus'd the gift of Heaven.

4

So well approv'd it's sure effect,
To turn aside the' impending harm;
And shall parental Love neglect
To minister the precious balm?

5

Oh! no; beware of dire Delay,
Ye, who caress your Infants dear:
Defer it not from day to day,
From month to month, from year to year:

6

Lest you, like me, too late lament,
Your Life bereft of all it's joy;
Clasp now the Gift so kindly sent,
Lest you behold your dying Boy!

7

Lest you see with trembling Fear,
With inexpressible Distress;
The purple spots of Death appear,
To blast your Hopes and Happiness:

8

Lest your keenest grief to wake,
Like mine your suffering prattler say,
'Go, bid my Father come and take
'These frightful Spots and Sores away.'

9

Quickly from such fears be free:
Oh! there is Danger in Delay!
Say not to-morrow it shall be: ...
To-morrow! no; to-day, to-day.

10

Embrace the Blessing Heaven hath sent;
So shall you ne'er such pangs endure:
Oh! give a Trifle to prevent,
What you would give a World to cure.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN ESSAY ON WAR, IN BLANK VERSE; HONINGTON GREEN, A
BALLAD; THE CULPRIT, AN ELEGY; AND OTHER POEMS, ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS ***

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