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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN DRYDEN,

NOW FIRST COLLECTED

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES.

ILLUSTRATED

WITH NOTES,

HISTORICAL, CRITICAL, AND EXPLANATORY,

AND

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

VOL. XI.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM MILLER, ALBEMARLE STREET,
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1808.

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EPISTLES.

EPISTLE THE FIRST,

TO HIS FRIEND

JOHN HODDESDON,

ON HIS

DIVINE EPIGRAMS.

These verses were rescued from oblivion by Mr Malone, having escaped the notice of Dryden's former editors. I have disposed them among the Epistles, that being the title which the author seems usually to have given to those copies of verses, which he sent to his friends upon their publications, and which, according to the custom of the time, were prefixed to the works to which they related. They form the second of our author's attempts at poetry hitherto discovered, the "Elegy upon Lord Hastings" being the first. The lines are distinguished by the hard and rugged versification, and strained conceit, which characterised English poetry before the Restoration. The title of Hoddesdon's book is a sufficiently odd one: "Sion and Parnassus, or Epigrams on several Texts of the Old and New Testaments," 8vo, 1650. Dryden was then a student in Trinity College, Cambridge, and about eighteen years old. The nature of the volume which called forth his poetical approbation, may lead us to suppose, that, at this time, he retained the puritanical principles in which he was doubtless educated. The verses are subscribed, *J. Dryden of Trin. C.*

EPISTLE THE FIRST.

THOU hast inspired me with thy soul, and I,
Who ne'er before could ken of poetry,
Am grown so good proficient, I can lend
A line in commendation of my friend.
Yet 'tis but of the second hand; if ought
There be in this, 'tis from thy fancy brought.
Good thief, who dar'st, Prometheus-like, aspire,
And fill thy poems with celestial fire;
Enlivened by these sparks divine, their rays
Add a bright lustre to thy crown of bays.
Young eaglet, who thy nest thus soon forsook,
So lofty and divine a course hast took,
As all admire, before the down begin
To peep, as yet, upon thy smoother chin;
And, making heaven thy aim, hast had the grace
To look the sun of righteousness i'the face.
What may we hope, if thou goest on thus fast?
Scriptures at first, enthusiams at last!
Thou hast commenced, betimes, a saint; go on,
Mingling diviner streams with Helicon,
That they who view what epigrams here be,
May learn to make like, in just praise of thee.—
Reader, I've done, nor longer will withhold
Thy greedy eyes; looking on this pure gold,
Thou'lt know adulterate copper; which, like this,
Will only serve to be a foil to his.

EPISTLE THE SECOND.

[5]

TO MY HONOURED FRIEND

SIR ROBERT HOWARD,

ON HIS

EXCELLENT POEMS.

This epistle was prefixed to Sir Robert Howard's poems, printed for Herringman, 12mo, 1660, and entered in the Stationers' books on 16th April that year. It was probably written about the commencement of Dryden's intimacy with the author, whose sister he afterwards married. Sir Robert Howard, son to the Earl of Berkshire, a man of quality, a wit, and a cavalier, was able to extend effectual patronage to a rising author; and so willing to do it, that he is even said to have received Dryden into his own house. These lines, therefore, make part of Dryden's grateful acknowledgments, of which more may be found in the prefatory letter to the "Annus Mirabilis," addressed to Sir Robert Howard.[1] The friendship of the brother poets was afterwards suspended for some time, in consequence of Sir Robert's strictures on the "Essay on Dramatic Poetry," and Dryden's contemptuous refutation of his criticism. But there is reason to believe, that this interval of coldness was of short duration; and that, if the warmth of their original intimacy was never renewed, they resumed the usual kindly intercourse of relations and friends.

The epistle itself is earlier in date than the poem called "Astrea Redux," which was probably not [6] published till the summer of 1660 was somewhat advanced. This copy of verses, therefore, is the first avowed production of our author after the Restoration, and may rank, in place and merit, with "Astrea Redux," the "Poem on the Coronation," and the "Address to the Chancellor." There is the same anxiety to turn and point every sentence, and the same tendency to extravagant and unnatural conceit. Yet it is sometimes difficult to avoid admiring the strength of the author's mind, even when employed in wresting ideas the wrong way. It is remarkable, also, that Dryden ventures to praise the verses of his patron, on account of that absence of extravagant metaphor, and that sobriety of poetic composition, for which, to judge by his own immediate practice, he ought rather to have censured them.

Those who may be induced to peruse the works of Sir Robert Howard, by the high commendation here bestowed upon them, will have more reason to praise the gratitude of our author, than the justice of his panegyric. They are productions of a most freezing mediocrity.

EPISTLE THE SECOND.

As there is music uninformed by art
In those wild notes, which, with a merry heart,
The birds in unfrequented shades express,
Who, better taught at home, yet please us less;
So in your verse a native sweetness dwells,
Which shames composure,[2] and its art excells.
Singing no more can your soft numbers grace,
Than paint adds charms unto a beauteous face.[3]
Yet as when mighty rivers gently creep,
Their even calmness does suppose them deep,
Such is your muse: no metaphor swelled high
With dangerous boldness lifts her to the sky:
Those mounting fancies, when they fall again,
Show sand and dirt at bottom do remain.
So firm a strength, and yet withal so sweet,
Did never but in Sampson's riddle meet.
'Tis strange each line so great a weight should bear,
And yet no sign of toil, no sweat appear.
Either your art hides art, as stoics feign
Then least to feel, when most they suffer pain;
And we, dull souls, admire, but cannot see [8]
What hidden springs within the engine be:
Or 'tis some happiness, that still pursues
Each act and motion of your graceful muse.
Or is it fortune's work, that in your head
The curious net that is for fancies spread,[4]
Lets through its meshes every meaner thought,
While rich ideas there are only caught?
Sure that's not all; this is a piece too fair
To be the child of chance, and not of care.
No atoms, casually together hurled,
Could e'er produce so beautiful a world;
Nor dare I such a doctrine here admit,
As would destroy the providence of wit.
'Tis your strong genius, then, which does not feel
Those weights, would make a weaker spirit reel.
To carry weight, and run so lightly too,
Is what alone your Pegasus can do.
Great Hercules himself could ne'er do more,
Than not to feel those heavens and gods he bore.
Your easier odes, which for delight were penned,
Yet our instruction make their second end;
We're both enriched and pleased, like them that woo
At once a beauty, and a fortune too.
Of moral knowledge poesy was queen,
And still she might, had wanton wits not been;
Who, like ill guardians, lived themselves at large,
And, not content with that, debauched their charge.
Like some brave captain, your successful pen
Restores the exiled to her crown again;
And gives us hope, that having seen the days
When nothing flourished but fanatic bays,
All will at length in this opinion rest,—
"A sober prince's government is best."
This is not all; your art the way has found [9]
To make improvement of the richest ground;
That soil which those immortal laurels bore,
That once the sacred Maro's temples wore.[5]
Eliza's griefs are so expressed by you,
They are too eloquent to have been true.
Had she so spoke, Æneas had obeyed
What Dido, rather than what Jove, had said.
If funeral rites can give a ghost repose,
Your muse so justly has discharged those,
Eliza's shade may now its wandering cease,
And claim a title to the fields of peace.

But if Æneas be obliged, no less
Your kindness great Achilles doth confess;
Who, dressed by Statius in too bold a look,
Did ill become those virgin robes he took.[6]
To understand how much we owe to you,
We must your numbers, with your author's, view:
Then we shall see his work was lamely rough,
Each figure stiff, as if designed in buff;
His colours laid so thick on every place,
As only showed the paint, but hid the face.
But, as in perspective, we beauties see,
Which in the glass, not in the picture, be;
So here our sight obligingly mistakes
That wealth, which his your bounty only makes.
Thus vulgar dishes are, by cooks, disguised,
More for their dressing than their substance prized.
Your curious notes[7] so search into that age, [10]
When all was fable but the sacred page,
That, since in that dark night we needs must stray,
We are at least misled in pleasant way.
But, what we most admire, your verse no less
The prophet than the poet doth confess.
Ere our weak eyes discerned the doubtful streak
Of light, you saw great Charles his morning break:[8]
So skilful seamen ken the land from far,
Which shows like mists to the dull passenger.
To Charles your muse first pays her duteous love,
As still the ancients did begin from Jove;
With Monk you end,[9] whose name preserved shall be,
As Rome recorded Rufus' memory;
Who thought it greater honour to obey
His country's interest, than the world to sway.[10]
But to write worthy things of worthy men,
Is the peculiar talent of your pen;
Yet let me take your mantle up, and I
Will venture, in your right, to prophecy:—
"This work, by merit first of fame secure, [11]
Is likewise happy in its geniture;[11]
For since 'tis born when Charles ascends the throne,
It shares at once his fortune and its own."

EPISTLE THE THIRD. [12]

TO MY HONOURED FRIEND

DR CHARLETON,

ON HIS

LEARNED AND USEFUL WORKS,

BUT MORE PARTICULARLY HIS TREATISE OF STONEHENGE,

BY HIM RESTORED TO THE TRUE

FOUNDER.

WALTER CHARLETON, M.D. was born in 1619, and educated at Oxford to the profession of physic, in which he became very eminent. During the residence of King Charles I. at Oxford, in the civil wars, Charleton became one of the physicians in ordinary to his majesty. He afterwards settled in London; and, having a strong bent towards philosophical and historical investigation, became intimate with the most learned and liberal of his profession, particularly with Ent and Harvey. He wrote several treatises in the dark period preceding the Restoration, when, the government being in the hands of swordsmen equally ignorant and fanatical, a less ardent mind would have been discouraged from investigations, attended neither by fame nor profit. These essays were upon physical, philosophical, and moral subjects. After the Restoration, Charleton published the work upon which he is here congratulated by our author. Its full title is, "CHOREA GIGANTUM, or the most famous antiquity of Great Britain, STONEHENGE, standing on Salisbury Plain, restored to the Danes. By Walter Charleton, M.D., and Physician in Ordinary to his Majesty. London, 1663, 4to." [13] The opinion which Dr Charleton had formed concerning the origin of this stupendous monument is strengthened by the information which he received from the famous northern antiquary, Olaus Wormius. But it is nevertheless hypothetical, and inconsistent with evidence; for Stonehenge is expressly mentioned by Nennius, who wrote two hundred years before the arrival of the Danes in Britain. If it be true, which is alleged by some writers, that it was anciently called Stan-Hengist, or, indeed, whether that be true or no, the monument seems likely to have been a Saxon erection, during their days of paganism; for it is neither mentioned by Cæsar nor Tacitus, who were both likely to have noticed a structure of so remarkable an appearance. Leaving the book to return to the author, I am sorry to add, that this learned man, after being president of the College of Physicians, and thus having attained the highest honours of his profession, in 1691 fell into embarrassed circumstances, which forced him shortly after to take refuge in the island of Jersey. It is uncertain if Dr Charleton ever returned from this sort of exile; but his death took place in 1707, at the advanced age of eighty-eight years.

Dr Charleton's hypothesis concerning Stonehenge was but indifferently received. It was considered as a personal attack on Inigo Jones, who had formed a much more fantastic opinion upon the subject, conceiving the stones to form a temple, dedicated, by the Romans, to the god Cælus, or Cælum. To the disgrace of that great architect's accuracy, it seems probable that he never had seen the monument which he attempts to describe; for he has converted an irregular polygon into a regular hexagon, in order to suit his own system. Dryden sided with Charleton in his theory; and, in the following elegant epistle, compliments him as having discovered the long-forgotten cause of this strange monument. The verses are not only valuable for the poetry and numbers, but for the accurate and interesting account which they present of the learning and philosophers of the age. It was probably written soon before the publication of Charleton's book in 1663. Sir Robert Howard also favoured Dr Charleton with a copy of recommendatory verses. Both poems are prefixed to the second edition of the "Chorea Gigantum," which is the only one I have seen. That of Dryden seems to have been afterwards revised and corrected.

EPISTLE THE THIRD.

[14]

THE longest tyranny that ever swayed,
Was that wherein our ancestors betrayed
Their free-born reason to the Stagyrite,
And made his torch their universal light.
So truth, while only one supplied the state,
Grew scarce, and dear, and yet sophisticate.
Still it was[12] bought, like emp'ric wares, or charms,
Hard words sealed up with Aristotle's arms.
Columbus was the first that shook his throne,
And found a temperate in a torrid zone:
The feverish air, fanned by a cooling breeze;
The fruitful vales, set round with shady trees;
And guiltless men, who danced away their time,
Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.
Had we still paid that homage to a name,
Which only God and nature justly claim,
The western seas had been our utmost bound,
Where poets still might dream the sun was drowned;
And all the stars, that shine in southern skies,
Had been admired by none but savage eyes.
  Among the assertors of free reason's claim, [15]
Our nation's not[13] the least in worth or fame.
The world to Bacon[14] does not only owe
Its present knowledge, but its future too.
Gilbert[15] shall live, till loadstones cease to draw,
Or British fleets the boundless ocean awe.
And noble Boyle,[16] not less in nature seen,
Than his great brother, read in states and men.
The circling streams, once thought but pools, of blood,
(Whether life's fuel, or the body's food,)
From dark oblivion Harvey's[17] name shall save;
While Ent keeps all the honour that he gave.
Nor are you, learned friend, the least renowned; [16]
Whose fame, not circumscribed with English ground,
Flies like the nimble journies of the light,
And is, like that, unspent too in its flight.
Whatever truths have been, by art or chance,
Redeemed from error, or from ignorance,
Thin in their authors, like rich veins of ore,
Your works unite, and still discover more.
Such is the healing virtue of your pen,
To perfect cures on books, as well as men.
Nor is this work the least; you well may give
To men new vigour, who make stones to live.
Through you, the Danes, their short dominion lost,
A longer conquest than the Saxons boast.
Stonehenge, once thought a temple, you have found
A throne, where kings, our earthly gods, were crowned;
Where by their wondering subjects they were seen,
Joyed[18] with their stature, and their princely mien.
Our sovereign here above the rest might stand,
And here be chose again to rule the land.
  These ruins sheltered once his sacred head,
When he from Wor'ster's fatal battle fled;
Watched by the genius of this royal place,
And mighty visions of the Danish race.
His refuge then was for a temple shown;
But, he restored, 'tis now become a throne.[19]

[18]

EPISTLE THE FOURTH.

TO THE

LADY CASTLEMAIN,

UPON HER ENCOURAGING HIS FIRST PLAY,

THE WILD GALLANT,

ACTED IN 1662-3.

Barbara Villiers, heiress of William Viscount Grandison, in Ireland, and wife of Roger Palmer, Esq., was the first favourite, who after the Restoration of Charles II. enjoyed the power and consequence of a royal mistress. It is even said, that the king took her from her husband, upon the very day of his landing, and raised him, in compensation, to the rank and title of Earl of Castlemain. The lady herself was created Lady Nonsuch, Countess of Southampton, and finally Duchess of Cleveland. She bore the king three sons and three daughters, and long enjoyed a considerable share of his favour.

It would seem, that, in 1662-3, while Lady Castlemain was in the very height of her reign, she extended her patronage to our author, upon his commencing his dramatic career. In the preface to his first play, "The Wild Gallant," he acknowledges, that it met with very indifferent success, and had been condemned by the greater part of the audience. But he adds, "it was well received at court, and was more than once the divertisement of his majesty by his own command."[20]

[19] These marks of royal favour were doubtless owing to the intercession of Lady Castlemain. If we can trust the sarcasm thrown out by a contemporary satirist, our author piqued himself more on this light and gallant effusion, than its importance deserved.[21] The verses abound with sprightly and ingenious turns; and the conceits, which were the taste of the age, shew to some advantage on such an occasion. There is, however, little propriety in comparing the influence of the royal mistress to the virtue of Cato.

EPISTLE THE FOURTH.

[20]

As seamen, shipwrecked on some happy shore,
Discover wealth in lands unknown before;
And, what their art had laboured long in vain,
By their misfortunes happily obtain:
So my much-envied muse, by storms long tost,
Is thrown upon your hospitable coast,
And finds more favour by her ill success,
Than she could hope for by her happiness.
Once Cato's virtue did the gods oppose;
While they the victor, he the vanquished chose;
But you have done what Cato could not do,
To choose the vanquished, and restore him too.
Let others still triumph, and gain their cause
By their deserts, or by the world's applause;
Let merit crowns, and justice laurels give,
But let me happy by your pity live.
True poets empty fame and praise despise,
Fame is the trumpet, but your smile the prize.[22]
You sit above, and see vain men below
Contend for what you only can bestow;
But those great actions others do by chance,
Are, like your beauty, your inheritance:
So great a soul, such sweetness joined in one,
Could only spring from noble Grandison.
You, like the stars, not by reflection bright, [21]
Are born to your own heaven, and your own light;
Like them are good, but from a nobler cause,
From your own knowledge, not from nature's laws.
Your power you never use, but for defence,
To guard your own, or others' innocence:
Your foes are such, as they, not you, have made,
And virtue may repel, though not invade.
Such courage did the ancient heroes show,
Who, when they might prevent, would wait the blow;
With such assurance as they meant to say,
We will o'ercome, but scorn the safest way.
What further fear of danger can there be?
Beauty, which captives all things, sets me free.
Posterity will judge by my success,
I had the Grecian poet's happiness,
Who, waving plots, found out a better way;
Some God descended, and preserved the play.
When first the triumphs of your sex were sung
By those old poets, beauty was but young,
And few admired the native red and white,
Till poets dressed them up to charm the sight;
So beauty took on trust, and did engage
For sums of praises till she came to age.
But this long-growing debt to poetry,
You justly, madam, have discharged to me,
When your applause and favour did infuse
New life to my condemned and dying muse.

EPISTLE THE FIFTH.

TO

MR LEE,

ON HIS TRAGEDY OF

THE RIVAL QUEENS, OR ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

1677.

"The Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great," of Nathaniel Lee, has been always deemed the most capital performance of its unfortunate author. There is nothing throughout the play that is tame or indifferent; all is either exquisitely good, or extravagantly bombastic, though some passages hover between the sublime and the ludicrous. Addison has justly remarked, that Lee's "thoughts are wonderfully suited for tragedy, but frequently lost in such a crowd of words, that it is hard to see the beauty of them. There is infinite fire in his works, but so involved in smoke, that it does not appear in half its lustre."

Lee and our author lived on terms of strict friendship, and wrote, in conjunction, "Œdipus," and the "Duke of Guise." Lee's madness and confinement in Bedlam are well known; as also his repartee to a coxcomb, who told him, it was easy to write like a madman:—"No," answered the poet, "it is not easy to write like a madman, but it is very easy to write like a fool." Dryden elegantly apologizes, in the following verses, for the extravagance of his style of poetry. Lee's death was very melancholy: Being discharged from Bedlam, and returning by night from a tavern, in a state of intoxication, to his lodgings in Duke-street, he fell down somewhere in Clare-Market, and was either killed by a carriage driving over him, or stifled in the snow, which was then deep. Thus died this eminent dramatic poet in the year 1691, or 1692, in the 35th year of his age.

EPISTLE THE FIFTH.

THE blast of common censure could I fear,
Before your play my name should not appear;
For 'twill be thought, and with some colour too,
I pay the bribe I first received from you;
That mutual vouchers for our fame we stand,
And play the game into each others hand;
And as cheap pen'orths to ourselves afford,
As Bessus and the brothers of the sword.[23]
Such libels private men may well endure,
When states and kings themselves are not secure;
For ill men, conscious of their inward guilt,
Think the best actions on by-ends are built.
And yet my silence had not 'scaped their spite;
Then, envy had not suffered me to write;
For, since I could not ignorance pretend,
Such merit I must envy or commend.
So many candidates there stand for wit, [24]
A place at court is scarce so hard to get:
In vain they crowd each other at the door;
For e'en reversions are all begged before:
Desert, how known soe'er, is long delayed,
And then, too, fools and knaves are better paid.
Yet, as some actions bear so great a name,
That courts themselves are just, for fear of shame;
So has the mighty merit of your play
Extorted praise, and forced itself a way.
'Tis here as 'tis at sea; who farthest goes,
Or dares the most, makes all the rest his foes.
Yet when some virtue much outgrows the rest,
It shoots too fast, and high, to be suppress;
As his heroic worth struck envy dumb,
Who took the Dutchman, and who cut the boom.[24]
Such praise is yours, while you the passions move,
That 'tis no longer feigned, 'tis real love,
Where nature triumphs over wretched art;
We only warm the head, but you the heart.
Always you warm; and if the rising year,
As in hot regions, brings the sun too near,
'Tis but to make your fragrant spices blow,
Which in our cooler climates will not grow.
They only think you animate your theme
With too much fire, who are themselves all phlegm.
Prizes would be for lags of slowest pace, [25]
Were cripples made the judges of the race.
Despise those drones, who praise, while they accuse,
The too much vigour of your youthful muse.
That humble style, which they your virtue make,
Is in your power; you need but stoop and take.
Your beauteous images must be allowed
By all, but some vile poets of the crowd.
But how should any sign-post dauber know
The worth of Titian, or of Angelo?
Hard features every bungler can command;
To draw true beauty, shews a master's hand.

EPISTLE THE SIXTH. [26]

TO THE

EARL OF ROSCOMMON,

ON HIS EXCELLENT

ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE.

The Earl of Roscommon's "Essay on Translated Verse," a work which abounds with much excellent criticism, expressed in correct, succinct, and manly language, was first published in 4to, in 1680: a second edition, corrected and enlarged, appeared in 1684. To both editions are prefixed the following copy of verses by our author; and to the second there is also one in Latin by his son Charles Dryden, afterwards translated by Mr Needler.

The high applause which our author has here and elsewhere[25] bestowed on the "Essay on Translated Verse," is censured by Dr Johnson, as unmerited and exaggerated. But while something is allowed for the partiality of a friend, and the zeal of a panegyrist, it must also be remembered, that the rules of criticism, now so well known as to be even trite and hackneyed, were then almost new to the literary world, and that translation was but then beginning to be emancipated from the fetters of verbal and literal versions. But Johnson elsewhere does [27] Roscommon more justice, where he acknowledges, that "he improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors of English literature."

Dryden has testified, in several places of his works, that he loved and honoured Roscommon; particularly by inscribing and applying to him his version of the Third Ode of the First Book of Horace.[26] Roscommon repaid these favours by a copy of verses addressed to Dryden on the "Religio Laici."[27]

EPISTLE THE SIXTH.

WHETHER the fruitful Nile, or Tyrian shore,
The seeds of arts and infant science bore,
'Tis sure the noble plant, translated first,
Advanced its head in Grecian gardens nurst.
The Grecians added verse; their tuneful tongue
Made nature first, and nature's God their song.
Nor stopt translation here; for conquering Rome,
With Grecian spoils, brought Grecian numbers home;
Enriched by those Athenian muses more,
Than all the vanquished world could yield before.
Till barbarous nations, and more barbarous times,
Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes;
Those rude at first; a kind of hobbling prose,
That limped along, and tinkled in the close.
But Italy, reviving from the trance
Of Vandal, Goth, and Monkish ignorance,
With pauses, cadence, and well-vowel'd words,
And all the graces a good ear affords,
Made rhyme an art, and Dante's polished page
Restored a silver, not a golden age.
Then Petrarch followed, and in him we see,
What rhyme improved in all its height can be;
At best a pleasing sound, and fair barbarity.
The French pursued their steps; and Britain, last,
In manly sweetness all the rest surpassed.
The wit of Greece, the gravity of Rome,
Appear exalted in the British loom:
The Muses' empire is restored again, [29]
In Charles his reign, and by Roscommon's pen.
Yet modestly he does his work survey,
And calls a finished poem an essay;
For all the needful rules are scattered here;
Truth smoothly told, and pleasantly severe;
So well is art disguised, for nature to appear.
Nor need those rules to give translation light;
His own example is a flame so bright,
That he, who but arrives to copy well,
Unguided will advance, unknowing will excel.
Scarce his own Horace could such rules ordain,
Or his own Virgil sing a nobler strain.
How much in him may rising Ireland boast,
How much in gaining him has Britain lost!
Their island in revenge has ours reclaimed;
The more instructed we, the more we still are shamed.
'Tis well for us his generous blood did flow,
Derived from British channels long ago,[28]
That here his conquering ancestors were nurst,
And Ireland but translated England first:
By this reprizal we regain our right,
Else must the two contending nations fight;
A nobler quarrel for his native earth,
Than what divided Greece for Homer's birth.
To what perfection will our tongue arrive,
How will invention and translation thrive,
When authors nobly born will bear their part,
And not disdain the inglorious praise of art!
Great generals thus, descending from command,
With their own toil provoke the soldier's hand.
How will sweet Ovid's ghost be pleased to hear [30]
His fame augmented by an English peer;[29]
How he embellishes his Helen's loves,
Outdoes his softness, and his sense improves?
When these translate, and teach translators too,
Nor firstling kid, nor any vulgar vow,
Should at Apollo's grateful altar stand:
Roscommon writes; to that auspicious hand,
Muse, feed the bull that spurns the yellow

Muse, feed the bull that spurns the yellow
sand.
Roscommon, whom both court and camps commend,
True to his prince, and faithful to his friend;
Roscommon, first in fields of honour known,
First in the peaceful triumphs of the gown;
Who both Minervas justly makes his own.
Now let the few beloved by Jove, and they
Whom infused Titan formed of better clay,
On equal terms with ancient wit engage,
Nor mighty Homer fear, nor sacred Virgil's page:
Our English palace opens wide in state,
And without stooping they may pass the gate.

EPISTLE THE SEVENTH. [31]

TO THE

DUCHESS OF YORK,

ON HER

RETURN FROM SCOTLAND, IN THE YEAR 1682.

These smooth and elegant lines are addressed to Mary of Este, second wife of James Duke of York, and afterwards his queen. She was at this time in all the splendour of beauty; tall, and admirably formed in her person; dignified and graceful in her deportment, her complexion very fair, and her hair and eye-brows of the purest black. Her personal charms fully merited the encomiastic strains of the following epistle.

The Duchess accompanied her husband to Scotland, where he was sent into a kind of honorary banishment, during the dependence of the Bill of Exclusion. Upon the dissolution of the Oxford parliament, the Duke visited the court in triumph; and after two months stay, returned to Scotland, and in his voyage suffered the misfortune of shipwreck, elsewhere mentioned particularly.[30] Having settled the affairs of Scotland, he returned with his family to England; whence he had been virtually banished for three years. His return was hailed by the poets of the [32]
royal party with unbounded congratulation. It is celebrated by Tate, in the Second Part of "Absalom and Achitophel;"[31] and by our author, in a prologue spoken before the Duke and Duchess.[32] But, not contented with that expression of zeal, Dryden paid the following additional tribute upon the same occasion.

EPISTLE THE SEVENTH.

[33]

WHEN factious rage to cruel exile drove
The queen of beauty, and the court of love,
The Muses drooped, with their forsaken arts,
And the sad Cupids broke their useless darts;
Our fruitful plains to wilds and desarts turned,
Like Eden's face, when banished man it mourned.
Love was no more, when loyalty was gone,
The great supporter of his awful throne.
Love could no longer after beauty stay,
But wandered northward to the verge of day,
As if the sun and he had lost their way.
But now the illustrious nymph, returned again,
Brings every grace triumphant in her train.
The wondering Nereids, though they raised no storm,
Foreslowed her passage, to behold her form:
Some cried, A Venus; some, A Thetis past;
But this was not so fair, nor that so chaste.
Far from her sight flew Faction, Strife, and Pride;
And Envy did but look on her, and died.
Whate'er we suffered from our sullen fate,
Her sight is purchased at an easy rate.
Three gloomy years against this day were set;
But this one mighty sum has cleared the debt:
Like Joseph's dream, but with a better doom,
The famine past, the plenty still to come.
For her, the weeping heavens become serene;
For her, the ground is clad in cheerful green;
For her, the nightingales are taught to sing, [34]
And Nature has for her delayed the spring.
The Muse resumes her long-forgotten lays,
And Love restored his ancient realm surveys,
Recals our beauties, and revives our plays,
His waste dominions peoples once again,
And from her presence dates his second reign.
But awful charms on her fair forehead sit,
Dispensing what she never will admit;
Pleasing, yet cold, like Cynthia's silver beam,
The people's wonder, and the poet's theme.
Distempered zeal, sedition, cankered hate,
No more shall vex the church, and tear the state;
No more shall faction civil discords move,
Or only discords of too tender love:
Discord, like that of music's various parts;
Discord, that makes the harmony of hearts;
Discord, that only this dispute shall bring,
Who best shall love the duke, and serve the king.

EPISTLE THE EIGHTH. [35]

TO MY FRIEND,

MR J. NORTHLEIGH,

AUTHOR OF

THE PARALLEL;

ON HIS

TRIUMPH OF THE BRITISH MONARCHY.

These verses have been recovered by Mr Malone, and are transferred, from his life of Dryden, into the present collection of his works. John Northleigh was by profession a student of law, though he afterwards became a physician; and was in politics a keen Tory. He wrote "The Parallel, or the new specious Association, an old rebellious Covenant, closing with a disparity between a true Patriot and a factious Associator." London, 1682, folio. This work was anonymous; but attracted so much applause among the High-churchmen, that, according to Wood, Dr Lawrence Womack called the author "an excellent person, whose name his own modesty, or prudence, as well as the iniquity of the times, keeps from us."

Proceeding in the same track of politics, Northleigh published two pamphlets on the side of the Tories, in the dispute between the petitioners and abhorrers; and finally produced, "The Triumph of our Monarchy, over the Plots and Principles of our Rebels and Republicans, being remarks on their most eminent Libels. London, 1685." This last publication called forth the following lines [36] from our author.

Northleigh was the son of a Hamburgh merchant, and born in that city. He became a student in Exeter College, in 1674, aged 17 years; and was, it appears, studying law in the Inner Temple in 1685, when his book was published. He was then, consequently, about 28 years old; so that his genius was not peculiarly premature, notwithstanding our author's compliment. He afterwards took a medical degree at Cambridge, and practised physic at Exeter.—Wood, *Athenæ Oxon*. Vol. II. p. 962.

These verses, like the address to Hoddesdon, are ranked among the Epistles, because Dryden gave that title to other recommendatory verses of the same nature.

EPISTLE THE EIGHTH.

So Joseph, yet a youth, expounded well
The boding dream, and did the event foretell;
Judged by the past, and drew the Parallel.
Thus early Solomon the truth explored,
The right awarded, and the babe restored.
Thus Daniel, ere to prophecy he grew,
The perjured Presbyters did first subdue,
And freed Susanna from the canting crew.
Well may our monarchy triumphant stand,
While warlike James protects both sea and land;
And, under covert of his seven-fold shield,
Thou send'st thy shafts to scour the distant field.
By law thy powerful pen has set us free;
Thou studiest that, and that may study thee.

EPISTLE THE NINTH. [38]

A

LETTER

TO

SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE.

Sir George Etherege, as a lively and witty companion, a smooth sonnetteer, and an excellent writer of comedy, was in high reputation in the seventeenth century. He lived on terms of intimacy with the men of genius, and with those of rank, at the court of Charles the Second, and appears to have been particularly acquainted with Dryden. Etherege enjoyed in a particular manner the favour of Queen Mary of Este, through whose influence he was sent envoy to Hamburgh, and afterwards became resident minister at Ratisbon. In this situation, he did not cease to interest himself in the progress of English literature; and we have several of his letters, both in prose and verse, written with great wit and vivacity, to the Duke of Buckingham, and other persons of wit and honour at the court of London. Among others, he wrote an epistle in verse to the Earl of Middleton, who engaged Dryden to return the following answer to it. As Sir George's verses are lively and pleasing, I have prefixed them to Dryden's epistle. Both pieces, with a second letter from Etherege to Middleton, appeared in Dryden's Miscellanies.

Our poet's epistle to Sir George Etherege affords an example how easily Dryden could adapt his poetry to the style which the moment required; since, although this is the only instance in which [39] he has used the verse of eight syllables, it flows as easily from his pen as if he had never written in another measure. This is the more remarkable, as, in the "Essay on Satire," Dryden speaks very contemptuously of the eight syllable, or Hudibrastic measure, and the ornaments proper to it, as a little instrument, unworthy the use of a great master.[33] Here, however, he happily retorts upon the witty knight, with his own weapons of gallant and courtly ridicule, and acquits himself, as well in the light arms of a polite and fashionable courtier, as when he wields the trenchant brand of his own keen satire.

Our author had formerly favoured Sir George Etherege with an excellent epilogue to his popular play, called "The Man of Mode," acted in 1676, and he occasionally speaks of him in his writings with great respect. The date of this epistle is not easily ascertained. From a letter of Etherege to the Duke of Buckingham, it appears, that Sir George was at Ratisbon when Dryden was engaged in his controversial poetry;[34] but whether that letter be previous or subsequent to the epistle to the Earl of Middleton, seems uncertain.

Considering the high reputation which Sir George Etherege enjoyed, and the figure which he made as a courtier and a man of letters, it is humbling to add, that we have no accurate information concerning the time or manner of his death. It seems certain, that he never returned from the Continent; but it is dubious, whether, according to one report, he followed the fortunes of King James, and resided with him at the court of St Germains till his death, or whether, as others have said, that event was occasioned by his falling down the stairs of his own house at Ratisbon, when, after drinking freely with a large company, he was attempting to do the honours of their retreat. From the date of the letter to the Duke of Buckingham, 21st October, 1689, it is plain he was then at Ratisbon; and it is somewhat singular, that he appears to have retained his official situation of Resident, though nearly twelve months had elapsed since the Revolution. This seems to give countenance to the latter report of his having died at Ratisbon. The date of that event was probably about 1694.

SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE,

[40]

TO THE

EARL OF MIDDLETON.[35]

SINCE love and verse, as well as wine,
Are brisker where the sun does shine,
'Tis something to lose two degrees,
Now age itself begins to freeze:
Yet this I patiently could bear,
If the rough Danube's beauties were
But only two degrees less fair
Than the bright nymphs of gentle Thames,
Who warm me hither with their beams:
Such power they have, they can dispense
Five hundred miles their influence.
But hunger forces men to eat,
Though no temptation's in the meat.
How would the ogling sparks despise
The darling damsel of my eyes,
Should they behold her at a play,
As she's tricked up on holiday,
When the whole family combine,
For public pride, to make her shine!
Her locks, which long before lay matted,
Are on this day combed out and plaited;
A diamond bodkin in each tress,
The badges of her nobleness;
For every stone, as well as she,
Can boast an ancient pedigree.
These formed the jewel erst did grace
The cap of the first Grave[36] o' the race,
Preferred by Graffin[37] Marian
To adorn the handle of her fan;
And, as by old record appears,
Worn since in Kunigunda's years,
Now sparkling in the froein's hair;[38]
No rocket breaking in the air
Can with her starry head compare.
Such ropes of pearl her arms encumber,
She scarce can deal the cards at omber;
So many rings each finger freight,
They tremble with the mighty weight.
The like in England ne'er was seen,
Since Holbein drew Hal[39] and his queen:
But after these fantastic flights,
The lustre's meaner than the lights.
The thing that bears this glittering pomp
Is but a tawdry ill-bred romp,
Whose brawny limbs and martial face
Proclaim her of the Gothic race,
More than the mangled pageantry
Of all the father's heraldry.
But there's another sort of creatures,
Whose ruddy look and grotesque features
Are so much out of nature's way,
You'd think them stamped on other clay,
No lawful daughters of old Adam.
'Mongst these behold a city madam,
With arms in mittins, head in muff,
A dapper cloak, and reverend ruff:
No farce so pleasant as this maukin,
And the soft sound of High-Dutch talking.
Here, unattended by the Graces,
The queen of love in a sad case is.

[41]

Nature, her active minister,
Neglects affairs, and will not stir;
Thinks it not worth the while to please,
But when she does it for her ease.
Even I, her most devout adorer,
With wandering thoughts appear before her,
And when I'm making an oblation,
Am fain to spur imagination
With some sham London inclination:
The bow is bent at German dame,
The arrow flies at English game.
Kindness, that can indifference warm,
And blow that calm into a storm,
Has in the very tenderest hour
Over my gentleness a power;
True to my country-women's charms,
When kissed and pressed in foreign arms.

EPISTLE THE NINTH.

To you, who live in chill degree,
As map informs, of fifty-three,[40]
And do not much for cold atone,
By bringing thither fifty-one,
Methinks all climes should be alike,
From tropic even to pole artique;
Since you have such a constitution
As no where suffers diminution.
You can be old in grave debate,
And young in love affairs of state;
And both to wives and husbands show
The vigour of a plenipo.
Like mighty missioner you come
Ad Partes Infidelium.
A work of wonderous merit sure,
So far to go, so much t'endure;
And all to preach to German dame, [43]
Where sound of Cupid never came.
Less had you done, had you been sent
As far as Drake or Pinto went,
For cloves or nutmegs to the line-a,
Or even for oranges to China.
That had indeed been charity,
Where love-sick ladies helpless lie,
Chapt, and, for want of liquor, dry.
But you have made your zeal appear
Within the circle of the Bear.
What region of the earth's so dull,
That is not of your labours full?
Triptolemus (so sung the Nine)
Strewed plenty from his cart divine;
But spite of all these fable-makers,
He never sowed on Almain acres.
No, that was left by fate's decree
To be performed and sung by thee.
Thou break'st through forms with as much ease
As the French king through articles.
In grand affairs thy days are spent,
In waging weighty compliment,
With such as monarchs represent.
They, whom such vast fatigues attend,
Want some soft minutes to unbend,
To shew the world that, now and then,
Great ministers are mortal men.
Then Rhenish rummers walk the round;
In bumpers every king is crowned;
Besides three holy mitred Hectors,[41]
And the whole college of Electors.
No health of potentate is sunk, [44]
That pays to make his envoy drunk.
These Dutch delights, I mentioned last,
Suit not, I know, your English taste:
For wine to leave a whore or play,
Was ne'er your Excellency's way.[42]
Nor need this title give offence, [45]
For here you were your Excellence;
For gaming, writing, speaking, keeping,
His Excellence for all—but sleeping.
Now if you tope in form, and treat,
'Tis the sour sauce to the sweet meat,
The fine you pay for being great.
Nay, here's a harder imposition,
Which is indeed the court's petition,
That, setting worldly pomp aside,
Which poet has at font denied,
You would be pleased in humble way

To write a trifle called a Play.
This truly is a degradation,
But would oblige the crown and nation
Next to your wise negotiation.
If you pretend, as well you may,
Your high degree, your friends will say,
The duke St Aignon made a play.
If Gallic wit convince you scarce,
His grace of Bucks has made a farce,
And you, whose comic wit is terse all,
Can hardly fall below Rehearsal.
Then finish what you have began, [46]
But scribble faster if you can;
For yet no George, to our discerning,
Has writ without a ten years warning.[43]

EPISTLE THE TENTH. [47]

TO

MR SOUTHERNE,

ON HIS COMEDY

CALLED

THE WIVES' EXCUSE,

ACTED IN 1692.

SOUTHERNE,—well known to the present age as a tragic writer, for his Isabella has been ranked among the first-rate parts of our inimitable Siddons,—was also distinguished by his contemporaries as a successful candidate for the honours of the comic muse. Two of his comedies, "The Mother in Fashion," and "Sir Anthony Love," had been represented with success, when, in 1692, the "Wives' Excuse, or Cuckolds make Themselves," was brought forward. The tone of that piece approaches what we now call genteel comedy: but, whether owing to the flatness into which such plays are apt to slide, for want of the *vis comica* which enlivens the more animated, though coarser, effusions of the lower comedy, or to some strokes of satire directed against music meetings, and other places of fashionable resort, "The Wives' Excuse" was unfortunate in the representation. The author, in the dedication of the printed play,[44] has hinted at the latter cause as that of his defeat; and vindicates himself from the idea of reflecting upon [48] music meetings, or any other resort of the people of fashion, by urging, that although a *billet doux* is represented as being there delivered, "such a thing has been done before now in a church, without the place being thought the worse of." But Southerne consoles himself for the disapprobation of the audience with the favour of Dryden, who, says he, "speaking of this play, has publicly said, the town was kind to 'Sir Anthony Love;' I needed them only to be just to this." And, after mentioning that Dryden had intrusted to him, upon the credit of this play, the task of completing "Cleomenes,"[45] he triumphantly adds,—"If modesty be sometimes a weakness, what I say can hardly be a crime: in a fair English trial, both parties are allowed to be heard; and without this vanity of mentioning Mr Dryden, I had lost the best evidence of my cause." Dryden, not satisfied with a verbal exertion of his patronage, consoled his friend under his discomfiture, by addressing to him the following Epistle, in which his failure is ascribed to the taste for bustling intrigue, and for low and farcical humour.

It is not the Editor's business to trace Southerne's life, or poetical career. He was born in the county of Dublin, in 1659; and produced, in his twenty-third year, the tragedy of "The Loyal Brother," which Dryden honoured with a prologue. On this occasion, Southerne's acquaintance with our bard took place, under the whimsical circumstances mentioned Vol. X. p. 372. The aged bard furnished also a prologue to Southerne's "Disappointment, or Mother in Fashion;" and as he had repeatedly ushered him to success, he presented him with the following lines to console him under disappointment. The poets appear to have continued on the most friendly terms until Dryden's death. Southerne survived him many years, and lived to be praised by the rising generation of a second century, for mildness of manners, and that cheerful and amiable disposition, which rarely is found in old age, unless from the happy union of a body at ease, and a conscience void of offence. When this dramatist was sixty-five, his last play, called "Money the Mistress," was acted, with a prologue by Welsted, containing the following beautiful lines:[46]

[49]

To you, ye fair, for patronage he sues;
O last defend, who first inspired his muse!
In your soft service he has past his days,
And gloried to be born for woman's praise:
Deprest at length, and in your cause decayed,
The good old man to beauty bends for aid;
That beauty, he has taught so oft to moan!
That ne'er let Imoinda weep alone,
And made his Isabella's griefs its own!
Ere you arose to life, ye blooming train;
Ere time brought forth our pleasure and our pain;
He melted hearts, to monarchs' vows denied,
And softened to distress unconquered pride:
O! then protect, in his declining years,
The man, that filled your mother's eyes with tears!
The last of Charles's bards! The living name,
That rose, in that Augustan age, to fame!
And you, his brother authors, bravely dare
To join to-night the squadrons of the fair;
With zeal protect your veteran writer's page,
And save the drama's father, in his age:
Nor let the wreath from his grey head be torn,
For half a century with honour worn!
His merits let your tribe to mind recal;
Of some the patron, and the friend to all!
In him the poets' Nestor ye defend!
Great Otway's peer, and greater Dryden's friend.

Southerne, on his eighty-first birth day, was complimented with a copy of verses by Pope; and on 26th May, 1746, he died at the advanced age of eighty-five and upwards.

EPISTLE THE TENTH.

[50]

SURE there's a fate in plays, and 'tis in vain
To write, while these malignant planets reign.
Some very foolish influence rules the pit,
Not always kind to sense, or just to wit;
And whilst it lasts, let buffoonry succeed,
To make us laugh, for never was more need.
Farce, in itself, is of a nasty scent;
But the gain smells not of the excrement.
The Spanish nymph, a wit and beauty too,
With all her charms, bore but a single show;
But let a monster Muscovite appear,
He draws a crowded audience round the year.
May be thou hast not pleased the box and pit;
Yet those who blame thy tale applaud thy wit:
So Terence plotted, but so Terence writ.
Like his, thy thoughts are true, thy language clean;
Even lewdness is made moral in thy scene.[47]
The hearers may for want of Nokes[48] repine;
But rest secure, the readers will be thine.
Nor was thy laboured drama damned or hissed, [51]
But with a kind civility dismissed;
With such good manners as the Wife[49] did use,
Who, not accepting, did but just refuse.
There was a glance at parting; such a look,
As bids thee not give o'er for one rebuke.
But if thou wouldst be seen, as well as read,
Copy one living author, and one dead.
The standard of thy style let Etherege be;
For wit, the immortal spring of Wycherly.
Learn, after both, to draw some just design,
And the next age will learn to copy thine.

EPISTLE THE ELEVENTH. [52]

TO

HENRY HIGDEN, ESQ.

ON HIS TRANSLATION OF

THE TENTH SATIRE OF JUVENAL.

HENRY HIGDEN was a member of the honourable society of the Middle Temple, and during the reigns of James II. and William III. held some rank among the wits of the age. He wrote a play called "Sir Noisy Parrot, or the Wary Widow," represented in 1693, which seems to have been most effectually damned; for in the preface the author complains, that "the theatre was by faction transformed into a bear-garden, hissing, mimicking, ridiculing, and cat-calling." I mention this circumstance, because amongst the poetical friends who hastened to condole with Mr Higden on the bad success of his piece, there is one who attributes it to the influence of our author over the inferior wits at Will's coffee-house.[50] But it seems more generally admitted, as the cause of the [53] downfall of the "Wary Widow," that the author being a man of a convivial temper, had introduced too great a display of good eating and drinking into his piece; and that the actors, although Mr Higden complains of their general negligence, entered into these convivial scenes with great zeal, and became finally incapable of proceeding in their parts.[51] The prologue was written by Sir Charles Sedley, in which the following lines seem to be levelled at Dryden's critical prefaces:

> But against old, as well as new, to rage,
> Is the peculiar phrenzy of this age;
> Shakespeare must down, and you must praise no more
> Soft Desdemona, or the jealous Moor.
> Shakespeare, whose fruitful genius, happy wit,
> Was framed and finished at a lucky hit;
> The pride of nature, and the shame of schools,
> Born to create, and not to learn from rules,
> Must please no more. His bastards now deride
> Their father's nakedness, they ought to hide;
> But when on spurs their Pegasus they force,
> Their jaded muse is distanced in the course.

If the admirers of Dryden were active in the condemnation of Higden's play, the offence probably lay in these verses.

It seems likely that Higden's translation, of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, which I have never seen, [54] was printed before Dryden published his own version, in 1693; consequently, before the damnation of the "Wary Widow," acted in the same year, which seems to have been attended with a quarrel between Dryden and the author. It is therefore very probable, that this Epistle should have stood earlier in the arrangement: but, having no positive evidence, the Editor has not disturbed the former order.

EPISTLE THE ELEVENTH. [55]

THE Grecian wits, who satire first began,
Were pleasant Pasquins on the life of man;
At mighty villains, who the state opprest,
They durst not rail, perhaps; they lashed, at least,
And turned them out of office with a jest.
No fool could peep abroad, but ready stand
The drolls to clap a bauble[52] in his hand.
Wise legislators never yet could draw
A fop within the reach of common law;
For posture, dress, grimace, and affectation,
Though foes to sense, are harmless to the nation.
Our last redress is dint of verse to try,
And satire is our court of chancery.
This way took Horace to reform an age,
Not bad enough to need an author's rage:
But yours,[53] who lived in more degenerate times,
Was forced to fasten deep, and worry crimes.
Yet you, my friend, have tempered him so well,
You make him smile in spite of all his zeal;
An art peculiar to yourself alone,
To join the virtues of two styles in one.
Oh! were your author's principle received, [56]
Half of the labouring world would be relieved;
For not to wish is not to be deceived.
Revenge would into charity be changed,
Because it costs too dear to be revenged;
It costs our quiet and content of mind,
And when 'tis compassed leaves a sting behind.
Suppose I had the better end o'the staff,
Why should I help the ill-natured world to laugh?
'Tis all alike to them, who get the day;
They love the spite and mischief of the fray.
No; I have cured myself of that disease;
Nor will I be provoked, but when I please:
But let me half that cure to you restore;
You give the salve, I laid it to the sore.
Our kind relief against a rainy day,
Beyond a tavern, or a tedious play,
We take your book, and laugh our spleen away.
If all your tribe, too studious of debate,
Would cease false hopes and titles to create,
Led by the rare example you begun,
Clients would fail, and lawyers be undone.

EPISTLE THE TWELFTH. [57]

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

Mr CONGREVE,

ON HIS COMEDY

CALLED

THE DOUBLE DEALER.

This admirable Epistle is addressed to Congreve, whose rising genius had early attracted our author's attention and patronage. When Congreve was about to bring out "The Old Bachelor," the manuscript was put by Southerne into Dryden's hands, who declared, that he had never seen such a first play, and bestowed considerable pains in adapting it to the stage. It was received with the most unbounded approbation. "The Double Dealer" was acted in November 1693, but without that universal applause which attended "The Old Bachelor." The plot was perhaps too serious, and the villainy of Maskwell too black and hateful for comedy. It was the opinion too of Dryden, that the fashionable world felt the satire too keenly.[54] The play, however, cannot be [58] said to have failed; for it rose by degrees against opposition. The epistle is one of the most elegant and apparently heart-felt effusions of friendship, that our language boasts; and the progress of literature from the Restoration, is described as Dryden alone could describe it. A critic of that day, whose candour seems to have been on a level with his taste, has ventured to insinuate, that *huffing Dryden*, as he prophanely calls our poet, had purposely deluded Congreve into presumption, by his praise, in order that he might lead him to make shipwreck of his popularity. But such malevolent constructions have been always put upon the conduct of men of genius, by the mean jealousy of the vulgar.[55]

EPISTLE THE TWELFTH.

[59]

Well, then, the promised hour is come at last,
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires, and as they fought they writ,
Conquering with force of arms, and dint of wit:
Theirs was the giant race, before the flood;
And thus, when Charles returned, our empire stood.
Like Janus, he the stubborn soil manured,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cured;
Tamed us to manners when the stage was rude,
And boisterous English wit with art endued.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gained in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were with want of genius curst;
The second temple was not like the first;
Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length,
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space:
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise;
He moved the mind, but had not power to raise:
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please;
Yet, doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorned their age;
One for the study, t'other for the stage.
One for the study, t'other for the stage.

[60]

But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One matched in judgment, both o'ermatched in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see,
Etherege his courtship, Southerne's purity,
The satire, wit, and strength, of manly Wycherly.
All this in blooming youth you have atchieved;
Nor are your foiled contemporaries grieved.
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome,
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.
Thus old Romano bowed to Raphael's fame,
And scholar to the youth he taught became.
O that your brows my laurel had sustained!
Well had I been deposed, if you had reigned:
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus, when the state one Edward did depose,
A greater Edward in his room arose:
But now not I, but poetry, is cursed;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.[56]

[61]

But let them not mistake my patron's part,
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophecy,—Thou shalt be seen,
(Though with some short parenthesis between,)
High on the throne of wit, and, seated there,
Not mine,—that's little,—but thy laurel wear.[57]

[62]

Thy first attempt an early promise made;
That early promise this has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion, this your native store;
Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much,—she could not give him more.

not give him more.
Maintain your post; that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage;
Unprofitably kept at heaven's expence,
I live a rent-charge on his providence:
But you, whom every muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and O defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you:[58]
And take for tribute what these lines express;
You merit more, nor could my love do less.

EPISTLE THE THIRTEENTH.

TO

Mr GRANVILLE,

ON HIS EXCELLENT TRAGEDY,

CALLED

HEROIC LOVE.

George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne of Biddiford, was distinguished, by the friendship of Dryden and Pope, from the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease. He copied Waller, a model perhaps chosen from a judicious consideration of his own powers. His best piece is his "Essay on unnatural Flights in Poetry," in which he elegantly apologizes for Dryden having suffered his judgment to be swayed by a wild audience. Granville's play of the "Heroic Love, or the cruel Separation," was acted in 1698 with great applause. It is a mythological drama on the love of Agamemnon and Briseis; and this being said, it is hardly necessary to add, that it now scarcely bears reading. Granville's unshaken attachment to Tory principles, as well as his excellent private character, probably gained him favour in our poet's eyes. Lord Lansdowne (for such became Granville's title when Queen Anne created twelve peers to secure a majority to ministry in the House of Lords) died on the 30th January, 1735.

EPISTLE THE THIRTEENTH.

[64]

AUSPICIOUS poet, wert thou not my friend,
How could I envy, what I must commend!
But since 'tis nature's law, in love and wit,
That youth should reign, and withering age submit,
With less regret those laurels I resign,
Which, dying on my brows, revive on thine.
With better grace an ancient chief may yield
The long contended honours of the field,
Than venture all his fortune at a cast,
And fight, like Hannibal, to lose at last.
Young princes, obstinate to win the prize,
Though yearly beaten, yearly yet they rise:
Old monarchs, though successful, still in doubt,
Catch at a peace, and wisely turn devout.
Thine be the laurel, then; thy blooming age
Can best, if any can, support the stage;
Which so declines, that shortly we may see
Players and plays reduced to second infancy:
Sharp to the world, but thoughtless of renown,
They plot not on the stage, but on the town,
And, in despair their empty pit to fill,
Set up some foreign monster in a bill.
Thus they jog on, still tricking, never thriving, [65]
And murdering plays, which they miscal reviving.[59]
Our sense is nonsense, through their pipes conveyed;
Scarce can a poet know the play he made,
'Tis so disguised in death; nor thinks 'tis he [66]
That suffers in the mangled tragedy.
Thus Itys first was killed, and after dressed
For his own sire, the chief invited guest.
I say not this of thy successful scenes,
Where thine was all the glory, theirs the gains.
With length of time, much judgment, and more toil,
Not ill they acted what they could not spoil.
Their setting-sun still shoots a glimmering ray,
Like ancient Rome, majestic in decay;
And better gleanings their worn soil can boast,
Than the crab-vintage of the neighbouring coast.
This difference yet the judging world will see;
Thou copiest Homer, and they copy thee.

EPISTLE THE FOURTEENTH.

[67]

TO MY FRIEND

Mr MOTTEUX,

ON HIS TRAGEDY

CALLED

BEAUTY IN DISTRESS,

PUBLISHED IN 1698.

Peter Anthony Motteux was a French Huguenot, born at Rohan, in Normandy, in l660. He emigrated upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz; and having friends in England of opulence and respectability, he became a merchant and bookseller of some eminence; besides enjoying a place in the Post-office, to which his skill as a linguist recommended him. This must have been considerable, if we judge by his proficiency in the language of England, certainly not the most easy to be commanded by a foreigner. Nevertheless, Motteux understood it so completely, as not only to write many occasional pieces of English poetry, but to execute a very good translation of "Don Quixote," and compose no less than fifteen plays, several of which were very well received. He also conducted the "Gentleman's Journal." On the 19th February, 1717-18, this author was found dead in a house of bad fame, in the parish of St Clement Danes, not without suspicion of murder.

Motteux appears to have enjoyed the countenance of Dryden, who, in the following verses, consoles him under the censure of those who imputed to his play of "Beauty in Distress" an irregularity of plot, and complication of incident. But the preliminary and more important part of [68] the verses regards Jeremy Collier's violent attack upon the dramatic authors of the age for immorality and indecency. To this charge, our author, on this as on other occasions, seems to plead guilty, while he deprecates the virulence, and sometimes unfair severity of his adversary. The reader may compare the poetical defence here set up with that in the prose dedication to the "Fables," and he will find in both the same grumbling, though subdued, acquiescence under the chastisement of the moralist; the poet much resembling an over-matched general, who is unwilling to surrender, though conscious of his inability to make an effectual resistance. See also Vol. VIII. p. 462.

EPISTLE THE FOURTEENTH. [69]

'Tis hard, my friend, to write in such an age,
As damns not only poets, but the stage.
That sacred art, by heaven itself infused,
Which Moses, David, Solomon, have used,
Is now to be no more: the Muses' foes
Would sink their Maker's praises into prose.
Were they content to prune the lavish vine
Of straggling branches, and improve the wine,
Who, but a madman, would his thoughts defend?
All would submit; for all but fools will mend.
But when to common sense they give the lie,
And turn distorted words to blasphemy,
They give the scandal; and the wise discern,
Their glosses teach an age, too apt to learn.
What I have loosely, or prophanely, writ,
Let them to fires, their due desert, commit:
Nor, when accused by me, let them complain;
Their faults, and not their function, I arraign. [60]
Rebellion, worse than witchcraft, they pursued;
The pulpit preached the crime, the people rued.
The stage was silenced; for the saints would see
In fields performed their plotted tragedy.
But let us first reform, and then so live, [70]
That we may teach our teachers to forgive;
Our desk be placed below their lofty chairs,
Ours be the practice, as the precept theirs.
The moral part, at least we may divide,
Humility reward, and punish pride;
Ambition, interest, avarice, accuse;
These are the province of a tragic muse.
These hast thou chosen; and the public voice
Has equalled thy performance with thy choice.
Time, action, place, are so preserved by thee,
That e'en Corneille might with envy see
The alliance of his tripled unity.
Thy incidents, perhaps, too thick are sown,
But too much plenty is thy fault alone.
At least but two can that good crime commit,
Thou in design, and Wycherly in wit.
Let thy own Gauls condemn thee, if they dare,
Contented to be thinly regular:
Born there, but not for them, our fruitful soil
With more increase rewards thy happy toil.
Their tongue, enfeebled, is refined too much,
And, like pure gold, it bends at every touch.
Our sturdy Teuton yet will art obey,
More fit for manly thought, and strengthened with allay.
But whence art thou inspired, and thou alone,
To flourish in an idiom not thy own?
It moves our wonder, that a foreign guest
Should overmatch the most, and match the best.
In under-praising thy deserts, I wrong;
Here find the first deficience of our tongue:
Words, once my stock, are wanting, to commend
So great a poet, and so good a friend.

EPISTLE THE FIFTEENTH. [71]

TO MY HONOURED KINSMAN

JOHN DRIDEN,

OF

CHESTERTON, IN THE COUNTY OF

HUNTINGDON, ESQ.

The person to whom this epistle is addressed was Dryden's first cousin; being the second son of Sir John Driden, elder brother of the poet's father Erasmus. He derived from his maternal grandfather, Sir Robert Bevile, the valuable estate of Chesterton, near Stilton, where latterly our author frequently visited him, and where it is said he wrote the first four verses of his Virgil with a diamond on a glass pane. The mansion-house is at this time (spring, 1807,) about to be pulled down, and the materials sold. The life of Mr John Driden, for he retained the ancient spelling of the name, seems to have been that of an opulent and respectable country gentleman, more happy, perhaps, in the quiet enjoyment of a large landed property, than his cousin in possession of his brilliant poetical genius. He represented the county of Huntingdon in parliament, in 1690, and from 1700 till his death in 1707-8.

The panegyric of our author is an instance, among a thousand, how genius can gild what it touches; for the praise of this lofty rhyme, when minutely examined, details the qualities of that very ordinary, though very useful and respectable, character, a wealthy and sensible country squire. "Just, good, and wise," contending neighbours referred their disputes to his decision; in humble prose, he was an active justice of peace. That he was hospitable, and kept a good pack of hounds, was a fox-hunter while young, and now followed beagles or harriers, that he represented [72] his county, and voted against ministry, sums up his excellencies; for I will not follow my author, by numbering among them his living and dying a bachelor.[61] Yet these annals, however simple and vulgar, illuminated by the touch of our author's pen, shine like the clouds under the influence of a setting sun. The greatest illustration of our author's genius is, that the praise, though unusually applied, is appropriate, and hardly exaggerated; we lay down the book, and recollect to how little this laboured character amounts; and when we resume it, are again hurried away by the magic of the poet. But in this epistle, besides the compliment to his cousin, Dryden had a further intention in view, which was, to illustrate the character of a good English member of Parliament, whom, in conformity with his own prejudice, he represents as inclining to oppose the ministry. It was coincidence in this sentiment which had done much to reconcile Dryden and his cousin; and thus politics reunited relations, whom political disputes had long parted. At this time we learn from one of our author's letters, that Mr Dryden of Chesterton, although upon different principles, was in as warm opposition as his cousin could have wished him.[62] Our poet, however, who had felt the hand of power, did not venture on this portrait without such an explanation to Charles Montague, afterwards Lord Halifax, as he thought sufficient to avert any risk of misconstruction.[63]

There has not been found any early edition of this epistle separate from the volume of Fables; of [73] which therefore it probably made an original part, and was first published with them in 1700. It supplies one instance among many, that the poet's lamp burned clear to the close of life. It is said that his cousin acknowledged the honour done him by the poet, by a handsome gratuity. The amount has been alleged to be five hundred pounds, which is probably exaggerated. Mr Driden of Chesterton bequeathed that sum to Charles Dryden, the poet's son, who did not live to profit by the legacy. As the report of the present to Dryden himself depends only on tradition,[64] it is possible the two circumstances may have been more or less confounded together.

The reader may be pleased to see the epitaph of John Driden of Chesterton, which concludes with some lines from this epistle. It is in the church of the village of Chesterton:

M.S.

JOHANNIS DRIDEN, *Arm.*
F. Natu secundi Johannis Driden
de Canons Ashby in agro Northampton Bart.
ex Honorâ F. et cohærede, e tribus unâ,
Roberti Bevile, Bart.
unde sortem maternam
in hâc viciniâ de Chesterton et Haddon
adeptus,
prædia dein latè,
per comitatum Huntington
adjecit;
nec sui profusus nec alieni appetens:
A litibus ipse abhorrens,
Et qui aliorum lites
Æquissimo sæpe arbitrio diremit,
Vivus,
adeo Amicitiam minimè fucatam coluit,
et publicam Patriæ salutem asseruit strenuè,
ut illa vicissim Eum summis quibus potuit
Honoribus cumulârit;
lubens sæpiusq. Senatorem voluerit:
vel moriens,
honorum atq. beneficiorum non immemor,
maximè vero Religiosæ charitatis interitu,
largam sui censûs partem
ad valorem 16 Millium plus minus Librarum, [74]
vel in locis ubi res et commercium,
vel inter familiares quibus necessitudo
cum eo vivo intercesserat,
erogavit
Marmor hoc P.
Nepos et Hæres Viri multum desiderati
Robertus Pigott, Arm.
Obiit Cœlebs 3 Non. Jan. Anno Dom. 1707, Æt. 72.

JUST, GOOD, AND WISE, CONTENDING NEIGHBOURS COME,
FROM YOUR AWARD TO WAIT THEIR FINAL DOOM;
AND, FOES BEFORE, RETURN IN FREINDSHIP HOME.
WITHOUT THEIR COST, YOU TERMINATE THE CAUSE,
AND SAVE THE EXPENCE OF LONG LITIGIOUS LAWS;
WHERE SUITS ARE TRAVERSED, AND SO LITTLE WON,
THAT HE WHO CONQUIERS IS BUT LAST UNDONE.

Vide p. 75.

EPISTLE THE FIFTEENTH.

[75]

How blessed is he, who leads a country life,
Unvexed with anxious cares, and void of strife!
Who, studying peace, and shunning civil rage,
Enjoyed his youth, and now enjoys his age:
All who deserve his love, he makes his own;
And, to be loved himself, needs only to be known.
Just, good, and wise, contending neighbours come,
From your award to wait their final doom;
And, foes before, return in friendship home.
Without their cost, you terminate the cause,
And save the expence of long litigious laws;
Where suits are traversed, and so little won,
That he who conquers is but last undone:
Such are not your decrees; but so designed,
The sanction leaves a lasting peace behind;
Like your own soul, serene, a pattern of your mind.
Promoting concord, and composing strife,
Lord of yourself, uncumbered with a wife;
Where, for a year, a month, perhaps a night,
Long penitence succeeds a short delight:
Minds are so hardly matched, that even the first,
Though paired by heaven, in Paradise were cursed.
For man and woman, though in one they grow,
Yet, first or last, return again to two.
He to God's image, she to his was made; [76]
So, farther from the fount the stream at random strayed.
How could he stand, when, put to double pain,
He must a weaker than himself sustain!
Each might have stood perhaps, but each alone;
Two wrestlers help to pull each other down.
Not that my verse would blemish all the fair;
But yet if some be bad, 'tis wisdom to beware,
And better shun the bait, than struggle in the snare.
Thus have you shunned, and shun the married state,
Trusting as little as you can to fate.
No porter guards the passage of your door,
To admit the wealthy, and exclude the poor;
For God, who gave the riches, gave the heart,
To sanctify the whole, by giving part;
Heaven, who foresaw the will, the means has wrought,
And to the second son a blessing brought;
The first-begotten had his father's share;
But you, like Jacob, are Rebecca's heir.[65]
So may your stores and fruitful fields increase;
And ever be you blessed, who live to bless.
As Ceres sowed, where-e'er her chariot flew;
As heaven in deserts rained the bread of dew;
So free to many, to relations most,
You feed with manna your own Israel host.
With crowds attended of your ancient race,
You seek the champaign sports, or sylvan chace;
With well-breathed beagles you surround the wood,
Even then industrious of the common good;
And often have you brought the wily fox
To suffer for the firstlings of the flocks;
Chased even amid the folds, and made to bleed,
Like felons, where they did the murderous deed.
This fiery game your active youth maintained; [77]
Not yet by years extinguished, though restrained:
You season still with sports your serious hours;
For age but tastes of pleasures, youth devours.
The hare in pastures or in plains is found,
Emblem of human life; who runs the round,
And, after all his wandering ways are done,

And, after all his wandering ways are done,
His circle fills, and ends where he begun,
Just as the setting meets the rising sun.
Thus princes ease their cares; but happier he,
Who seeks not pleasure through necessity,
Than such as once on slippery thrones were placed,
And chasing, sigh to think themselves are chased.
So lived our sires, ere doctors learned to kill,
And multiplied with theirs the weekly bill.
The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade.
Pity the generous kind their cares bestow
To search forbidden truths, (a sin to know,)
To which if human science could attain,
The doom of death, pronounced by God, were vain.
In vain the leech would interpose delay;
Fate fastens first, and vindicates the prey.
What help from art's endeavours can we have?
Guibbons[66] but guesses, nor is sure to save;
But Maurus[67] sweeps whole parishes, and peoples every grave;
And no more mercy to mankind will use, [78]
Than when he robbed and murdered Maro's muse.
Would'st thou be soon dispatched, and perish whole,
Trust Maurus with thy life, and Milbourne with thy soul.
[68]

By chace our long-lived fathers earned their food;
Toil strung the nerves, and purified the blood:
But we their sons, a pampered race of men,
Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.
Better to hunt in fields, for health unbought,
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise, for care, on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend.
The tree of knowledge, once in Eden placed,
Was easy found, but was forbid the taste:
O had our grandsire walked without his wife,
He first had sought the better plant of life!
Now both are lost: yet, wandering in the dark,
Physicians, for the tree, have found the bark;
They, labouring for relief of human kind,
With sharpened sight some remedies may find;
The apothecary-train is wholly blind.
From files a random recipe they take, [79]
And many deaths of one prescription make.
Garth,[69] generous as his muse, prescribes and gives;
The shopman sells, and by destruction lives:
Ungrateful tribe! who, like the viper's brood,
From Med'cine issuing, suck their mother's blood!
Let these obey, and let the learned prescribe,
That men may die without a double bribe;
Let them, but under their superiors, kill,
When doctors first have signed the bloody bill;
He 'scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.
You hoard not health for your own private use,
But on the public spend the rich produce.
When, often urged, unwilling to be great,
Your country calls you from your loved retreat,
And sends to senates, charged with common care,
Which none more shuns, and none can better bear:
Where could they find another formed so fit,
To poise, with solid sense, a sprightly wit?
Were these both wanting, as they both abound,
Where could so firm integrity be found?
Well born, and wealthy, wanting no support,
You steer betwixt the country and the court;
Nor gratify whate'er the great desire,
Nor grudging give, what public needs require.
Part must be left, a fund when foes invade, [80]
And part employed to roll the watery trade;
Even Canaan's happy land, when worn with toil,
Required a sabbath-year to mend the meagre soil.

Good senators (and such as you) so give,
That kings may be supplied, the people thrive:
And he, when want requires, is truly wise,
Who slights not foreign aids, nor overbuys,
But on our native strength, in time of need, relies.
Munster was bought, we boast not the success;
Who fights for gain, for greater makes his peace.
Our foes, compelled by need, have peace embraced;[70]
The peace both parties want, is like to last;
Which if secure, securely we may trade;
Or, not secure, should never have been made.
Safe in ourselves, while on ourselves we stand,
The sea is ours, and that defends the land.
Be, then, the naval stores the nation's care,
New ships to build, and battered to repair.
Observe the war, in every annual course; [81]
What has been done, was done with British force:
Namur subdued, is England's palm alone;
The rest besieged, but we constrained the town:[71]
We saw the event that followed our success;
France, though pretending arms, pursued the peace,
Obliged, by one sole treaty, to restore
What twenty years of war had won before.
Enough for Europe has our Albion fought;
Let us enjoy the peace our blood has bought.
When once the Persian king was put to flight,
The weary Macedons refused to fight;
Themselves their own mortality confessed,
And left the son of Jove to quarrel for the rest.
Even victors are by victories undone;
Thus Hannibal, with foreign laurels won,
To Carthage was recalled, too late to keep his own.
While sore of battle, while our wounds are green,
Why should we tempt the doubtful dye again?
In wars renewed, uncertain of success;
Sure of a share, as umpires of the peace.
A patriot both the king and country serves;
Prerogative and privilege preserves:
Of each our laws the certain limit show;
One must not ebb, nor t'other overflow:
Betwixt the prince and parliament we stand,
The barriers of the state on either hand;
May neither overflow, for then they drown the land.
When both are full, they feed our blessed abode; [82]
Like those that watered once the paradise of God.
Some overpoise of sway, by turns, they share;
In peace the people, and the prince in war:
Consuls of moderate power in calms were made;
When the Gauls came, one sole dictator swayed.
Patriots, in peace, assert the people's right,
With noble stubbornness resisting might;
No lawless mandates from the court receive,
Nor lend by force, but in a body give.
Such was your generous grandsire; free to grant
In parliaments, that weighed their prince's want:
But so tenacious of the common cause,
As not to lend the king against his laws;
And, in a loathsome dungeon doomed to lie,
In bonds retained his birthright liberty,
And shamed oppression, till it set him free. [72]

O true descendant of a patriot line,
Who, while thou shar'st their lustre, lend'st them thine.
Vouchsafe this picture of thy soul to see;
'Tis so far good, as it resembles thee;
The beauties to the original I owe,
Which when I miss, my own defects I show:
Nor think the kindred muses thy disgrace;
A poet is not born in every race.
Two of a house few ages can afford,
One to perform, another to record.[73]

Praise-worthy actions are by thee embraced,
And 'tis my praise to make thy praises last.
For even when death dissolves our human frame,
The soul returns to heaven from whence it came;
Earth keeps the body, verse preserves the fame.

EPISTLE THE SIXTEENTH.

TO

SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

PRINCIPAL PAINTER TO

HIS MAJESTY.

The well-known Sir Godfrey Kneller was a native of Lubec, but settled in London about 1674. He was a man of genius; but, according to Walpole, he lessened his reputation, by making it subservient to his fortune. No painter was more distinguished by the great, for ten sovereigns sate to him. What may tend longer to preserve his reputation, no painter ever received more incense from the praise of poets. Dryden, Pope, Addison, Prior, Tickell, Steele, all wrote verses to him in the tone of extravagant eulogy. Those addressed to Kneller by Addison, in which the series of the heathen deities is, with unexampled happiness, made to correspond with that of the British monarchs painted by the artist, are not only the best production of that elegant poet, but of their kind the most felicitous ever written. Sir Godfrey Kneller died 27th November, 1723.

Dryden seems to have addressed the following epistle to Sir Godfrey Kneller, as an acknowledgment for the copy of the Chandos' portrait of Shakespeare, mentioned in the verses. It would appear that, upon other occasions, Sir Godfrey repaid the tributes of the poets, by the productions of his pencil.

There is great luxuriance and richness of idea and imagery in the epistle.

EPISTLE THE SIXTEENTH.

[85]

ONCE I beheld the fairest of her kind,
And still the sweet idea charms my mind:
True, she was dumb; for nature gazed so long,
Pleased with her work, that she forgot her tongue;
But, smiling, said—She still shall gain the prize;
I only have transferred it to her eyes.
Such are thy pictures, Kneller, such thy skill,
That nature seems obedient to thy will;
Comes out, and meets thy pencil in the draught,
Lives there, and wants but words to speak her thought.
At least thy pictures look a voice; and we
Imagine sounds, deceived to that degree,
We think 'tis somewhat more than just to see.
  Shadows are but privations of the light;
Yet, when we walk, they shoot before the sight;
With us approach, retire, arise, and fall;
Nothing themselves, and yet expressing all.
Such are thy pieces, imitating life
So near, they almost conquer in the strife;
And from their animated canvas came,
Demanding souls, and loosened from the frame.
  Prometheus, were he here, would cast away
His Adam, and refuse a soul to clay;
And either would thy noble work inspire,
Or think it warm enough, without his fire.
  But vulgar hands may vulgar likeness raise; [86]
This is the least attendant on thy praise:
From hence the rudiments of art began;
A coal, or chalk, first imitated man:
Perhaps the shadow, taken on a wall,
Gave outlines to the rude original;
Ere canvas yet was strained, before the grace
Of blended colours found their use and place,
Or cypress tablets first received a face.
  By slow degrees the godlike art advanced;
As man grew polished, picture was enhanced:
Greece added posture, shade, and perspective,
And then the mimic piece began to live.
Yet perspective was lame, no distance true,
But all came forward in one common view:
No point of light was known, no bounds of art;
When light was there, it knew not to depart,
But glaring on remoter objects played;
Not languished and insensibly decayed.[74]
  Rome raised not art, but barely kept alive,
And with old Greece unequally did strive;
Till Goths and Vandals, a rude northern race,
Did all the matchless monuments deface.
Then all the Muses in one ruin lie,
And rhyme began to enervate poetry.
Thus, in a stupid military state, [87]
The pen and pencil find an equal fate.
Flat faces, such as would disgrace a skreen,
Such as in Bantam's embassy were seen,
Unraised, unrounded, were the rude delight
Of brutal nations, only born to fight.
  Long time the sister arts, in iron sleep,
A heavy sabbath did supinely keep;
At length, in Raphael's age, at once they rise,
Stretch all their limbs, and open all their eyes.
  Thence rose the Roman, and the Lombard line;
One coloured best, and one did best design.
Raphael's, like Homer's, was the nobler part,
But Titian's painting looked like Virgil's art.
  Thy genius gives thee both; where true design,
Postures unforced, and lively colours join,
Likeness is ever there; but still the best

Likeness is over there, but still the best,
(Like proper thoughts in lofty language drest,)
Where light, to shades descending, plays, not strives,
Dies by degrees, and by degrees revives.
Of various parts a perfect whole is wrought;
Thy pictures think, and we divine their thought.
Shakespeare, thy gift, I place before my sight;[75]
With awe, I ask his blessing ere I write;
With reverence look on his majestic face;
Proud to be less, but of his godlike race.
His soul inspires me, while thy praise I write, [88]
And I, like Teucer, under Ajax fight;
Bids thee, through me, be bold; with dauntless breast
Contemn the bad, and emulate the best.
Like his, thy critics in the attempt are lost;
When most they rail, know then, they envy most.
In vain they snarl aloof; a noisy crowd,
Like women's anger, impotent and loud.
While they their barren industry deplore,
Pass on secure, and mind the goal before,
Old as she is, my muse shall march behind,
Bear off the blast, and intercept the wind.
Our arts are sisters, though not twins in birth,
For hymns were sung in Eden's happy earth:
But oh, the painter muse, though last in place,
Has seized the blessing first, like Jacob's race.
Apelles' art an Alexander found,
And Raphael did with Leo's gold abound;
But Homer was with barren laurel crowned.
Thou hadst thy Charles a while, and so had I;
But pass we that unpleasing image by.
Rich in thyself, and of thyself divine,
All pilgrims come and offer at thy shrine.
A graceful truth thy pencil can command;
The fair themselves go mended from thy hand.
Likeness appears in every lineament,
But likeness in thy work is eloquent.
Though nature there her true resemblance bears,
A nobler beauty in thy piece appears.
So warm thy work, so glows the generous frame,
Flesh looks less living in the lovely dame.
Thou paint'st as we describe, improving still,
When on wild nature we ingraft our skill,
Yet not creating beauties at our will.
But poets are confined in narrower space,
To speak the language of their native place;
The painter widely stretches his command, [89]
Thy pencil speaks the tongue of every land.
From hence, my friend, all climates are your own,
Nor can you forfeit, for you hold of none.
All nations all immunities will give
To make you theirs, where'er you please to live;
And not seven cities, but the world, would strive.
Sure some propitious planet then did smile,
When first you were conducted to this isle;
Our genius brought you here, to enlarge our fame,
For your good stars are every where the same.
Thy matchless hand, of every region free,
Adopts our climate, not our climate thee.
[76]Great Rome and Venice early did impart
To thee the examples of their wonderous art.
Those masters, then but seen, not understood,
With generous emulation fired thy blood;
For what in nature's dawn the child admired,
The youth endeavoured, and the man acquired.
If yet thou hast not reached their high degree,
'Tis only wanting to this age, not thee.
Thy genius, bounded by the times, like mine,
Drudges on petty draughts, nor dare design
A more exalted work, and more divine.
For what a song, or senseless opera,
Is to the living labour of a play;
Or what a play to Virgil's work would be,
Such is a single piece to history.

But we, who life bestow, ourselves must live;
Kings cannot reign, unless their subjects give;
And they, who pay the taxes, bear the rule:
Thus thou, sometimes, art forced to draw a fool;[77]
But so his follies in thy posture sink, [90]
The senseless idiot seems at last to think.
Good heaven! that sots and knaves should be so vain,
To wish their vile resemblance may remain,
And stand recorded, at their own request,
To future days, a libel or a jest!
Else should we see your noble pencil trace
Our unities of action, time, and place;
A whole composed of parts, and those the best,
With every various character exprest;
Heroes at large, and at a nearer view;
Less, and at distance, an ignoble crew;
While all the figures in one action join,
As tending to complete the main design.
More cannot be by mortal art exprest,
But venerable age shall add the rest:
For time shall with his ready pencil stand,
Retouch your figures with his ripening hand,
Mellow your colours, and imbrown the teint,
Add every grace, which time alone can grant;
To future ages shall your fame convey,
And give more beauties than he takes away.

ELEGIES AND EPITAPHS.

[91]

UPON THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS.

[93]

The subject of this elegy was Henry Lord Hastings, eldest son of Ferdinando Earl of Huntingdon. He was born 16th January, 1630, and died 24th June, 1649. He was buried at Ashby de la Zouche, near the superb family-seat of Donnington-Castle. This Lord Hastings, says Collins, was a nobleman of great learning, and of so sweet a disposition, that no less than ninety-eight elegies were made on him, and published in 1650, under this title: "*Lachrymæ Musarum*, the Tears of the Muses expressed in Elegies written by divers Persons of nobility and worth, upon the Death of the most hopeful Henry, Lord Hastings, eldest son of the Right Honourable Ferdinando, Earl of Huntingdon, then general of the high-born Prince George, Duke of Clarence, brother to King Edward IV."

This accomplished young nobleman died unmarried; but, from the concluding lines of the elegy, it is obvious, that he had been betrothed to the "virgin widow," whom the poet there addresses, but whose name I have been unable to learn.

The poem was written by Dryden while at Westminster-school, and displays little or no promise of future excellence; being a servile imitation of the conceits of Cleveland, and the metaphysical wit of Cowley, exerted in numbers hardly more harmonious than those of Donne.

[94]

UPON

THE DEATH
OF
LORD HASTINGS.

MUST noble Hastings immaturely die,
The honour of his ancient family,
Beauty and learning thus together meet,
To bring a winding for a wedding-sheet?
Must virtue prove death's harbinger? must she,
With him expiring, feel mortality?
Is death, sin's wages, grace's now? shall art
Make us more learned, only to depart?
If merit be disease; if virtue, death;
To be good, not to be; who'd then bequeath
Himself to discipline? who'd not esteem
Labour a crime? study self-murder deem?
Our noble youth now have pretence to be
Dunces securely, ignorant healthfully.
Rare linguist, whose worth speaks itself, whose praise,
Though not his own, all tongues besides do raise:
Than whom great Alexander may seem less,
Who conquered men, but not their languages.
In his mouth nations spake; his tongue might be
Interpreter to Greece, France, Italy.
His native soil was the four parts o'the earth; [95]
All Europe was too narrow for his birth.
A young apostle; and,—with reverence may
I speak't,—inspired with gift of tongues, as they.
Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain
Oft strive, by art though furthered, to obtain.
His body was an orb, his sublime soul
Did move on virtue's and on learning's pole;
Whose regular motions better to our view,
Than Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did shew.
Graces and virtues, languages and arts,
Beauty and learning, filled up all the parts.
Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear
Scattered in others, all, as in their sphere,
Were fixed, conglobate in his soul, and thence
Shone through his body, with sweet influence;
Letting their glories so on each limb fall,
The whole frame rendered was celestial.
Come, learned Ptolemy, and trial make,
If thou this hero's altitude can'st take:
But that transcends thy skill; thrice happy all,
Could we but prove thus astronomical.
Lived Tycho now, struck with this ray which shone[78]
More bright i'the morn, than others beam at noon,
He'd take his astrolabe, and seek out here
What new star 'twas did gild our hemisphere.
Replenished then with such rare gifts as these,
Where was room left for such a foul disease?
The nation's sin hath drawn that veil, which shrouds
Our day-spring in so sad benighting clouds.
Heaven would no longer trust its pledge, but thus
Recalled it,—rapt its Ganymede from us.
Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
So many spots, like næves on Venus' soil, [96]
One jewel set off with so many a foil;
Blisters with pride swelled, which through's flesh did
sprout
Like rose-buds, stuck i'the lily-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit:

To wail the fault its rising did commit,
Which, rebel-like, with its own lord at strife,
Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretel his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.
O had he died of old, how great a strife
Had been, who from his death should draw their life;
Who should, by one rich draught, become whate'er
Seneca, Cato, Numa, Cæsar, were!
Learned, virtuous, pious, great; and have by this
An universal metempsychosis.
Must all these aged sires in one funeral
Expire? all die in one so young, so small?
Who, had he lived his life out, his great fame
Had swoln 'bove any Greek or Roman name.
But hasty winter, with one blast, hath brought
The hopes of autumn, summer, spring, to nought.
Thus fades the oak i'the sprig, i'the blade the corn;
Thus without young, this Phœnix dies, new-born.
Must then old three-legged grey-beards with their gout,
Catarrhs, rheums, aches, live three ages out?
Time's offals, only fit for the hospital!
Or to hang antiquaries rooms withal!
Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live
With such helps as broths, possets, physic give?
None live, but such as should die? shall we meet
With none but ghostly fathers in the street?
Grief makes me rail, sorrow will force its way,
And showers of tears tempestuous sighs best lay.
The tongue may fail; but overflowing eyes [97]
Will weep out lasting streams of elegies.
   But thou, O virgin-widow, left alone,
Now thy beloved, heaven-ravished spouse is gone,
Whose skilful sire in vain strove to apply
Med'cines, when thy balm was no remedy;
With greater than Platonic love, O wed
His soul, though not his body, to thy bed:
Let that make thee a mother; bring thou forth
The ideas of his virtue, knowledge, worth;
Transcribe the original in new copies; give
Hastings o'the better part: so shall he live
In's nobler half; and the great grandsire be
Of an heroic divine progeny:
An issue which to eternity shall last,
Yet but the irradiations which he cast.
Erect no mausoleums; for his best
Monument is his spouse's marble breast.

TO THE MEMORY OF Mr OLDHAM.

John Oldham, who, from the keenness of his satirical poetry, justly acquired the title of the *English Juvenal*, was born at Shipton, in Gloucestershire, where his father was a clergyman, on 9th August, 1653. About 1678, he was an usher in the free school of Croydon; but having already distinguished himself by several pieces of poetry, and particularly by four severe satirical invectives against the order of Jesuits, then obnoxious on account of the Popish Plot, he quitted that mean situation, to become tutor to the family of Sir Edward Theveland, and afterwards to a son of Sir William Hickes. Shortly after he seems to have resigned all employment except the unthrifty trade of poetry. When Oldham entered upon this career, he settled of course in the metropolis, where his genius recommended him to the company of the first wits, and to the friendship of Dryden. He did not long enjoy the pleasures of such a life, nor did he live to experience the uncertainties, and disappointment, and reverses, with which, above all others, it abounds. Being seized with the small-pox, while visiting at the seat of his patron, William Earl of Kingston, he died of that disease on the 9th December, 1683, in the 30th year of his age.

His "Remains," in verse and prose, were soon afterwards published, with elegies and recommendatory verses prefixed by Tate, Flatman, Durfey, Gould, Andrews, and others. But the applause of Dryden, expressed in the following lines, was worth all the tame panegyrics of other contemporary bards. It appears, among the others, in "Oldham's Remains," London, 1683.

TO [99]

THE MEMORY
OF
Mr OLDHAM.

FAREWELL, too little, and too lately known,
Whom I began to think, and call my own:
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive;
The last set out, the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
Whilst his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more!
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.[79]
A noble error, and but seldom made, [100]
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere
their prime,
Still shewed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write, to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail, and farewell! farewell, thou young, [101]
But ah too short, Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy, and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

TO [102]

THE PIOUS MEMORY

OF

MRS ANNE KILLIGREW.

MRS ANNE KILLIGREW was daughter of Dr Henry Killigrew, master of the Savoy, and one of the prebendaries of Westminster, and brother of Thomas Killigrew, renowned, in the court of Charles II., for wit and repartee. The family, says Mr Walpole, was remarkable for its loyalty, accomplishments, and wit; and this young lady, who displayed great talents for painting and poetry, promised to be one of its fairest ornaments. She was maid of honour to the Duchess of York, and died of the small-pox in 1685, the 25th year of her age.

Mrs Anne Killigrew's poems were published after her death in a thin quarto, with a print of the author, from her portrait drawn by herself. She also painted the portraits of the Duke of York and of his Duchess, and executed several historical pictures, landscapes, and pieces of still life. See *Lord* ORFORD'S *Lives of the Painters*, Works, Vol. III. p. 297; and BALLARD'S *Lives of Learned Ladies*.

The poems of this celebrated young lady do not possess any uncommon merit, nor are her paintings of a high class, although preferred by Walpole to her poetry. But very slender attainments in such accomplishments, when united with youth, beauty, and fashion, naturally receive a much greater share of approbation from contemporaries, than unbiassed posterity can afford to them. Even the flinty heart of old Wood seems to have been melted by this young lady's charms, notwithstanding her being of *womankind*, as he contemptuously calls the fair sex. He [103] says, that she was a Grace for a beauty, and a Muse for a wit; and that there must have been more true history than compliment in our author's ode, since otherwise the lady's father would not have permitted it to go to press.—*Athenæ*, Vol. II. p. 1036.

This ode, which singularly exhibits the strong grasp and comprehensive range of Dryden's fancy, as well as the harmony of his numbers, seems to have been a great favourite of Dr Johnson, who, in one place, does not hesitate to compare it to the famous ode on St Cecilia; and, in another, calls it undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. Although it is probable that few will subscribe to the judgment of that great critic in the present instance, yet the verses can never be read with indifference by any admirer of poetry. We are, it is true, sometimes affronted by a pun, or chilled by a conceit; but the general power of thought and expression resumes its sway, in despite of the interruption given by such instances of bad taste. In its arrangement, the ode is what the seventeenth century called pindaric; freed, namely, from the usual rules of order and arrangement. This license, which led most poets, who exercised it, to extravagance and absurdity, only gave Dryden a wider scope for the exercise of his wonderful power of combining and uniting the most dissimilar ideas, in a manner as ingenious as his numbers are harmonious. Images and scenes, the richest, though most inconsistent with each other, are sweeped together by the flood of song: we neither see whence they arise, nor whither they are going; but are contented to admire the richness and luxuriance in which the poet has arrayed them. The opening of the poem has been highly praised by Dr Johnson. "The first part," says that critic, "flows with a torrent of enthusiasm,—*Fervet immensusque ruit*. All the stanzas, indeed, are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter."

The stanzas, which appear to the editor peculiarly to exhibit the spirit of the pindaric ode, are the first, second, fourth, and fifth. Of the others, the third is too metaphysical for the occasion; the description of the landscapes in the sixth is beautiful, and presents our imagination with the scenery and groups of Claude Lorraine; and that of the royal portraits, in the seventh, has some fine lines and turns of expression: But I cannot admire, with many critics, the comparison of the progress of genius to the explosion of a sky-rocket; and still less the flat and familiar conclusion,

What next she had designed, heaven only knows.

The eighth stanza is disgraced by antitheses and conceit; and though the beginning of the ninth [104] be beautiful and affecting, our emotion is quelled by the nature of the consolation administered to a sea captain, that his sister is turned into a star. The last stanza excites ideas perhaps too solemn for poetry; and what is worse, they are couched in poetry too fantastic to be solemn; but the account of the resurrection of the "sacred poets," is, in the highest degree, elegant and beautiful.

Anne Killigrew was the subject of several other poetical lamentations, one or two of which are in the Luttrell Collection.

[105]

TO

THE PIOUS MEMORY

OF THE ACCOMPLISHED YOUNG LADY

Mrs ANNE KILLIGREW,

EXCELLENT IN

THE TWO SISTER ARTS

OF

POESY AND PAINTING.

AN ODE.

I.

THOU youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new plucked from paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us, in thy wandering race,
Or, in procession fixed and regular,
Mov'st with the heaven's majestic pace;
Or, called to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region is thy place, [106]
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since heaven's eternal year is thine.
Hear, then, a mortal muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were given,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer,
And candidate of heaven.

II.

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfused into thy blood:
So wert thou born into a tuneful strain,
An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.[80]
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was formed, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.
If so, then cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

[107]

III.

May we presume to say, that, at thy birth,
New joy was sprung in heaven, as well as here on earth.
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And e'en the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tuned it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;
And then, if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres.
And if no clustering swarm of bees
On thy sweet mouth distilled their golden dew,
'Twas that such vulgar miracles
Heaven had not leisure to renew:
For all thy blest fraternity of love
Solemnized there thy birth, and kept thy holiday above.

IV.

O gracious God! how far have we
Prophaned thy heavenly gift of poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the muse,
Debased to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordained above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love?
O wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubrique and adulterate age,
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own)
T'increase the streaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t'excuse our second fall?
Let this thy vestal, heaven, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoiled,
Unmixed with foreign filth, and undefiled;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child.[81]

[108]

V.

Art she had none, yet wanted none;
For nature did that want supply:
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seemed borrowed where 'twas only born.
Her morals, too, were in her bosom bred,
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read:
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test, and every light, her muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.
E'en love (for love sometimes her muse exprest)
Was but a lambent flame which played about her breast:
Light as the vapours of a morning dream,
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth exprest,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

VI.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretched her sway,
For Painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A chamber of dependencies was framed,
(As conquerors will never want pretence,
When armed, to justify the offence,)
And the whole fief, in right of poetry, she claimed. [109]
The country open lay without defence;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with every lineament,
And all the large domains which the Dumb Sister swayed;
All bowed beneath her government,
Received in triumph wheresoe'er she went.
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul designed,
And oft the happy draught surpassed the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flowed so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which, as in mirrors, shewed the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the power of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, frizes, columns, broken lie,
And, though defaced, the wonder of the eye;
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

VII.

The scene then changed; with bold erected look
Our martial king[82] the sight with reverence strook:
For, not content to express his outward part, [110]
Her hand called out the image of his heart:
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figured there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phœnix queen[83] was pourtrayed too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observed, as well as heavenly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands:
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank, the queen.
Thus nothing to her genius was denied,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on every side.
What next she had designed, heaven only knows:
To such immoderate growth her conquest rose,
That fate alone its progress could oppose.

VIII.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
The well-proportioned shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies.
Not wit, nor piety, could fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;
But, like a hardened felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plundered first, and then destroyed.
O double sacrilege on things divine, [111]
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda died;[84]
Heaven, by the same disease, did both translate;
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

IX.

Meantime, her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays. [112]
Ah, generous youth! that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here:
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come;
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wrecked at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far
Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star,
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

X.

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the valley of Jehosophat,
The judging God shall close the book of fate,
And there the last assizes keep,
For those who wake, and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly,
From the four corners of the sky;
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those clothed with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shall go,
As harbinger of heaven, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learnt below.

UPON THE DEATH OF [113]

THE VISCOUNT OF DUNDEE.

James Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, studied the military art under the Prince of Orange. He first distinguished himself by his activity in exercising the severities which the Scottish council, in the reigns of Charles II. and James II., decreed against the frequenters of the field-meetings and conventicles. On this account his memory is generally reprobated by the Scottish presbyterians; nor would history have treated him more gently, had not the splendour of his closing life effaced the recollection of his cruelties. When the Scottish Convention declared for the Prince of Orange in 1688-9, Dundee left Edinburgh, and retired to the north, where he raised the Highland clans, to prop the sinking cause of James II. After an interval of a few months, spent in desultory warfare, General Mackay marched, with a regular force, towards Blair in Athole, against this active and enterprising enemy. Upon the 17th June, 1689, when Mackay had defiled through the rocky and precipitous pass of Killicrankie, he found Dundee, with his Highlanders, arranged upon an eminence opposite to the northern mouth of the defile. Dundee permitted his adversary gradually, and at leisure, to disengage himself from the pass, and draw up his army in line; for, meditating a total victory, and not a mere check or repulse, he foresaw that Mackay's retreat would be difficult in proportion to the distance of his forces from the only path of safety through which they could fly. He then charged with irresistible fury, and routed Mackay's army in every direction, saving two regiments who stood firm. But as Dundee hastened towards them, and extended his arm as if urging the assault, a shot penetrated his armour beneath his arm-pit, and he dropt from his horse. He lived but a very short time, and died in the arms of victory. With Dundee fell all hopes of restoring King James's affairs in Scotland; the independent chieftains, who had been overawed by his superior talents, resumed the petty altercations which his authority had decided or suppressed; their followers melted away without [114] a battle; and after his death, those who had been rather the implements than the companions of his victory, met nothing but repulse and defeat, until all the north of Scotland submitted to William III.

The epitaph, here translated by Dryden, was originally written in Latin by Dr Pitcairn, remarkable for genius and learning, as well as for Jacobitism. It will hardly be disputed, that the original is much superior to the translation, though the last be written by Dryden. In the second couplet alone, the translator has improved upon his original:

IN MORTEM VICECOMITIS TAODUNENSIS.

ULTIME SCOTORUM! POTUIT, QUO SOSPITE SOLO,
  LIBERTAS PATRIÆ SALVA FUISSE TUÆ;
TE MORIENTE NOVOS ACCEPIT SCOTIA CIVES,
  ACCEPITQUE NOVOS, TE MORIENTE, DEOS.
ILLA TIBI SUPERESSE NEGAT, TU NON POTES ILLI,
  ERGO CALEDONIÆ NOMEN INANE, VALE!
TUQUE VALE, GENTIS PRISCÆ FORTISSIME DUCTOR,

Some editions of this celebrated epitaph, which seem to have been followed by Dryden, read the last line thus:

Ultime Scotorum atque optime, Grame, Vale.

But there is something national in calling Dundee the last of Scots, and the last of Grames, a race distinguished for patriotism in the struggles against England, and on this principle the last reading should be preferred.

UPON

THE DEATH
OF
THE VISCOUNT OF DUNDEE.

OH last and best of Scots! who didst maintain
Thy country's freedom from a foreign reign;
New people fill the land now thou art gone,
New gods the temples, and new kings the throne.
Scotland and thou did each in other live;
Nor would'st thou her, nor could she thee survive.
Farewell! who, dying, didst support the state,
And couldst not fall but with thy country's fate.

ELEONORA:

A

PANEGYRICAL POEM,

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE

COUNTESS OF ABINGDON.

——Superas evadere per auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est. Pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evixit ad æthera virtus,
Diis geniti potuere. VIRGIL.
Æneid. lib. vi.

[119]

ELEONORA.

MR. MALONE has given a full account of the lady in whose honour this poem was written: "Eleonora, eldest daughter, and at length sole heir, of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in the county of Oxford, Baronet, by Anne, daughter of Sir John Danvers, and sister and heir to Henry Danvers, Esq., who was nephew and heir to Henry, Earl of Danby: She was the wife of James Bertie, first Earl of Abingdon, and died May 31, 1691. Her lord, in 1698, married a second wife, Catharine, daughter of Sir Thomas Chamberlaine, Bart."

Her death was unexpectedly sudden, and took place in a ball-room in her own house; a circumstance which our author has hardly glanced at, although capable of striking illustration; and although one might have thought he would have grasped at whatever could assist him in executing the difficult task, of an elegy written by desire of a nobleman whom he did not know, in memory of a lady whom he had never seen. It is to be presumed, that the task imposed was handsomely recompensed; for we can hardly conceive one in itself more unpleasant or unprofitable. Notwithstanding Dryden's professions, that he "swam with the tide" while composing this piece, and that the variety and multitude of his similies were owing to the divine *afflatus* and the influence of his subject, we may be fairly permitted to doubt, whether they did not rather originate in an attempt to supply the lack of real sympathy, by the indulgence of a luxuriant imagination. The commencement has been rather severely censured by Dr Johnson; the comparison, he says, contains no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented: "This," observes he, "is little better than to say of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country." But, I presume, the point on which Dryden meant the comparison to depend, was, the extent of the lamentation occasioned by Eleonora's death; in which particular the simile conveyed an illustration as ample, as if Dryden had said of a myrtle, it was as tall as an oak, or of a brook, it was as deep as the Thames.

The poem is certainly totally deficient in interest; for the character has no peculiarity of features: [120]
But, considered as an abstract example of female perfection, we may admire the ideal Eleonora, as we do the fancy-piece of a celebrated painter, though with an internal consciousness that the original never existed.

"Eleonora" first appeared in quarto, in 1692, probably about the end of autumn; as Dryden alludes to the intervention of some months between Lord Abingdon's commands and his own performance.

TO [121]

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF ABINGDON, &c.[85]

MY LORD,

THE commands, with which you honoured me some months ago, are now performed: they had been sooner, but betwixt ill health, some business, and many troubles, I was forced to defer them till this time. Ovid, going to his banishment, and writing from on shipboard to his friends, excused the faults of his poetry by his misfortunes; and told them, that good verses never flow, but from a serene and composed spirit. Wit, which is a kind of Mercury, with wings fastened to his head and heels, can fly but slowly in a damp air. I therefore chose rather to obey you late than ill: if at least I am capable of writing any thing, at any time, which is worthy your perusal and your patronage. I cannot say that I have escaped from a shipwreck; but have only gained a rock by hard swimming, where I may pant awhile and gather breath; for the doctors give me a sad assurance, that my disease[86] never took its leave of any man, but with a purpose to return. However, my [122] lord, I have laid hold on the interval, and managed the small stock, which age has left me, to the best advantage, in performing this inconsiderable service to my lady's memory. We, who are priests of Apollo, have not the inspiration when we please; but must wait till the God comes rushing on us, and invades us with a fury which we are not able to resist; which gives us double strength while the fit continues, and leaves us languishing and spent, at its departure. Let me not seem to boast, my lord, for I have really felt it on this occasion, and prophesied beyond my natural power. Let me add, and hope to be believed, that the excellency of the subject contributed much to the happiness of the execution; and that the weight of thirty years was taken off me while I was writing. I swam with the tide, and the water under me was buoyant. The reader will easily observe, that I was transported by the multitude and variety of my similitudes; which are generally the product of a luxuriant fancy, and the wantonness of wit. Had I called in my judgment to my assistance, I had certainly retrenched many of them. But I defend them not; let them pass for beautiful faults amongst the better sort of critics; for the whole poem, though written in that which they call heroic verse, is of the pindaric nature, as well in the thought as the expression; and, as such, requires the same grains of allowance for it. It was intended, as your lordship sees in the title, not for an elegy, but a panegyric: a kind of apotheosis, indeed, if a heathen word may be applied to a Christian use. And on all occasions of praise, if we take the ancients for our patterns, we are bound by prescription to employ the magnificence of words, and the force of figures, to adorn the sublimity of thoughts. Isocrates amongst the Grecian orators, [123] and Cicero, and the younger Pliny, amongst the Romans, have left us their precedents for our security; for I think I need not mention the inimitable Pindar, who stretches on these pinions out of sight, and is carried upward, as it were, into another world.

This, at least, my lord, I may justly plead, that, if I have not performed so well as I think I have, yet I have used my best endeavours to excel myself. One disadvantage I have had, which is, never to have known or seen my lady; and to draw the lineaments of her mind from the description which I have received from others, is for a painter to set himself at work without the living original before him; which, the more beautiful it is, will be so much the more difficult for him to conceive, when he has only a relation given him of such and such features by an acquaintance or a friend, without the nice touches, which give the best resemblance, and make the graces of the picture. Every artist is apt enough to flatter himself, and I amongst the rest, that their own ocular observations would have discovered more perfections, at least others, than have been delivered to them; though I have received mine from the best hands, that is, from persons who neither want a just understanding of my lady's worth, nor a due veneration for her memory.

Doctor Donne, the greatest wit, though not the best poet of our nation, acknowledges, that he had never seen Mrs Drury, whom he has made immortal in his admirable "Anniversaries."[87] I have had the same fortune, though I have not succeeded to the same genius. However, I have [124] followed his footsteps in the design of his panegyric; which was to raise an emulation in the living, to copy out the example of the dead. And therefore it was, that I once intended to have called this poem "The Pattern;" and though, on a second consideration, I changed the title into the name of that illustrious person, yet the design continues, and Eleonora is still the pattern of charity, devotion, and humility; of the best wife, the best mother, and the best of friends.

And now, my lord, though I have endeavoured to answer your commands, yet I could not answer it to the world, nor to my conscience, if I gave not your lordship my testimony of being the best husband now living: I say my testimony only; for the praise of it is given you by yourself. They, who despise the rules of virtue both in their practice and their morals, will think this a very trivial commendation. But I think it the peculiar happiness of the Countess of Abingdon, to have been so truly loved by you, while she was living, and so gratefully honoured, after she was dead. Few there are who have either had, or could have, such a loss; and yet fewer, who carried their love [125] and constancy beyond the grave. The exteriors of mourning, a decent funeral, and black habits,

are the usual stints of common husbands; and perhaps their wives deserve no better than to be mourned with hypocrisy, and forgot with ease. But you have distinguished yourself from ordinary lovers, by a real and lasting grief for the deceased; and by endeavouring to raise for her the most durable monument, which is that of verse. And so it would have proved, if the workman had been equal to the work, and your choice of the artificer as happy as your design. Yet, as Phidias, when he had made the statue of Minerva, could not forbear to engrave his own name, as author of the piece; so give me leave to hope, that, by subscribing mine to this poem, I may live by the goddess, and transmit my name to posterity by the memory of hers. It is no flattery to assure your lordship, that she is remembered, in the present age, by all who have had the honour of her conversation and acquaintance; and that I have never been in any company since the news of her death was first brought me, where they have not extolled her virtues, and even spoken the same things of her in prose, which I have done in verse.

I therefore think myself obliged to your lordship for the commission which you have given me: how I have acquitted myself of it, must be left to the opinion of the world, in spite of any protestation which I can enter against the present age, as incompetent or corrupt judges. For my comfort, they are but Englishmen; and, as such, if they think ill of me to-day, they are inconstant enough to think well of me to-morrow. And after all, I have not much to thank my fortune that I was born amongst them. The good of both sexes are so few, in England, that they stand like exceptions against general rules; and though one of them has deserved a greater commendation [126]
than I could give her, they have taken care that I should not tire my pen with frequent exercise on the like subjects; that praises, like taxes, should be appropriated, and left almost as individual as the person. They say, my talent is satire; if it be so, it is a fruitful age, and there is an extraordinary crop to gather, but a single hand is insufficient for such a harvest: they have sown the dragon's teeth themselves, and it is but just they should reap each other in lampoons. You, my lord, who have the character of honour, though it is not my happiness to know you, may stand aside, with the small remainders of the English nobility, truly such, and, unhurt yourselves, behold the mad combat. If I have pleased you, and some few others, I have obtained my end. You see I have disabled myself, like an elected Speaker of the House; yet, like him, I have undertaken the charge, and find the burden sufficiently recompensed by the honour. Be pleased to accept of these my unworthy labours, this paper monument; and let her pious memory, which I am sure is sacred to you, not only plead the pardon of my many faults, but gain me your protection, which is ambitiously sought by,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient servant,
John Dryden.

[127]

ELEONORA:

A

PANEGYRICAL POEM,

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE

COUNTESS OF ABINGDON.

ARGUMENT.

From the Marginal Notes of the First Edition.

The introduction. Of her charity. Of her prudent management. Of her humility. Of her piety. Of her various virtues. Of her conjugal virtues. Of her love to her children. Her care of their education. Of her friendship. Reflections on the shortness of her life. The manner of her death. Her preparedness to die. Apostrophe to her soul. Epiphonema, or close of the poem.

As when some great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whispers first, and mournful murmurs, rise
Among the sad attendants; then the sound
Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,
Through town and country, till the dreadful blast
Is blown to distant colonies at last,
Who then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
For his long life, and for his happy reign:
So slowly, by degrees, unwilling fame
Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim,
Till public as the loss the news became. } [128]
  The nation felt it in the extremest parts,
With eyes o'erflowing, and with bleeding hearts;
But most the poor, whom daily she supplied,
Beginning to be such, but when she died.
For, while she lived, they slept in peace by night,
Secure of bread, as of returning light,
And with such firm dependence on the day,
That need grew pampered, and forgot to pray;
So sure the dole, so ready at their call,
They stood prepared to see the manna fall.
  Such multitudes she fed, she clothed, she nurst,
That she herself might fear her wanting first.
Of her five talents, other five she made;
Heaven, that had largely given, was largely paid;
And in few lives, in wonderous few, we find
A fortune better fitted to the mind.
Nor did her alms from ostentation fall,
Or proud desire of praise—the soul gave all:
Unbribed it gave; or, if a bribe appear,
No less than heaven, to heap huge treasures there.
  Want passed for merit at her open door:
Heaven saw, he safely might increase his poor,
And trust their sustenance with her so well,
As not to be at charge of miracle.
None could be needy, whom she saw or knew;
All in the compass of her sphere she drew:
He, who could touch her garment, was as sure,
As the first Christians of the apostles' cure.
The distant heard, by fame, her pious deeds,
And laid her up for their extremest needs;
A future cordial for a fainting mind;
For, what was ne'er refused, all hoped to find,
Each in his turn: the rich might freely come,
As to a friend; but to the poor, 'twas home.

As to some holy house the afflicted came, [129]
The hunger-starved, the naked, and the lame,
Want and diseases fled before her name.
For zeal like her's her servants were too slow;
She was the first, where need required, to go;
Herself the foundress and attendant too.
Sure she had guests sometimes to entertain,
Guests in disguise, of her great Master's train:
Her Lord himself might come, for aught we know,
Since in a servant's form he lived below:
Beneath her roof he might be pleased to stay;
Or some benighted angel, in his way,
Might ease his wings, and, seeing heaven appear
In its best work of mercy, think it there;
Where all the deeds of charity and love
Were in as constant method, as above,
All carried on; all of a piece with theirs;
As free her alms, as diligent her cares;
As loud her praises, and as warm her prayers.
Yet was she not profuse; but feared to waste,
And wisely managed, that the stock might last;
That all might be supplied, and she not grieve,
When crowds appeared, she had not to relieve:
Which to prevent, she still increased her store;
Laid up, and spared, that she might give the more.
So Pharaoh, or some greater king than he,
Provided for the seventh necessity;[88]
Taught from above his magazines to frame,
That famine was prevented ere it came.
Thus heaven, though all-sufficient, shews a thrift
In his œconomy, and bounds his gift;
Creating for our day one single light,
And his reflection too supplies the night.
Perhaps a thousand other worlds, that lie
Remote from us, and latent in the sky,
Are lightened by his beams, and kindly nurst, [130]
Of which our earthly dunghill is the worst.
Now, as all virtues keep the middle line,
Yet somewhat more to one extreme incline,
Such was her soul; abhorring avarice,
Bounteous, but almost bounteous to a vice;
Had she given more, it had profusion been,
And turned the excess of goodness into sin.
These virtues raised her fabric to the sky;
For that which is next heaven is charity.
But as high turrets for their airy steep
Require foundations in proportion deep,
And lofty cedars as far upward shoot
As to the nether heavens they drive the root;
So low did her secure foundation lie,
She was not humble, but humility.
Scarcely she knew that she was great, or fair,
Or wise, beyond what other women are,
Or, which is better, knew, but never durst compare.
For, to be conscious of what all admire,
And not be vain, advances virtue higher.
But still she found, or rather thought she found,
Her own worth wanting, others' to abound;
Ascribed above their due to every one,
Unjust and scanty to herself alone.
Such her devotion was, as might give rules
Of speculation to disputing schools,
And teach us equally the scales to hold
Betwixt the two extremes of hot and cold;
That pious heat may moderately prevail,
And we be warmed, but not be scorched with zeal.
Business might shorten, not disturb, her prayer;
Heaven had the best, if not the greater share.
An active life long orisons forbids;
Yet still she prayed, for still she prayed by deeds.
Her every day was sabbath; only free
From hours of prayer, for hours of charity.
Such as the Jews from servile toil released, [131]
Where works of mercy were a part of rest:

Where works of mercy were a part of rest,
Such as blest angels exercise above,
Varied with sacred hymns and acts of love;
Such sabbaths as that one she now enjoys,
E'en that perpetual one, which she employs,
(For such vicissitudes in heaven there are)
In praise alternate, and alternate prayer.
All this she practised here, that when she sprung
Amidst the choirs, at the first sight she sung;
Sung, and was sung herself in angels' lays;
For, praising her, they did her Maker praise.
All offices of heaven so well she knew,
Before she came, that nothing there was new;
And she was so familiarly received,
As one returning, not as one arrived.
  Muse, down again precipitate thy flight;
For how can mortal eyes sustain immortal light?
But as the sun in water we can bear,
Yet not the sun, but his reflection there,
So let us view her here in what she was,
And take her image in this watery glass:
Yet look not every lineament to see;
Some will be cast in shades, and some will be
So lamely drawn, you'll scarcely know 'tis
      she.
For where such various virtues we recite,
'Tis like the milky-way, all over bright,
But sown so thick with stars, 'tis
      undistinguished light.
  Her virtue, not her virtues, let us call;
For one heroic comprehends them all:
One, as a constellation is but one,
Though 'tis a train of stars, that, rolling on,
Rise in their turn, and in the zodiac run,
Ever in motion; now 'tis faith ascends,
Now hope, now charity, that upward tends,
And downwards with diffusive good descends.
  As in perfumes composed with art and cost, [132]
Tis hard to say what scent is uppermost;
Nor this part musk or civet can we call,
Or amber, but a rich result of all;
So she was all a sweet, whose every part,
In due proportion mixed, proclaimed the Maker's art.
No single virtue we could most commend,
Whether the wife, the mother, or the friend;
For she was all, in that supreme degree,
That as no one prevailed, so all was she.
The several parts lay hidden in the piece;
The occasion but exerted that, or this.
  A wife as tender, and as true withal,
As the first woman was before her fall:
Made for the man, of whom she was a part;
Made to attract his eyes, and keep his heart.
A second Eve, but by no crime accurst;
As beauteous, not as brittle as the first.
Had she been first, still Paradise had been,
And death had found no entrance by her sin.
So she not only had preserved from ill
Her sex and ours, but lived their pattern still.
  Love and obedience to her lord she bore;
She much obeyed him, but she loved him more:
Not awed to duty by superior sway,
But taught by his indulgence to obey.
Thus we love God, as author of our good;
So subjects love just kings, or so they should.
Nor was it with ingratitude returned;
In equal fires the blissful couple burned;
One joy possessed them both, and in one grief
      they mourned.
His passion still improved; he loved so fast,
As if he feared each day would be her last.
Too true a prophet to foresee the fate
That should so soon divide their happy state;
When he to heaven entirely must restore
That love, that heart, where he went halves before.
Yet as the soul is all in every part,

You as the soul is all in every part;
So God and he might each have all her heart. [133]
So had her children too; for charity
Was not more fruitful, or more kind, than she:[89]
Each under other by degrees they grew;
A goodly perspective of distant view.
Anchises looked not with so pleased a face,
In numbering o'er his future Roman race,[90]
And marshalling the heroes of his name,
As, in their order, next to light they came;
Nor Cybele, with half so kind an eye,
Surveyed her sons and daughters of the sky;
Proud, shall I say, of her immortal fruit?
As far as pride with heavenly minds may suit.
Her pious love excelled to all she bore;
New objects only multiplied it more.
And as the chosen found the pearly grain
As much as every vessel could contain;
As in the blissful vision each shall share
As much of glory as his soul can bear;
So did she love, and so dispense her care.
Her eldest thus, by consequence, was best,
As longer cultivated than the rest.
The babe had all that infant care beguiles,
And early knew his mother in her smiles:
But when dilated organs let in day
To the young soul, and gave it room to play,
At his first aptness, the maternal love
Those rudiments of reason did improve:
The tender age was pliant to command;
Like wax it yielded to the forming hand:
True to the artificer, the laboured mind [134]
With ease was pious, generous, just, and kind;
Soft for impression, from the first prepared,
Till virtue with long exercise grew hard:
With every act confirmed, and made at last
So durable as not to be effaced,
It turned to habit; and, from vices free,
Goodness resolved into necessity.
Thus fixed she virtue's image, (that's her own,)
Till the whole mother in the children shone;
For that was their perfection: she was such,
They never could express her mind too much.
So unexhausted her perfections were,
That, for more children, she had more to spare;
For souls unborn, whom her untimely death
Deprived of bodies, and of mortal breath;
And, could they take the impressions of her mind,
Enough still left to sanctify her kind.
Then wonder not to see this soul extend
The bounds, and seek some other self, a friend;
As swelling seas to gentle rivers glide,
To seek repose, and empty out the tide;
So this full soul, in narrow limits pent,
Unable to contain her, sought a vent
To issue out, and in some friendly breast
Discharge her treasures, and securely rest;
To unbosom all the secrets of her heart,
Take good advice, but better to impart.
For 'tis the bliss of friendship's holy state,
To mix their minds, and to communicate;
Though bodies cannot, souls can penetrate:
Fixed to her choice, inviolably true,
And wisely choosing, for she chose but few.
Some she must have; but in no one could find
A tally fitted for so large a mind.
The souls of friends like kings in progress are,
Still in their own, though from the palace far:
Thus her friend's heart her country dwelling was, [135]
A sweet retirement to a coarser place;
Where pomp and ceremonies entered not,
Where greatness was shut out, and business well forgot.
This is the imperfect draught; but short as far
As the true height and bigness of a star

Exceeds the measures of the astronomer.
She shines above, we know; but in what place,
How near the throne, and heaven's imperial face,
By our weak optics is but vainly guessed;
Distance and altitude conceal the rest.
  Though all these rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow space of life confined,
The figure was with full perfection crowned;
Though not so large an orb, as truly round.
  As when in glory, through the public place,
The spoils of conquered nations were to pass,
And but one day for triumph was allowed,
The consul was constrained his pomp to crowd;
And so the swift procession hurried on,
That all, though not distinctly, might be shewn:
So in the straitened bounds of life confined,
She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind;
And multitudes of virtues passed along,
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be seen, and then make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
  Yet unemployed no minute slipped away;
Moments were precious in so short a stay.
The haste of heaven to have her was so great,
That some were single acts, though each complete;
But every act stood ready to repeat.
Her fellow-saints with busy care will look
For her blest name in fate's eternal book;
And, pleased to be outdone, with joy will see
Numberless virtues, endless charity:
But more will wonder at so short an age, [136]
To find a blank beyond the thirtieth page;
And with a pious fear begin to doubt
The piece imperfect, and the rest torn out.
But 'twas her Saviour's time;[91] and, could there be
A copy near the original, 'twas she.
  As precious gums are not for lasting fire,
They but perfume the temple, and expire;
So was she soon exhaled, and vanished hence;
A short sweet odour, of a vast expence.
She vanished, we can scarcely say she died;
For but a now did heaven and earth divide:
She passed serenely with a single breath;
This moment perfect health, the next was death:
One sigh did her eternal bliss assure;
So little penance needs, when souls are almost pure.
As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue,
Or, one dream passed, we slide into a new;
So close they follow, such wild order keep,
We think ourselves awake, and are asleep;
So softly death succeeded life in her,
She did but dream of heaven, and she was there.
  No pains she suffered, nor expired with noise;
Her soul was whispered out with God's still voice;
As an old friend is beckoned to a feast,
And treated like a long-familiar guest.
He took her as he found, but found her so,
As one in hourly readiness to go;
E'en on that day, in all her trim prepared,[92]
As early notice she from heaven had heard,
And some descending courier from above
Had given her timely warning to remove;
Or counselled her to dress the nuptial room, [137]
For on that night the bridegroom was to come.
He kept his hour, and found her where she lay,
Clothed all in white, the livery of the day:[93]
Scarce had she sinned in thought, or word, or act,
Unless omissions were to pass for fact;
That hardly death a consequence could draw,
To make her liable to nature's law.
And, that she died, we only have to shew
The mortal part of her she left below;
The rest, so smooth, so suddenly she went,
Looked like translation through the

Looked like translation through the firmament,
Or like the fiery car on the third errand sent.
O happy soul! if thou canst view from high,
Where thou art all intelligence, all eye,
If looking up to God, or down to us,
Thou find'st, that any way be pervious,
Survey the ruins of thy house, and see
Thy widowed and thy orphan family;
Look on thy tender pledges left behind;
And, if thou canst a vacant minute find
From heavenly joys, that interval afford
To thy sad children, and thy mourning lord.
See how they grieve, mistaken in their love,
And shed a beam of comfort from above;
Give them, as much as mortal eyes can bear,
A transient view of thy full glories there;
That they with moderate sorrow may sustain,
And mollify their losses in thy gain.
Or else divide the grief; for such thou wert,
That should not all relations bear a part,
It were enough to break a single heart.
Let this suffice: nor thou, great saint, refuse
This humble tribute, of no vulgar muse;
Who, not by cares, or wants, or age deprest, [138]
Stems a wild deluge with a dauntless breast;
And dares to sing thy praises in a clime
Where vice triumphs, and virtue is a crime;
Where e'en to draw the picture of thy mind,
Is satire on the most of human kind:
Take it, while yet 'tis praise; before my rage,
Unsafely just, break loose on this bad age;
So bad, that thou thyself hadst no defence
From vice, but barely by departing hence.
Be what, and where thou art; to wish thy place,
Were, in the best, presumption more than grace.
Thy relics, (such thy works of mercy are)
Have, in this poem, been my holy care.
As earth thy body keeps, thy soul the sky,
So shall this verse preserve thy memory;
For thou shalt make it live, because it sings of thee.

[139]

ON

THE DEATH OF AMYNTAS.

A PASTORAL ELEGY.

'Twas on a joyless and a gloomy morn,
Wet was the grass, and hung with pearls the thorn,
When Damon, who designed to pass the day
With hounds and horns, and chace the flying prey,
Rose early from his bed; but soon he found
The welkin pitched with sullen clouds around,
An eastern wind, and dew upon the ground.
Thus while he stood, and sighing did survey
The fields, and curst the ill omens of the day,
He saw Menalcas come with heavy pace:
Wet were his eyes, and cheerless was his face:
He wrung his hands, distracted with his care,
And sent his voice before him from afar.
"Return," he cried, "return, unhappy swain,
The spungy clouds are filled with gathering rain:
The promise of the day not only crossed,
But even the spring, the spring itself is lost.
Amyntas—oh!"—he could not speak the rest,
Nor needed, for presaging Damon guessed.
Equal with heaven young Damon loved the boy,
The boast of nature, both his parents' joy.
His graceful form revolving in his mind; [140]
So great a genius, and a soul so kind,
Gave sad assurance that his fears were true;
Too well the envy of the gods he knew:
For when their gifts too lavishly are placed,
Soon they repent, and will not make them last.
For sure it was too bountiful a dole,
The mother's features, and the father's soul.
Then thus he cried:—"The *morn* bespoke the news;
The morning did her cheerful light diffuse;
But see how suddenly she changed her face,
And brought on clouds and rain, the day's disgrace;
Just such, Amyntas, was thy promised race.
What charms adorned thy youth, where nature smiled,
And more than man was given us in a child!
His infancy was ripe; a soul sublime
In years so tender that prevented time:
Heaven gave him all at once; then snatched away,
Ere mortals all his beauties could survey;
Just like the flower that buds and withers in a day.

MENALCAS.

The mother, lovely, though with grief opprest,
Reclined his dying head upon her breast.
The mournful family stood all around;
One groan was heard, one universal sound:
All were in floods of tears and endless sorrow drowned.
So dire a sadness sat on every look,
Even death repented he had given the stroke.
He grieved his fatal work had been ordained,
But promised length of life to those who yet remained.
The mother's and her eldest daughter's grace,
It seems, had bribed him to prolong their space.
The father bore it with undaunted soul,
Like one who durst his destiny controul;
Yet with becoming grief he bore his part, [141]
Resigned his son, but not resigned his heart.
Patient as Job; and may he live to see,
Like him, a new increasing family!

DAMON.

Such is my wish, and such my prophecy;
For yet, my friend, the beauteous mould remains;
Long may she exercise her fruitful pains!
But, ah! with better hap, and bring a race
More lasting, and endued with equal grace!
Equal she may, but farther none can go;
For he was all that was exact below.

MENALCAS.

Damon, behold yon breaking purple cloud;
Hear'st thou not hymns and songs divinely loud?
There mounts Amyntas; the young cherubs play
About their godlike mate, and sing him on his way.
He cleaves the liquid air; behold, he flies,
And every moment gains upon the skies.
The new-come guest admires the ethereal state,
The sapphire portal, and the golden gate;
And now admitted in the shining throng,
He shows the passport which he brought along.
His passport is his innocence and grace,
Well known to all the natives of the place.
Now sing, ye joyful angels, and admire
Your brother's voice that comes to mend your quire:
Sing you, while endless tears our eyes bestow;
For, like Amyntas, none is left below.

ON [142]

THE DEATH

OF

A VERY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

He, who could view the book of destiny,
And read whatever there was writ of thee,
O charming youth, in the first opening page,
So many graces in so green an age,
Such wit, such modesty, such strength of mind,
A soul at once so manly and so kind,
Would wonder when he turned the volume o'er,
And, after some few leaves, should find no more.
Nought but a blank remain, a dead void space,
A step of life that promised such a race.
We must not, dare not, think, that heaven began
A child, and could not finish him a man;
Reflecting what a mighty store was laid
Of rich materials, and a model made:
The cost already furnished; so bestowed,
As more was never to one soul allowed:
Yet after this profusion spent in vain,
Nothing but mouldering ashes to remain,
I guess not, lest I split upon the shelf,
Yet, durst I guess, heaven kept it for himself;
And giving us the use, did soon recal, [143]
Ere we could spare the mighty principal.
  Thus then he disappeared, was rarefied,
For 'tis improper speech to say he died:
He was exhaled; his great Creator drew
His spirit, as the sun the morning dew.
'Tis sin produces death; and he had none,
But the taint Adam left on every son.
He added not, he was so pure, so good,
'Twas but the original forfeit of his blood;
And that so little, that the river ran
More clear than the corrupted fount began.
Nothing remained of the first muddy clay;
The length of course had washed it in the way:
So deep, and yet so clear, we might behold
The gravel bottom, and that bottom gold.
  As such we loved, admired, almost adored,
Gave all the tribute mortals could afford.
Perhaps we gave so much, the powers above
Grew angry at our superstitious love;
For when we more than human homage pay,
The charming cause is justly snatched away.
  Thus was the crime not his, but ours alone;
And yet we murmur that he went so soon,
Though miracles are short, and rarely shown.
  Learn then, ye mournful parents, and divide
That love in many, which in one was tied.
That individual blessing is no more,
But multiplied in your remaining store.
The flame's dispersed, but does not all expire;
The sparkles blaze, though not the globe of fire.
Love him by parts, in all your numerous race,
And from those parts form one collected grace;
Then, when you have refined to that degree,
Imagine all in one, and think that one is he.

YOUNG Mr ROGERS,

OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The family of Rogers seems to have been of considerable antiquity in Gloucestershire. They possessed the estate of Dowdeswell during the greater part of the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of their monuments are in the church of Dowdeswell, of which they were patrons.—See Atkyn's Gloucestershire. *The subject of this epitaph was probably of this family.*

Of gentle blood, his parents only treasure,
Their lasting sorrow, and their vanished pleasure.
Adorned with features, virtues, wit, and grace,
A large provision for so short a race:
More moderate gifts might have prolonged his date,
Too early fitted for a better state:
But, knowing heaven his home, to shun delay,
He leaped o'er age, and took the shortest way.

[145]

ON THE DEATH OF

Mr PURCELL.

IN MUSIC.

Henry Purcell, as a musician, is said by Burney to have been as much the pride of an Englishman, as Shakespeare in the drama, Milton in epic poetry, or Locke and Newton in their several departments of philosophy. He was born in 1658, and died in 1695, at the premature age of 37 years. Dryden, to whose productions he had frequently added the charms of music, devoted a tribute to his memory in the following verses, which, with others by inferior bards, were prefixed to a collection of Purcell's music, published two years after his death, under the title of Orpheus Britannicus. The Ode was set to music by Dr Blow, and performed at the concert in York Buildings. Dr Burney says, that the music is composed in fugue and imitation; but appears laboured, and is wholly without invention or pathos.

The "Orpheus Britannicus" being inscribed by the widow of Purcell to the Hon. Lady Howard, both Sir John Hawkins and Dr Burney have been led into the mistake of supposing, that the person so named was no other than Lady Elizabeth Dryden, our author's wife. Mr Malone has detected this error; and indeed the high compliments paid by the dedicator to Mr Purcell's patroness, as an exquisite musician, a person of extensive influence, and one whose munificence had covered the remains of Purcell with "a fair monument," are irreconcileable with the character, situation, and pecuniary circumstances of Lady Elizabeth Dryden. The Lady Howard of the dedication must, unquestionably, have been the wife of the Honourable Sir Robert Howard; whence it follows, that the "honourable gentleman, who had the dearest, and most deserved relation to her, and whose excellent compositions were the subject of Purcell's last and best performances in music," was not our author, as has been erroneously supposed, but his brother-in-law, the said Sir Robert Howard, who continued to the last to be an occasional author, and to [146] contribute songs to the dramatic performances of the day.[94]

Although Dryden's lady certainly did not erect Purcell's monument, it is more than probable, judging from internal evidence, that the poet contributed the inscription, which runs thus:

Here lies
Henry Purcell, Esq.
Who left this life,
And is gone to that blessed place,
Where only his harmony
can be exceeded.

Obiit 21mo die Novembris,
Anno ætatis suæ 37mo,
Annoq. Domini, 1695.

The stone over the grave bore the following epitaph: [147]

Plaudito, felices Superi, tanto hospite; nostris
Præfuerat, vestris additur ille choris:
Invida nec vobis Purcellum terra reposcat,
Questa decus secli, deliciasque breves
Tam cito decessisse, modos cui singula debet
Musa, prophana suos, religiosa suos:
Vivit Io et vivat, dum vicina organa spirant,
Dumque colet numeris turba canora Deum.

Of the following ode, it may be briefly observed, that it displays much conceit, and little pathos, although the introductory simile is beautifully worded.

ON [148]

THE DEATH OF

Mr PURCELL.

SET TO MUSIC BY DR BLOW.

Mark how the lark and linnet sing,
With rival notes
They strain their warbling throats,
To welcome in the spring.
But in the close of night,
When Philomel begins her heavenly lay,
They cease their mutual spite,
Drink in her music with delight,
And, listening, silently obey.

II.

So ceased the rival crew when Purcell came;
They sung no more, or only sung his fame.
Struck dumb, they all admired the godlike man:
The godlike man,
Alas! too soon retired,
As he too late began.
We beg not hell our Orpheus to restore;
Had he been there,
Their sovereign's fear
Had sent him back before.
The power of harmony too well they knew: [149]
He long ere this had tuned their jarring sphere,
And left no hell below.

III.

The heavenly choir, who heard his notes from high,
Let down the scale of music from the sky;
They handed him along,
And all the way he taught, and all the way they sung.
Ye brethren of the lyre, and tuneful voice,
Lament his lot, but at your own rejoice:
Now live secure, and linger out your days;
The gods are pleased alone with Purcell's lays,
Nor know to mend their choice.

EPITAPH

ON THE

LADY WHITMORE.

This was perhaps Frances, daughter of Sir William Brooke, Knight of the Bath, and wife to Sir Thomas Whitmore, Knight-Baronet.

FAIR, kind, and true, a treasure each alone,
A wife, a mistress, and a friend, in one;
Rest in this tomb, raised at thy husband's cost,
Here sadly summing, what he had, and lost.
  Come, virgins, ere in equal bands ye join,
Come first and offer at her sacred shrine;
Pray but for half the virtues of this wife,
Compound for all the rest, with longer life;
And wish your vows, like hers, may be returned,
So loved when living, and, when dead, so mourned.

EPITAPH

ON

MRS MARGARET PASTON,

OF BURNINGHAM, IN NORFOLK.

This is an ancient and distinguished family in Norfolk. See Bloomfield's topographical account of that shire.

So fair, so young, so innocent, so sweet,
So ripe a judgment, and so rare a wit,
Require at least an age in one to meet.
In her they met; but long they could not stay,
'Twas gold too fine to mix without allay.
Heaven's image was in her so well exprest,
Her very sight upbraided all the rest;
Too justly ravished from an age like this,
Now she is gone, the world is of a piece.

[152]

EPITAPH

ON THE

MONUMENT

OF

THE MARQUIS OF WINCHESTER.

JOHN POWLET, fifth Marquis of Winchester, was remarkable for his steady loyalty to Charles I. He garrisoned for the king his fine castle at Basing, and underwent a siege of two years, from August 1643 to October 16th, 1645; on which day it was taken by Cromwell, by storm, after having been defended with great gallantry to the very last extremity. The Marquis had written, in every window of the house, with a diamond, the motto *Aymez Loyaulté*. The parliamentary leaders, incensed at this device, burned down this noble seat, (a conflagration which Cromwell imputes to accident,) and destroyed and plundered property to the amount of L. 200,000. The Marquis himself was made prisoner. The particulars of this memorable siege were printed at Oxford, in 1645; and Oliver's account of the storm is published in Collins's "Peerage," from a manuscript in the Museum. The Marquis of Winchester survived the Restoration; and, having died premier marquis of England in 1674, was buried at Englefield. This monument, upon which our author's verses are engraved, is made of black and white marble; and a compartment underneath the lines bears this inscription: "The Lady Marchioness Dowager, in testimony of her love and sorrow, gave this monument to the memory of a most affectionate, tender husband." On a flat marble stone, beneath the monument, is the following epitaph: "Here lieth interred the body of the most noble and mighty prince, John Powlet, Marquis of Winchester, Earl of Wiltshire, Baron of St John of Basing, first Marquis of England: A man of exemplary piety towards God, and of inviolable fidelity towards his sovereign; in whose cause he fortified his house of Basing, and defended it against the rebels to the last extremity. He married three wives: the first was Jane, daughter of [153] Thomas, Viscount Savage, and of Elizabeth his wife, daughter and co-heir of Thomas Darcey, Earl of Rivers; by whom he had issue Charles, now Marquis of Winchester. His second wife was Honora, daughter of Richard Burgh, Earl of St Alban's and Clanricarde, and of Frances, his wife, daughter and heir of Sir Francis Walsingham, knight, and principal secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth; by whom he had issue four sons and three daughters. His last wife, who survived him, was Isabella, daughter of William, Viscount Stafford, second son of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, Earl Marshal of England, and of Mary his wife, sister and sole heir of Henry, Lord Stafford, who was the heir-male of the most high, mighty, and most noble Prince Edward, last Duke of Buckingham of that most illustrious name and family, by whom he had no issue. He died in the 77th year of his age, on the 5th of March, in the year of our Lord 1674.—By Edward Walker, Garter King of Arms."

EPITAPH

ON THE

MONUMENT

OF

THE MARQUIS OF WINCHESTER.

He who, in impious times, undaunted stood,
And 'midst rebellion durst be just and good;
Whose arms asserted, and whose sufferings more
Confirmed the cause for which he fought before,
Rests here, rewarded by an heavenly prince,
For what his earthly could not recompence.
Pray, reader, that such times no more appear;
Or, if they happen, learn true honour here.
Ask of this age's faith and loyalty,
Which, to preserve them, heaven confined in thee.
Few subjects could a king like thine deserve;
And fewer, such a king so well could serve.
Blest king, blest subject, whose exalted state
By sufferings rose, and gave the law to fate!
Such souls are rare, but mighty patterns given
To earth, and meant for ornaments to heaven.

[155]

EPITAPH

ON

SIR PALMES FAIRBONE'S TOMB

IN

WESTMINSTER-ABBEY.

Sacred to the immortal memory of Sir PALMES FAIRBONE, *Knight, Governor of Tangier; in execution of which command he was mortally wounded by a shot from the Moors, then besieging the town, in the forty-sixth year of his age, October* 24, 1680.

YE sacred relics, which your marble keep,
Here, undisturbed by wars, in quiet sleep;
Discharge the trust, which, when it was below,
Fairbone's undaunted soul did undergo,
And be the town's palladium from the foe.
Alive and dead these walls he will defend:
Great actions great examples must attend.
The Candian siege his early valour knew,
Where Turkish blood did his young hands imbrue.
From thence returning with deserved applause, [156]
Against the Moors his well-fleshed sword he draws;
The same the courage, and the same the cause.
His youth and age, his life and death, combine,
As in some great and regular design,
All of a piece throughout, and all divine.
Still nearer heaven his virtues shone more bright,
Like rising flames expanding in their height;
The martyr's glory crowned the soldier's fight.
More bravely British general never fell,
Nor general's death was e'er revenged so well;
Which his pleased eyes beheld before their close,
Followed by thousand victims of his foes.[95]
To his lamented loss, for time to come, [157]
His pious widow consecrates this tomb.

ON [158]

THE MONUMENT

OF A

FAIR MAIDEN LADY,

WHO DIED AT BATH,

AND IS THERE INTERRED.

This lady lies buried in the Abbey-Church at Bath. The lines are accompanied by the following inscription upon a monument of white marble: "Here lies the body of Mary, third daughter of Richard Frampton of Moreton, in Dorsetshire, Esq. and of Jane his wife, sole daughter of Sir Francis Cothington of Founthill, in Wilts, who was born January 1, 1676, and died, after seven weeks illness, on the 6th of September, 1698.

"This monument was erected by Catharine Frampton, her second sister and executrix, in testimony of her grief, affection, and gratitude."

BELOW this marble monument is laid
All that heaven wants of this celestial maid.
Preserve, O sacred tomb, thy trust consigned;
The mold was made on purpose for the mind:
And she would lose, if, at the latter day,
One atom could be mixed of other clay;
Such were the features of her heavenly face,
Her limbs were formed with such harmonious grace:
So faultless was the frame, as if the whole [159]
Had been an emanation of the soul;
Which her own inward symmetry revealed,
And like a picture shone, in glass annealed;
Or like the sun eclipsed, with shaded light;
Too piercing, else, to be sustained by sight.
Each thought was visible that rolled within;
As through a crystal case the figured hours are seen.
And heaven did this transparent veil provide,
Because she had no guilty thought to hide.
All white, a virgin-saint, she sought the skies,
For marriage, though it sullies not, it dyes.
High though her wit, yet humble was her
mind;
As if she could not, or she would not find
How much her worth transcended all her kind.
Yet she had learned so much of heaven below,
That when arrived, she scarce had more to know;
But only to refresh the former hint,
And read her Maker in a fairer print.
So pious, as she had no time to spare
For human thoughts, but was confined to prayer;
Yet in such charities she passed the day,
'Twas wondrous how she found an hour to pray.
A soul so calm, it knew not ebbs or flows,
Which passion could but curl, not discompose.
A female softness, with a manly mind;
A daughter duteous, and a sister kind;
In sickness patient, and in death resigned.

UNDER

MR MILTON'S PICTURE,

BEFORE HIS PARADISE LOST.

This inscription appeared under the engraving prefixed to Tonson's folio edition of the Paradise Lost, published by subscription, under the patronage of Somers, in 1688. Dryden was one of the subscribers. Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was active in procuring subscribers. See a letter of his to Tonson, Malone's Life of Dryden, p. 203.

Mr Malone regards Dryden's hexastich as an amplification of Selvaggi's distich, addressed to Milton while at Rome:

> Græcia Mœonidem, jactet sibi Roma Maronem,
> Anglia Miltonum jactat utrique parem.

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

ODES, SONGS,

AND

LYRICAL PIECES.

FAREWELL, FAIR ARMIDA. [161]

A SONG.

This Song was written on the death of Captain Digby, a younger son of the Earl of Bristol, who was killed in the great sea-fight between the English and Dutch, on the 28th May, 1672. The relentless beauty to whom the lines were addressed, was Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond; called in the Memoires de Grammont, La Belle Stuart. Count Hamilton there assures us, that her charms made conquest of Charles II. and were the occasion of much jealousy to the Countess of Castlemaine. Dryden's song is parodied in "The Rehearsal," in that made by "Tom Thimble's first wife after she was dead." "Farewell, fair Armida," is printed in the Covent-Garden Drollery, 1672, p. 16. where there is an exculpatory answer by the Lady, but of little merit.

FAREWELL, fair Armida, my joy and my grief!
In vain I have loved you, and hope no relief;
Undone by your virtue, too strict and severe,
Your eyes gave me love, and you gave me despair:
Now called by my honour, I seek with content
The fate which in pity you would not prevent:
To languish in love were to find, by delay,
A death that's more welcome the speediest way.

On seas and in battles, in bullets and fire,
The danger is less than in hopeless desire;
My death's wound you give me, though far off I bear
My fall from your sight—not to cost you a tear;
But if the kind flood on a wave should convey, [162]
And under your window my body should lay,
The wound on my breast when you happen to see,
You'll say with a sigh—*it was given by me*.

THE

FAIR STRANGER,

A SONG.

These verses are addressed to Louise de la Querouailles. That lady came to England with the Duchess of Orleans, when she visited her brother Charles II. in 1670. The beauty of this fair stranger made the intended impression on Charles; he detained her in England, and created her Duchess of Portsmouth. Notwithstanding the detestation in which she was held by his subjects, on account of her religion, country, and politics, she continued to be Charles's principal favourite till the very hour of his death, when he recommended her and her son to his successor's protection.

I.

HAPPY and free, securely blest,
No beauty could disturb my rest;
My amorous heart was in despair
To find a new victorious fair:

II.

Till you, descending on our plains,
With foreign force renew my chains;
Where now you rule without controul,
The mighty sovereign of my soul.

III.

Your smiles have more of conquering charms,
Than all your native country's arms;
Their troops we can expel with ease,
Who vanquish only when we please.

IV.

But in your eyes, O! there's the spell!
Who can see them, and not rebel?
You make us captives by your stay;
Yet kill us if you go away.

A SONG FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY.

[165]

St Cecilia was, according to her legend, a Roman virgin of rank, who flourished during the reign of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. She was a Christian, and, by her purity of life, and constant employment in the praises of her Maker, while yet on earth, obtained intercourse with an angel. Being married to Valerianus, a Pagan, she not only prevailed upon him to abstain from using any familiarity with her person, but converted him and his brother to Christianity. They were all martyrs for the faith in the reign of Septimius Severus. Chaucer has celebrated this legend in the "Second Nonne's Tale," which is almost a literal translation from the "Golden Legend" of Jacobus Januensis. As all professions and fraternities, in ancient times, made choice of a tutelar saint, Cecilia was elected the protectress of music and musicians. It was even believed that she had invented the organ, although no good authority can be discovered for such an assertion. Her festival was celebrated from an early period by those of the profession over whom she presided.

The revival of letters, with the Restoration, was attended with a similar resuscitation of the musical art; but the formation of a Musical Society, for the annual commemoration of St Cecilia's day, did not take place until 1680. An ode, written for the occasion, was set to music by the most able professor, and rehearsed before the society and their stewards upon the 22d November, the day dedicated to the patroness. The first effusions of this kind are miserable enough. Mr Malone has preserved a few verses of an ode, by an anonymous author, in 1633; that of 1684 was furnished by Oldham, whom our author has commemorated by an elegy; that of 1685 was written by Nahum Tate, and is given by Mr Malone, Vol. I. p. 274. There was no performance in 1686; and, in 1687, Dryden furnished the following ode, which was set to music by Draghi, an eminent Italian composer. Of the annual festival, Motteux gives the following account:

"The 22d of November, being St Cecilia's day, is observed throughout all Europe by the lovers of [166]
music. In Italy, Germany, France, and other countries, prizes are distributed on that day, in some of the most considerable towns, to such as make the best anthem in her praise.... On that day, or the next when it falls on a Sunday, ... most of the lovers of music, whereof many are persons of the first rank, meet at Stationers' Hall in London, not through a principle of superstition, but to propagate the advancement of that divine science. A splendid entertainment is provided, and before it is always a performance of music, by the best voices and hands in town: the words, which are always in the patronesses praise, are set by some of the greatest masters. This year [1691] Dr John Blow, that famous musician, composed the music; and Mr D'Urfey, whose skill in things of that nature is well known, made the words. Six stewards are chosen for each ensuing year; four of which are either persons of quality or gentlemen of note, and the two last either gentlemen of their majesties music, or some of the chief masters in town.... This feast is one of the genteelest in the world; there are no formalities nor gatherings as at others, and the appearance there is always very splendid. Whilst the company is at table, the hautboys and trumpets play successively."

The merit of the following Ode has been so completely lost in that of "Alexander's Feast," that few readers give themselves even the trouble of attending to it. Yet the first stanza has exquisite merit; and although the power of music is announced, in those which follow, in a manner more abstracted and general, and, therefore, less striking than when its influence upon Alexander and his chiefs is placed before our eyes, it is perhaps only our intimate acquaintance with the second ode that leads us to undervalue the first, although containing the original ideas, so exquisitely brought out and embodied in "Alexander's Feast."

SONG

FOR

ST CECILIA'S DAY,

22D NOVEMBER, 1687.

I.

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead."
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran, [168]
The diapason[96] closing full in man.

II.

What passion cannot music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot music raise and quell?

III.

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum,
Cries, hark! the foes come:
Charge, charge! 'tis too late to retreat.

[169]

IV.

The soft complaining flute,
In dying notes, discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers;
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

V.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI.

But, oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
When to her organ[97] vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

[170]

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

THE

TEARS OF AMYNTA,

FOR THE

DEATH OF DAMON.

A SONG.

I.

ON a bank, beside a willow,
Heaven her covering, earth her pillow,
  Sad Amynta sighed alone;
From the cheerless dawn of morning
Till the dews of night returning,
  Singing thus, she made her moan:
    Hope is banished,
    Joys are vanished,
  Damon, my beloved, is gone!

II.

Time, I dare thee to discover
Such a youth, and such a lover;
  Oh, so true, so kind was he!
Damon was the pride of nature,
Charming in his every feature;
  Damon lived alone for me:
    Melting kisses,
    Murmuring blisses;
  Who so lived and loved as we!

III.

Never shall we curse the morning,
Never bless the night returning,
  Sweet embraces to restore:
Never shall we both lie dying,
Nature failing, love supplying
  All the joys he drained before.
    Death, come end me,
    To befriend me;
  Love and Damon are no more.

A SONG.

I.

SYLVIA, the fair, in the bloom of fifteen,
Felt an innocent warmth as she lay on the green;
She had heard of a pleasure, and something she guest
By the towzing, and tumbling, and touching her breast.
She saw the men eager, but was at a loss,
What they meant by their sighing, and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

II.

Ah! she cried, ah, for a languishing maid,
In a country of Christians, to die without aid!
Not a Whig, or a Tory, or Trimmer at least,
Or a Protestant parson, or Catholic priest,
To instruct a young virgin, that is at a loss,
What they meant by their sighing, and kissing so close!
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

III.

Cupid, in shape of a swain, did appear,
He saw the sad wound, and in pity drew near;
Then showed her his arrow, and bid her not fear,
For the pain was no more than a maiden may bear.
When the balm was infused, she was not at a loss,
What they meant by their sighing, and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

THE

LADY'S SONG.

The obvious application of this song is to the banishment of King James, and his beautiful consort Mary of Este.

I.

A choir of bright beauties in spring did appear,
To chuse a May-lady to govern the year:
All the nymphs were in white, and the shepherds in green,
The garland was given, and Phyllis was queen;
But Phyllis refused it, and sighing did say,
I'll not wear a garland while Pan is away.

II.

While Pan and fair Syrinx are fled from our shore,
The Graces are banished, and Love is no more;
The soft god of pleasure, that warmed our desires,
Has broken his bow, and extinguished his fires,
And vows that himself and his mother will mourn,
Till Pan and fair Syrinx in triumph return.

III.

Forbear your addresses, and court us no more,
For we will perform what the deity swore:
But, if you dare think of deserving our charms,
Away with your sheep hooks, and take to your arms;
Then laurels and myrtles your brows shall adorn,
When Pan, and his son, and fair Syrinx, return.

A SONG.

I.

FAIR, sweet, and young, receive a prize
Reserved for your victorious eyes:
From crowds, whom at your feet you see,
O pity, and distinguish me!
As I from thousand beauties more
Distinguish you, and only you adore.

II.

Your face for conquest was designed,
Your every motion charms my mind;
Angels, when you your silence break,
Forget their hymns, to hear you speak;
But when at once they hear and view,
Are loath to mount, and long to stay with you.

III.

No graces can your form improve,
But all are lost, unless you love;
While that sweet passion you disdain,
Your veil and beauty are in vain:
In pity then prevent my fate,
For after dying all reprieve's too late.

A SONG.

HIGH state and honours to others impart,
But give me your heart;
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.
So gentle a love, so fervent a fire,
My soul does inspire;
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.
Your love let me crave;
Give me in possessing
So matchless a blessing;
That empire is all I would have.
Love's my petition,
All my ambition;
If e'er you discover
So faithful a lover,
So real a flame,
I'll die, I'll die,
So give up my game.

RONDELAY.

I.

CHLOE found Amyntas lying,
All in tears, upon the plain,
Sighing to himself, and crying,
Wretched I, to love in vain!
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain.

II.

Sighing to himself, and crying,
Wretched I, to love in vain!
Ever scorning, and denying
To reward your faithful swain.
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain.

III.

Ever scorning, and denying
To reward your faithful swain.—
Chloe, laughing at his crying,
Told him, that he loved in vain.
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain,

IV.

Chloe, laughing at his crying,
Told him, that he loved in vain;
But, repenting, and complying,
When he kissed, she kissed again:
Kissed him up before his dying;
Kissed him up, and eased his pain.

A SONG.

I.

Go tell Amynta, gentle swain,
I would not die, nor dare complain:
Thy tuneful voice with numbers join,
Thy words will more prevail than mine.
To souls oppressed, and dumb with grief,
The gods ordain this kind relief,
That music should in sounds convey,
What dying lovers dare not say.

II.

A sigh or tear, perhaps, she'll give,
But love on pity cannot live.
Tell her that hearts for hearts were made,
And love with love is only paid.
Tell her my pains so fast increase,
That soon they will be past redress;
But, ah! the wretch that speechless lies,
Attends but death to close his eyes.

[181]

A SONG

TO A

FAIR YOUNG LADY,

GOING OUT OF THE TOWN IN THE SPRING.

I.

Ask not the cause, why sullen spring
  So long delays her flowers to bear?
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
  And winter storms invert the year?
Chloris is gone, and fate provides
To make it spring where she resides.

II.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
  She cast not back a pitying eye;
But left her lover in despair,
  To sigh, to languish, and to die.
Ah, how can those fair eyes endure,
To give the wounds they will not cure!

III.

Great god of love, why hast thou made
  A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
  And change the laws of every land?
Where thou hadst placed such power before, [182]
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

IV.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
  Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs,
  And every life but mine recal.
I only am, by love, designed
To be the victim for mankind.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST,

OR

THE POWER OF MUSIC;

AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST CECILIA'S DAY.

This celebrated Ode was written for the Saint's Festival in 1697, when the following stewards officiated: Hugh Colvill, Esq.; Capt. Thomas Newman; Orlando Bridgeman, Esq.; Theophilus Buller, Esq.; Leonard Wessell, Esq.; Paris Slaughter, Esq.; Jeremiah Clarke, Gent.; and Francis Rich, Gent. The merits of this unequalled effusion of lyrical poetry, are fully discussed in the general criticism.

I.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft, in awful state,
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne.
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS.

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II.

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spheres he rode,
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then, round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.—
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity! they shout around;
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS.

With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

[185]

III.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung;
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Flushed with a purple grace
He shews his honest face:
Now, give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS.

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldiers pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain:
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.—
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful muse,
Soft pity to infuse;
He sung Darius great and good, [186]
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood:
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS.

Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

V.

The mighty master smiled, to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures:
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour, but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying;
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee—
The many rend the skies with loud applause; [187]
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair,
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair,
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

VI.

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise;
See the snakes, that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain, [188]
And, unburied, remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.—
The princes applaud, with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

CHORUS.

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

VII.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS.

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS,

PARAPHRASED.

[190]

CREATOR spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come visit every pious mind;
Come pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.
O source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing.
Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy seven-fold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty hand,
Whose power does heaven and earth command.
Proceeding spirit, our defence,
Who do'st the gifts of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence.
Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, O, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice controul,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And, when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay thy hand, and hold them down.
Chace from our minds the infernal foe; [191]
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And, lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.
Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe;
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father, and the Son, by thee.
Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name;
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died;
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

FABLES.

TALES FROM CHAUCER.

TO

HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF ORMOND.[98]

Anno 1699.

MY LORD,

SOME estates are held, in England, by paying a fine at the change of every lord. I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this present day. I have dedicated the translations of the "Lives of Plutarch" to the first duke;[99] and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father.[100] Though I am very short of the age of Nestor, [196] yet I have lived to a third generation of your house; and, by your grace's favour, am admitted still to hold from you by the same tenure.

I am not vain enough to boast, that I have deserved the value of so illustrious a line; but my fortune is the greater, that, for three descents, they have been pleased to distinguish my poems from those of other men, and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to say, that as your grandfather and father were cherished and adorned with honours by two successive monarchs, so I have been esteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the son, descended from one of the most ancient, most conspicuous, and most deserving families in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payment of my last fine, when it was due by your grace's accession to the titles and patrimonies of your house, I may seem, in rigour of law, to have made a forfeiture of my claim; yet my heart has always been devoted to your service; and since you have been graciously pleased, by your permission of this address, to accept the tender of my duty, it is not yet too late to lay these poems at your feet.

The world is sensible, that you worthily succeed not only to the honours of your ancestors, but also to their virtues. The long chain of magnanimity, courage, easiness of access, and desire of doing good, even to the prejudice of your fortune, is so far from being broken in your grace, that the precious metal yet runs pure to the newest link of it; which I will not call the last, because I [197] hope and pray it may descend to late posterity; and your flourishing youth, and that of your excellent duchess, are happy omens of my wish.

It is observed by Livy, and by others, that some of the noblest Roman families retained a resemblance of their ancestry, not only in their shapes and features, but also in their manners, their qualities, and the distinguishing characters of their minds. Some lines were noted for a stern, rigid virtue; savage, haughty, parsimonious, and unpopular; others were more sweet and affable, made of a more pliant paste, humble, courteous, and obliging; studious of doing charitable offices, and diffusive of the goods which they enjoyed. The last of these is the proper and indelible character of your grace's family. God Almighty has endued you with a softness, a beneficence, an attractive behaviour winning on the hearts of others, and so sensible of their misery, that the wounds of fortune seem not inflicted on them, but on yourself.[101] You are so ready to redress, that you almost prevent their wishes, and always exceed their expectations; as if what was yours was not your own, and not given you to possess, but to bestow on wanting merit. But this is a topic which I must cast in shades, lest I offend your modesty; which is so far from being ostentatious of the good you do, that it blushes even to have it known; and, therefore, I must leave you to the satisfaction and testimony of your own conscience, which, though it be a silent panegyric, is yet the best.

You are so easy of access, that Poplicola[102] was not more, whose doors were opened on the [198] outside to save the people even the common civility of asking entrance; where all were equally

admitted; where nothing that was reasonable was denied; where misfortune was a powerful recommendation; and where, I can scarce forbear saying, that want itself was a powerful mediator, and was next to merit.

The history of Peru assures us, that their Incas, above all their titles, esteemed that the highest, which called them *lovers of the poor*;—a name more glorious than the Felix, Pius, and Augustus, of the Roman emperors, which were epithets of flattery, deserved by few of them; and not running in a blood like the perpetual gentleness, and inherent goodness, of the Ormond family.

Gold, as it is the purest, so it is the softest and most ductile of all metals. Iron, which is the hardest, gathers rust, corrodes itself, and is, therefore, subject to corruption. It was never intended for coins and medals, or to bear the faces and inscriptions of the great. Indeed, it is fit for armour, to bear off insults, and preserve the wearer in the day of battle; but, the danger once repelled, it is laid aside by the brave, as a garment too rough for civil conversation; a necessary guard in war, but too harsh and cumbersome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reason, my lord, though you have courage in an heroical degree, yet I ascribe it to you but as your second attribute: mercy, beneficence, and compassion, claim precedence, as they are first in the divine nature. An intrepid courage, which is inherent in your grace, is at best but a [199] holiday-kind of virtue, to be seldom exercised, and never but in cases of necessity; affability, mildness, tenderness, and a word, which I would fain bring back to its original signification of virtue, I mean good-nature, are of daily use. They are the bread of mankind, and staff of life. Neither sighs, nor tears, nor groans, nor curses of the vanquished, follow acts of compassion and of charity; but a sincere pleasure, and serenity of mind, in him who performs an action of mercy, which cannot suffer the misfortunes of another without redress, lest they should bring a kind of contagion along with them, and pollute the happiness which he enjoys.

Yet since the perverse tempers of mankind, since oppression on one side, and ambition on the other, are sometimes the unavoidable occasions of war, that courage, that magnanimity, and resolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended: And here it grieves me that I am scanted in the pleasure of dwelling on many of your actions; but αἰδέομαι Τρῶας is an expression which Tully often uses, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the censure of the Romans.

I have sometimes been forced to amplify on others; but here, where the subject is so fruitful, that the harvest overcomes the reaper, I am shortened by my chain, and can only see what is forbidden me to reach; since it is not permitted me to commend you according to the extent of my wishes, and much less is it in my power to make my commendations equal to your merits.

Yet, in this frugality of your praises, there are some things which I cannot omit, without detracting from your character. You have so formed your own education, as enables you to pay the debt you owe your country, or, more properly speaking, both your countries; because you [200] were born, I may almost say, in purple, at the castle of Dublin, when your grandfather was lord-lieutenant, and have since been bred in the court of England.

If this address had been in verse, I might have called you, as Claudian calls Mercury, *Numen commune, gemino faciens commercia mundo*. The better to satisfy this double obligation, you have early cultivated the genius you have to arms, that when the service of Britain or Ireland shall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practised in the camp; and thus both Lucullus and Cæsar (to omit a crowd of shining Romans) formed themselves to the war, by the study of history, and by the examples of the greatest captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name those two commanders in particular, because they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus, in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be sent into the field, against the most formidable enemy of Rome. Tully, indeed, was called the learned consul in derision; but then he was not born a soldier; his head was turned another way: when he read the tactics, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general, who dares not make use of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage and resolution; in him it will direct his martial spirit, and teach him the way to the best victories, which are those that are least bloody, and which, though achieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science distinguishes a man of honour from one of those athletic brutes whom, undeservedly, we call heroes. Cursed be the poet, who first honoured with that name a mere [201] Ajax, a man-killing idiot! The Ulysses of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he understood not the shield for which he pleaded; there was engraven on it plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as stupidly as his fellow-beast, the lion. But, on the other side, your grace has given yourself the education of his rival; you have studied every spot of ground in Flanders, which, for these ten years past, has been the scene of battles, and of sieges. No wonder if you performed your part with such applause, on a theatre which you understood so well.

If I designed this for a poetical encomium, it were easy to enlarge on so copious a subject; but, confining myself to the severity of truth, and to what is becoming me to say, I must not only pass over many instances of your military skill, but also those of your assiduous diligence in the war, and of your personal bravery, attended with an ardent thirst of honour; a long train of generosity; profuseness of doing good; a soul unsatisfied with all it has done, and an unextinguished desire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own historians; I am, as Virgil says, *Spatiis exclusus iniquis*.

Yet, not to be wholly silent of all your charities, I must stay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the consideration of yourself. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had transported you so far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much less to succour you; when you were not only dangerously, but, in all appearance, mortally wounded; when in that desperate condition you were made prisoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in possession of the French;[103] then it was, my [202] lord, that you took a considerable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and, as a memorable instance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of Count Guiscard, who was governor of the place, to be distributed among your fellow-prisoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatness of your soul, accordingly consigned it to the use for which it was intended by the donor; by which means the lives of so many miserable men were saved, and a comfortable provision made for their subsistence, who had otherwise perished, had you not been the companion of their misfortune; or rather sent by Providence, like another Joseph, to keep out famine from invading those, whom, in humility, you called your brethren. How happy was it for those poor creatures, that your grace was made their fellow-sufferer? And how glorious for you, that you chose to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others? The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, spoke like a Christian:

on ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

All men, even those of a different interest, and contrary principles, must praise this action as the most eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almost in any of the former; when [203] men were made *de meliore luto*; when examples of charity were frequent, and when there were in being,

————Teucri pulcherrima proles,
Magnanimi heroes, nati melioribus annis.

No envy can detract from this; it will shine in history, and, like swans, grow whiter the longer it endures; and the name of Ormond will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greatest triumphs.

But all actions of your grace are of a piece, as waters keep the tenor of their fountains: your compassion is general, and has the same effect as well on enemies as friends. It is so much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many; as the sun is always carrying his light to some part or other of the world. And were it not that your reason guides you where to give, I might almost say, that you could not help bestowing more than is consisting with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What wonder is it then, that, being born for a blessing to mankind, your supposed death in that engagement was so generally lamented through the nation? The concernment for it was as universal as the loss; and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in some, yet the tears of all were real: where every man deplored his private part in that calamity, and even those who had not tasted of your favours, yet built so much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loss of their expectations.

This brought the untimely death of your great father into fresh remembrance,—as if the same decree had passed on two short successive generations of the virtuous; and I repeated to myself [204] the same verses which I had formerly applied to him:

Ostendunt terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent.

But, to the joy not only of all good men, but mankind in general, the unhappy omen took not place. You are still living, to enjoy the blessings and applause of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long prosperity, and that your power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealously desired than by

Your Grace's most humble,

Most obliged, and

Most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PREFACE

PREFIXED TO

THE FABLES.

IT is with a poet, as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short in the expence he first intended. He alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me; I have built a house, where I intended but a lodge; yet with better success than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived.[104]

From translating the First of Homer's "Iliads," (which I intended as an essay to the whole work,) I [206]
proceeded to the translation of the Twelfth Book of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," because it contains, among other things, the causes, the beginning, and ending, of the Trojan war. Here I ought in reason to have stopped; but the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses lying next in my way, I could not balk them. When I had compassed them, I was so taken with the former part of the Fifteenth Book, which is the masterpiece of the whole "Metamorphoses," that I enjoined myself the pleasing task of rendering it into English. And now I found, by the number of my verses, that they began to swell into a little volume; which gave me an occasion of looking backward on some beauties of my author, in his former books: There occurred to me the "Hunting of the Boar," "Cinyras and Myrrha," the good-natured story of "Baucis and Philemon," with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same turn of verse which they had in the original;[105] and this I may say, without vanity, is not the talent of every poet. He who has arrived the nearest to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the best versifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name, which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language, and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers, than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr Waller of Fairfax; for
we have our lineal descents and clans as well as other families. Spenser more than once [207]
insinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body;[106] and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenser was his original; and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from "Godfrey of Bulloigne," which was turned into English by Mr Fairfax.[107]

But to return. Having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind, that our old English poet, Chaucer, in many things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the side of the modern author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them; and as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the honour of my native country, so I soon resolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning some of the "Canterbury Tales" into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means, both the poets being set in the same light, and dressed in the same English habit, story to be compared with story, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them by the reader,
without obtruding my opinion on him. Or, if I seem partial to my countryman and predecessor in [208]
the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few; and, besides many of the learned, Ovid has almost all the beaux, and the whole fair sex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have assumed somewhat more to myself than they allow me, because I have adventured to sum up the evidence; but the readers are the jury, and their privilege remains entire, to decide according to the merits of the cause; or, if they please, to bring it to another hearing before some other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my discourse, (as thoughts, according to Mr Hobbes, have always some connection,) so from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but also pursued the same studies; wrote novels in prose, and many works in verse; particularly is said to have invented the octave rhyme, or stanza of eight lines, which ever since has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers, who are, or at least assume the title of heroic poets. He and Chaucer, among other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother-tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at least in verse, before the time of Boccace, who likewise received no little help from his master Petrarch; but the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue, though many of his phrases are become obsolete, as, in process of time, it must needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr Rymer[108]) first
adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provençal, which was then the most polished [209]
of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius, in Chaucer and Boccace, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own, which, whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who, mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I

was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators, that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number; a cripple in my limbs,—but what decays are in my mind the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to chuse or to reject, to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose: I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time [210] in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness. They who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them, and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges, as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better?

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the dead-colouring of the whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which savours of immorality or profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency. If the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved or forfeited, like counterbanded goods; at least, let their authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandize, and not of my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to chuse such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral; which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious, and they leap foremost into sight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm, with a safe conscience, that I had taken the same care in all my former writings; for it must be owned, that supposing verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet, if they contain any thing which shocks religion or good manners, they are at best what Horace says of good [211] numbers without good sense, *Versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ*. Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing to my other right of self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accused, and my sense wire-drawn into blasphemy, or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer,[109] in a late pleading against the stage; in which he mixes truth with falsehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translations, which was the first "Ilias" of Homer.[110] If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole "Ilias;" provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some cheerfulness. And this I dare assure the world beforehand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil, though I say not the translation will be less laborious; for the Grecian is more according to my genius than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners, and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him. Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined; so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry; for nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman [212] poem is but the second part of the "Ilias;" a continuation of the same story, and the persons already formed. The manners of Æneas are those of Hector, superadded to those which Homer gave him. The adventures of Ulysses in the "Odysses," are imitated in the first Six Books of Virgil's "Æneis;" and though the accidents are not the same, (which would have argued him of a servile copying, and total barrenness of invention,) yet the seas were the same in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypso. The six latter Books of Virgil's poem are the four-and-twenty "Iliads" contracted; a quarrel occasioned by a lady, a single combat, battles fought, and a town besieged. I say not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just praise; for his episodes are almost wholly of his own invention, and the form which he has given to the telling makes the tale his own, even though the original story had been the same. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to design; and if invention be the first virtue of an epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the second place. Mr Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald translation of the "Ilias," (studying poetry as he did mathematics, when it was too late,) Mr Hobbes,[111] I say, begins the praise of Homer where he should have ended it. He tells us, that the first beauty of an epic poem consists in diction; that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers. Now the words are the colouring of the work, which, in the order of nature, is last to be considered; the [213] design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life, which is in the very definition of a poem. Words, indeed, like glaring colours, are the first beauties that arise, and strike the sight; but, if the draught be false or lame, the figures ill disposed, the manners obscure or inconsistent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the finest colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monster at the best. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the

former beauties; but in this last, which is expression, the Roman poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere: supplying the poverty of his language by his musical ear, and by his diligence.

But to return. Our two great poets being so different in their tempers, one choleric and sanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several ways is, that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the design, as in the execution of it. The very heroes show their authors: Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful,

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, &c.

Æneas patient, considerate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies; ever submissive to the will of heaven:

——quò fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur.

I could please myself with enlarging on this subject, but am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have said, I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer, being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of consequence more pleasing [214] to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. It is the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully; one persuades, the other commands. You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the Second Book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in less compass than two months. This vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my temper; and, therefore, I have translated his First Book with greater pleasure than any part of Virgil; but it was not a pleasure without pains. The continual agitations of the spirits must needs be a weakening of any constitution, especially in age; and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats; the "Ilias," of itself, being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to say of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer; considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue; from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike. Both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings; it may be, also in their lives. Their studies were the same,—philosophy and philology. Both of them were knowing in astronomy; of which Ovid's "Books of the Roman Feasts," and Chaucer's "Treatise of the Astrolabe," are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful [215] facility and clearness; neither were great inventors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables, and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors. Boccace his "Decameron" was first published; and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his "Canterbury Tales." Yet that of "Palamon and Arcite" was written, in all probability, by some Italian wit, in a former age as I shall prove hereafter. The tale of "Grisilde" was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace, from whom it came to Chaucer.[112] "Troilus and Cressida" was also written by a Lombard author,[113] but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general, being rather to [216] improve an invention than to invent themselves, as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures.—I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt, are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: besides, the nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say.

Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "The Cock and the Fox,"[114] which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners; under which name I comprehend the passions, and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits. For an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the Pilgrims in the "Canterbury Tales," their humours, their [217] features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard[115] in Southwark. Yet even there, too, the figures of Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light; which though I have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality.—The thoughts and words remain to be considered, in the comparison of the two poets, and I have saved myself one half of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up, as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered; and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in

ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad for preferring the Englishman to the Roman. Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say, that the things they admire are only [218] glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*, and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death? This is just John Littlewit, in "Bartholomew Fair," who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit. On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity; but, instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido: he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it; yet, when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed;—he had complained he was farther off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise, would, by the same reason, prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets, they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and, I confess, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with [219] judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely than to use them.[116] I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal.—It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and, therefore, speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets[117] is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept, like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweet-meats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment. Neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets, but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, [220] though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, "Not being of God, he could not stand."

Chaucer followed nature every where, but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis poeta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*. They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so, even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries:—there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go so far as he[118] who published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten [221] syllables in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers, in every verse which we call heroic, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last [222] appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes; they are to be found at large in all the editions of his Works. He was employed abroad, and favoured, by Edward III., Richard II., and Henry IV., and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them.[119] In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the Commons;[120] and being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry IV. when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wise as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he

was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliffe, after John of Gaunt his [223] patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale of "Pierce Plowman:"[121] yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his "Canterbury Tales." Neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them: Yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests' reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Canon, and his Friar, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satirical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used; for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured.[122] If he be wrongfully [224] accused, he has his action of slander; and it is at the poet's peril if he transgress the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing dishonoured when a peer suffers for his treason? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his *scandulum magnatum* to punish the offender. They who use this kind of argument, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash, and are less concerned for their public capacity than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties; for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not; but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbishop of Canterbury;[123] one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour, as he called it, of God's church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr Drake[124] has saved me the labour of enquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: yet I [225] must needs say, that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a Christian, to forgive him: *prior læsit* is justification sufficient in the civil law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure, must be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure; reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the Good Parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him.

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his "Canterbury Tales" the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta[125] could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, [226] humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady-Prioress and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed,[126] Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days: their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks, and friars, and canons, and lady-abbesses, and nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice, (since my enemies will do me none,[127] and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man,) may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader, that I [227] have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners. I am sensible, as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it, *totum hoc indictum volo*. Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the "Canterbury Tales," thus excuses the ribaldry, which is very gross in many of his novels:

But firste, I praie you of your curtesie,
That ye ne arette it not my vilanie,
Though that I plainly speke in this matere,
To tellen you hir wordes, and hir chere:
Ne though I speke hir wordes proprely,
For this ye knowen al so well as I,
Who so shall telle a tale after a man,
He moste reherse as neighe as ever he can;
Everich word, if it be in his charge,
All speke he, never so rudely and so large:
Or elles he moste tellen his tale untrewe,
Or feinen thinges, or finden wordes newe:
He may not spare, although he were his brother,
He moste as wel sayn o word as an other.
Crist spake himself ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye wote no vilanie is it,
Eke Plato sayeth, who so can him rede, [228]
The wordes moste ben cosin to the dede.

Yet if a man should have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard? I know not what answer they could have made; for that reason, such tale shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete, that his sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English: as for example, these two lines, in the description of the carpenter's young wife:

Winsing she was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worthy reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester[128] say, that Mr Cowley himself was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author; but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public. Mr Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. [229]
Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished, ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits beside Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer, (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater,) I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther, in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press. Let this example suffice at present: in the story of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses, in all the editions of our author:

Ther saw I Dane yturned til a tree,
I mene not hire the goddesse Diane,
But Venus daughter, which that hight Dane.

which, after a little consideration, I knew was to be reformed into this sense,—that Daphne, the [230]
daughter of Peneus, was turned into a tree.[129] I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourne should arise, and say, I varied from my author, because I understood him not.

But there are other judges, who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person, whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr Cowley despised him. My lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death,) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking

while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then, as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure:

Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere; cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed; customs are changed, and even statutes are [231] silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument,—that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty by the innovation of words,—in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. How few are there, who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends, that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes, who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing [232] without him. *Facile est inventis addere* is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: A lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiselle de Scuderi, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French.[130] From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal; for how she should come to understand old English, I know not. But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, it is extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

Boccace comes last to be considered, who, living in the same age with Chaucer, had the same genius, and followed the same studies. Both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greatest resemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar style, and pleasing way of relating comical adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated [233] nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the serious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's side; for though the Englishman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears, that those of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled; so that what there was of invention, in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the stories, which he has borrowed, in his way of telling; though prose allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at disadvantage. I desire not the reader should take my word; and, therefore, I will set two of their discourses, on the same subject, in the same light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I translated Chaucer first, and, amongst the rest, pitched on the "Wife of Bath's Tale;" not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her prologue, because it is too licentious.[131] There Chaucer introduces an old woman, of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight, of noble blood, was forced to marry, and consequently loathed her. The crone, being in bed with him, on the wedding-night, and finding his aversion, endeavours to win his affection by reason, and speaks a good word for herself, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the sullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and ugliness, the vanity of youth, and the silly pride of ancestry and titles, without inherent virtue, which is the true [234] nobility. When I had closed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and translated some more of his fables; and, by this time, had so far forgotten the "Wife of Bath's Tale," that, when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the same argument, of preferring virtue to nobility of blood and titles, in the story of Sigismunda; which I had certainly avoided, for the resemblance of the two discourses, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and, if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer, in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of "Palamon and Arcite," which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias, or the Æneis. The story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful, only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least: but Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action,

which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought, for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own: but I was undeceived by Boccace; for, casually looking on the end of his seventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he shadows himself,) and Fiametta, (who represents his mistress, the natural daughter of Robert, king of Naples,) of whom these words are spoken:—"*Dioneo e Fiametta gran pezza Eantarono insieme d'Arcita, e di Palemone*;" by which it appears, that this story was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly lost, Chaucer is now become an original; and I question not but the poem has [235] received many beauties, by passing through his noble hands.[132] Besides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called "The Flower and the Leaf," with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done justice to others, I owe somewhat to myself; not that I think it worth my time to enter the lists with one Milbourne, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that such men there are, who have written scurrilously against me, without any provocation. Milbourne, who is in orders, pretends, amongst the rest, this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood: if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little.[133] Let him be satisfied, that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. If, as they say, he has declared in print, he prefers the version of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the same compliment; for it is agreed, on all hands, that he writes even below Ogilby. That, you will say, is [236] not easily to be done; but what cannot Milbourne bring about? I am satisfied, however, that, while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks, as if I had desired him, underhand, to write so ill against me; but, upon my honest word, I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. It is true, I should be glad if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on any thing of mine; for I find, by experience, he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains with my poetry; but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the church, as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts, I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice, by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners, and my principles, is of a piece with his cavils and his poetry; and so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of "Absalom and Achitophel," which, he thinks, is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead; and, therefore, peace be to the manes of his "Arthurs."[134] I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an epic poem on King Arthur, in my preface to the [237] translation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirlbats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus: yet from that preface, he plainly took his hint; for he began [238] immediately upon the story, though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but, instead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I shall say the less of Mr Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that, in many places, he has perverted my meaning by his glosses, and interpreted my words into blasphemy and bawdry, of which they were not guilty; besides, that he is too much given to horse-play in his raillery, and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, "the zeal of God's house has eaten him up;" but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility. It might also be doubted, whether it were altogether zeal which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps, it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbish of ancient and modern plays: a divine might have employed his pains to better purpose, than in the nastiness of Plautus and Aristophanes, whose examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly supposed, that he read them not without some pleasure. They, who have written commentaries on those poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained some vices, which, without their interpretation, had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially [239] betwixt the former age and us. There is more bawdry in one play of Fletcher's, called "The Custom of the Country," than in all ours together.[135] Yet this has been often acted on the stage, in my remembrance. Are the times so much more reformed now, than they were five-and-twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cause of my fellow poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have some of them answered for themselves; and neither they nor I can think Mr Collier so formidable an enemy, that we should shun him. He has lost ground, at the latter end of the day, by pursuing his point too far, like the Prince of Condé, at the battle of Senneph:[136] from immoral plays, to no plays, *ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia*. But, being a party, I am not to erect myself into a judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels, that they deserve not

the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only distinguished from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy: [240]

——*Demetri, teque, Tigelli,*
Discipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

PALAMON AND ARCITE;

OR,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

"The Knight's Tale," whether we consider Chaucer's original poem, or the spirited and animated version of Dryden, is one of the finest pieces of composition in our language. We have treated of its merits so amply in the general criticism on Dryden's poetry, that little remains here save to trace the antiquity of the fable.

The history of Theseus, as, indeed, it is a sort of legend of knight-errantry, was an early favourite during the middle ages. It is probable, that the anecdote of Palamon and Arcite was early engrafted upon the story of the siege of Thebes. But the original from which Chaucer appears to have immediately derived his materials, is the "Teseide" of Boccacio, an epic poem, composed in *ottava rima*, of which Tyrwhitt has given an analysis. The work of Chaucer cannot, however, properly be termed a translation; on the contrary, the tale has acquired its most beautiful passages under the hand of the English bard. He abridged the prolix, and enlarged the poetical, parts of the work; compressed the whole into one concise and interesting tale; and left us an example of a beautiful heroic poem, if a work is entitled to that name which consists only of two thousand lines.

This romantic legend is, by Chaucer, with great propriety, put into the mouth of the Knight, a distinguished character among the Pilgrims; who, in their journey to the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury, had agreed to beguile the way by telling each a tale in turn. Hence the second title of "The Knight's Tale."

TO

[245]

HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF ORMOND.[137]

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM OF

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

MADAM,

THE bard, who first adorned our native tongue,
Tuned to his British lyre this ancient song;
Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verse:
He matched their beauties, where they most excel;
Of love sung better, and of arms as well.
  Vouchsafe, illustrious Ormond, to behold
What power the charms of beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if such deeds of arms were done,
Inspired by two fair eyes that sparkled like your own.
  If Chaucer by the best idea wrought, [246]
And poets can divine each other's thought,
The fairest nymph before his eyes he set,
And then the fairest was Plantagenet;[138]
Who three contending princes made her prize,
And ruled the rival nations with her eyes;
Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the noblest order gave the name.
  Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
You keep her conquests, and extend your own:
As when the stars in their ethereal race,
At length have rolled around the liquid space,
At certain periods they resume their place,
From the same point of heaven their course advance,
And move in measures of their former dance;
Thus, after length of ages, she returns,
Restored in you, and the same place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the sphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new platonic year.[139]
O true Plantagenet, O race divine, [247]
(For beauty still is fatal to the line,)
Had Chaucer lived that angel-face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
Or had you lived to judge the doubtful right,
Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
And conquering Theseus from his side had sent
Your generous lord, to guide the Theban government.
Time shall accomplish that; and I shall see
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
Already have the Fates your path prepared,
And sure presage your future sway declared:
When westward, like the sun, you took your way,
And from benighted Britain bore the day,
Blue Triton gave the signal from the shore,
The ready Nereids heard, and swam before
To smooth the seas; a soft Etesian gale
But just inspired, and gently swelled the sail:
Portunus took his turn, whose ample hand[140]
Heaved up the lightened keel, and sunk the sand,
And steered the sacred vessel safe to land.
The land, if not restrained, had met your way,
Projected out a neck, and jutted to the sea.[141]

Projected out a neck, and jutted to the sea.
Hibernia, prostrate at your feet, adored,
In you, the pledge of her expected lord;
Due to her isle, a venerable name; [248]
His father and his grandsire known to fame;
Awed by that house, accustomed to
command,
The sturdy kerns in due subjection stand,
Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand,
At your approach, they crowded to the port;
And scarcely landed, you create a court:
As Ormond's harbinger[142] to you they run,
For Venus is the promise of the sun.
The waste of civil wars, their towns destroyed,
Pales unhonoured, Ceres unemployed,
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
Wiped all the tears of three campaigns away.[143]
Blood, rapines, massacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty recompence your beauty brought.
As when the dove returning bore the mark
Of earth restored to the long-labouring ark,
The relics of mankind, secure of rest,
Ope'd every window to receive the guest,
And the fair bearer of the message blessed:
So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,
The nation took an omen from your eyes,
And God advanced his rainbow in the skies,
To sign inviolable peace restored;
The saints, with solemn shouts, proclaimed the new
accord.
When at your second coming you appear,
(For I foretel that millenary year,)
The sharpened share shall vex the soil no more,
But earth unbidden shall produce her store;
The land shall laugh, the circling ocean smile,
And heaven's indulgence bless the holy isle.
Heaven, from all ages, has reserved for you [249]
That happy clime, which venom never knew;
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
Have power to chase all poison, but their own.
Now in this interval, which fate has cast
Betwixt your future glories and your past,
This pause of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
While England celebrates your safe return,
By which you seem the seasons to command,
And bring our summers back to their forsaken land.
The vanquished isle our leisure must
attend,
Till the fair blessing we vouchsafe to send;
Nor can we spare you long, though often we may lend.
The dove was twice employed abroad, before
The world was dried, and she returned no more.
Nor dare we trust so soft a messenger,
New from her sickness,[144] to that northern air;
Rest here a while your lustre to restore,
That they may see you, as you shone before;
For yet, the eclipse not wholly past, you wade
Through some remains, and dimness of a shade.
A subject in his prince may claim a right,
Nor suffer him with strength impaired to fight;
Till force returns, his ardour we restrain,
And curb his warlike wish to cross the main.
Now past the danger, let the learned begin
The inquiry, where disease could enter in;
How those malignant atoms forced their way;
What in the faultless frame they found to make their prey,
Where every element was weighed so well,
That heaven alone, who mixed the mass,
could tell
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;
And where, imprisoned in so sweet a cage, [250]
A soul might well be pleased to pass an age.
And yet the fine materials made it weak;
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break;
Even to your breast the sickness durst aspire,

And, forced from that fair temple to retire,
Profanely set the holy place on fire.
In vain your lord, like young Vespasian,[145] mourned,
When the fierce flames the sanctuary burned;
And I prepared to pay in verses rude
A most detested act of gratitude:
Even this had been your elegy, which now
Is offered for your health, the table of my vow.
Your angel sure our Morley's[146] mind inspired,
To find the remedy your ill required;
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream an herb for Ptolemy:
Or heaven, which had such over-cost bestowed,
As scarce it could afford to flesh and blood,
So liked the frame, he would not work anew,
To save the charges of another you.
Or by his middle science did he steer,
And saw some great contingent good appear
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end, preserved the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated, in his better mind,
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind.
Blest be the power, which has at once restored
The hopes of lost succession to your lord;
Joy to the first and last of each degree, [251]
Virtue to courts, and, what I longed to see,
To you the Graces, and the Muse to me.
O daughter of the rose, whose cheeks unite
The differing titles of the red and white;
Who heaven's alternate beauty well display,
The blush of morning, and the milky way;
Whose face is paradise, but fenced from sin;
For God in either eye has placed a cherubin.
All is your lord's alone; even absent, he
Employs the care of chaste Penelope.
For him you waste in tears your widowed hours;
For him your curious needle paints the flowers:
Such works of old imperial dames were taught;
Such, for Ascanius, fair Elisa wrought.
The soft recesses of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:
All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son;[147]
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

[252]

PALAMON AND ARCITE

OR,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK I.

IN days of old, there lived, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name;
A chief, who more in feats of arms excelled,
The rising nor the setting sun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.
In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,
Whom first by force he conquered, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his side.
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way;
But, were it not too long, I would recite [253]
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen, and hero knight;
The town besieged, and how much blood it cost
The female army, and the Athenian host;
The spousals of Hippolita the queen;
What tilts and tourneys at the feast were seen;
The storm at their return, the ladies' fear;
But these, and other things, I must forbear.
The field is spacious I design to sow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plow:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
And trivial accidents shall be forborne,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at first enjoined us by mine host,
That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,
Should win his supper at our common cost.
And therefore where I left, I will pursue
This ancient story, whether false or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,
In this array drew near the Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,
Marching, he chanced to cast his eye aside,
And saw a choir of mourning dames, who lay,
By two and two, across the common way:
At his approach they raised a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high;
Creeping and crying, till they seized at last,
His courser's bridle, and his feet embraced.
Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are,
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph, in ill-omened weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy [254]
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injured, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief.—
The most in years, of all the mourning train,
Began; but swooned first away for pain:
Then, scarce recovered, spoke;—Nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory:

'Tis thine, O king, the afflicted to redress,
And fame has filled the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refused to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief;
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears,
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait;
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But reverence thou the power, whose name it bears;
Relieve the oppressed, and wipe the widow's tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; curst be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array,
To make their moan, their lords in battle lost
Before that town besieged by our confederate host;
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburned, unburied, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead, [255]
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed.—
At this she shrieked aloud; the mournful train
Echoed her grief, and, grovelling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to their helpless kind.
  The prince was touched, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sighed; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
"That, by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And whate'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he revenged their wrongs;
That Greece should see performed what he declared;
And cruel Creon find his just reward."—
He said no more, but, shunning all delay,
Rode on, nor entered Athens on his way;
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And waved his royal banner in the wind,
Where, in an argent field, the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seemed to glow with fire;
Even the ground glittered where the standard flew,
And the green grass was dyed to sanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance, his pennon bore[148]
His Cretan fight, the conquered Minotaur:
The soldiers shout around with generous rage, [256]
And in that victory their own presage.
He praised their ardour; inly pleased to see
His host the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he marched, and all the ensuing night,
And saw the city with returning light.
The process of the war I need not tell,
How Theseus conquered, and how Creon fell;
Or after, how by storm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sacked and burned the town;
How to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their lords in battle slain;
And with what ancient rites they were interred,—
All these to fitter times shall be deferred:
I spare the widows' tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their husbands' obsequies;
How Theseus at these funerals did assist,

And with what gifts the mourning dames dismissed.
  Thus when the victor-chief had Creon slain,
And conquered Thebes, he pitched upon the plain
His mighty camp, and, when the day returned,
The country wasted, and the hamlets burned,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without controul, to strip and spoil the dead.
  There, in a heap of slain, among the rest,
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppressed
Of slaughtered foes, whom first to death they sent,
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seemed,
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deemed;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame; [257]
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats, were the same.
Close by each other laid, they pressed the ground,
Their manly bosoms pierced with many a grisly wound;
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But some faint signs of feeble life appear;
The wandring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heaved the heart.
These two were sister's sons; and Arcite one,
Much famed in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
And softly both conveyed to Theseus' tent;
Whom, known of Creon's line, and cured with care,
He to his city sent as prisoners of the war,
Hopeless of ransom, and condemned to lie
In durance, doomed a lingering death to die.
  This done, he marched away with warlike sound,
And to his Athens turned with laurels crowned,
Where happy long he lived, much loved, and more renowned.
But in a tower, and never to be loosed,
The woful captive kinsmen are inclosed.
  Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once,—'twas on the morn of cheerful May,—
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
For with the rosy colour strove her hue,
Waked, as her custom was, before the day,
To do the observance due to sprightly May;
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves.
In this remembrance, Emily, ere day, [258]
Arose, and dressed herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair,
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair;
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wantoned in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chased the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
  At every turn she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose, and every rose she drew,
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew;
Then party-coloured flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head
This done, she sung and carolled out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear;
Even wondering Philomel forgot to sing,
And learned from her to welcome in the spring.
The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall;
The garden was enclosed within the square,

Where young Emilia took the morning-air.
It happened Palamon, the prisoner knight,
Restless for woe, arose before the light,
And with his jailor's leave desired to breathe
An air more wholesome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Cheered with the promise of a glorious day;
Then cast a languishing regard around,
And saw, with hateful eyes, the temples crowned
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground.
He sighed, and turned his eyes, because he knew [259]
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view;
Then looked below, and from the castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight;
The garden, which before he had not seen,
In spring's new livery clad with white and green,
Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.
This viewed, but not enjoyed, with arms across
He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
Himself an object of the public scorn,
And often wished he never had been born.
At last, for so his destiny required,
With walking giddy, and with thinking tired,
He through a little window cast his sight,
Though thick of bars, that gave a scanty light;
But even that glimmering served him to descry
The inevitable charms of Emily.
Scarce had he seen, but, seized with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it to his heart;
Struck blind with overpowering light, he stood,
Then started back amazed, and cried aloud.
Young Arcite heard, and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embraced;
And asked him why he looked so deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done the offence? "But if," said he,
"Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heaven with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so:
So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, ruled our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth:
Whate'er betides, by destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly seek to shun.
Nor of my bonds, said Palamon again, [260]
Nor of unhappy planets, I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caused my cry,
That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierced with a random shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady space!
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace,
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus, (for thy charms confess,
That face was formed in heaven, nor art thou less;
Disguised in habit, undisguised in shape,)
O help us captives from our chains to 'scape!
But if our doom be past in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeased with our disgrace,
And shew compassion to the Theban race,
Oppressed by tyrant power!"—While yet he spoke,
Arcite on Emily had fixed his look;
The fatal dart a ready passage found,
And deep within his heart infixed the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmost soul he sighed, and said,
The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
Unknowingly she strikes, and kills by chance;

Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
O, I must; nor ask alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.—
  Thus Arcite: And thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes,)
Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein?
Jesting, said Arcite, suits but ill with pain.
It suits far worse, (said Palamon again,
And bent his brows,) with men who honour weigh, [261]
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one should be the common good of both;
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to further my design,
As I am bound by vow to further thine:
Nor canst, nor dar'st thou, traitor, on the plain,
Appeach my honour, or thy own maintain;
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend.
And wouldst thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release would choose to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain:
For first my love began ere thine was born;
Thou, as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound to assist my eldership of right,
Or justly to be deemed a perjured knight.—
  Thus Palamon: But Arcite, with disdain,
In haughty language, thus replied again,—
Forsworn thyself: the traitor's odious name
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nurst
With strong desires, I loved the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflamed
To worship, and a power celestial named?
Thine was devotion to the blest above,
I saw the woman, and desired her love;
First owned my passion, and to thee commend
The important secret, as my chosen friend.
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire [262]
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
And know'st thou not, no law is made for love?
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate:
Laws are but positive; love's power, we see,
Is nature's sanction, and her first decree.
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cause.
Laws for defence of civil rights are placed;
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste:
Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall;
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
I keep the greater, while I break the less;
And both are mad alike, since neither can
    possess.
Both hopeless to be ransomed, never more
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.—
  Like Æsop's hounds contending for the bone,
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone:
The fruitless fight continued all the day;
A cur came by, and snatched the prize away.
As courtiers therefore jostle for a grant,
And when they break their friendship, plead their want;
So thou, if fortune will thy suit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I must love, and am resolved to try
My fate, or, failing in the adventure, die.
  Great was their strife, which hourly was renewed,

Till each with mortal hate his rival viewed:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand,
But when they met, they made a surly stand,
And glared like angry lions as they passed,
And wished that every look might be their last.
It chanced at length, Perithous came, to attend [263]
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend:
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripened into man,
Companions of the war; and loved so well,
That when one died, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to pursue my tale; to welcome home
His warlike brother, is Perithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honoured by this young Thessalian prince.
Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,
Restored to liberty the captive knight,
But on these hard conditions I recite:—
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of the offence.
To this Perithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.
Unpleased and pensive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
What have I gained, he said, in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And banished from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom, than I felt in bonds before;
Forced from her presence, and condemned to live,
Unwelcome freedom, and unthanked reprieve:
Heaven is not, but where Emily abides,
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurst,
Which bound my friendship to Perithous first:
Had I not known that prince, I still had been
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen:
For though I never can her grace deserve, [264]
'Tis recompence enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is the adventure; thine the victory;
Well has thy fortune turned the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thine eyes,
In prison, no; but blissful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,
And, by some ways unknown, thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But doomed to drag my loathsome life in care,
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates,
That governs all, and heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief:
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell
With youth and life, and life itself, farewell!
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or Providence, complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watched by robbers, for their wealth are slain:
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,

When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murdered by those they trusted with their life,
A favoured servant, or a bosom wife.
Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken sots about the streets we roam; [265]
Well knows the sot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find the uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers every pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came; from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.—
  Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath, he makes outrageous moan,
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;
The hollow tower with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bathed his fettered feet,
And dropped all o'er with agony of sweat.
Alas! he cried, I, wretch! in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,
Pleased with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou may'st, since thou hast youth and courage joined,
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace;
And after, by some treaty made, possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.
Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.—
  The rage of jealousy then fired his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins, [266]
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.
Then thus he said:—Eternal deities,
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,
And write whatever time shall bring to pass,
With pens of adamant, on plates of brass;
What, is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the rest is liable to pain,
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,
All these he must, and, guiltless, oft endure;
Or does your justice, power, or presence fail,
When the good suffer, and the bad prevail?
What worse to wretched virtue could befal,
If fate or giddy fortune governed all?
Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate;
Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil:
Then when the creature is unjustly slain,
Yet, after death at least, he feels no pain;
But man, in life surcharged with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doomed to suffer more.
A serpent shoots his sting at unaware;
An ambushed thief forelays a traveller;
The man lies murdered, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just, or unjust, I have my share of woe:
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath, that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love.—

Let Palamon oppressed in bondage mourn,
While to his exiled rival we return.
By this, the sun, declining from his height, [267]
The day had shortened to prolong the night:
The lengthened night gave length of misery,
Both to the captive lover and the free.
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns.
The banished never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains;
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains;
One free, and all his motions uncontrouled,
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would behold.
[149]
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banished knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes returned again,
The loss of her he loved renewed his pain;
What could be worse, than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He raved with all the madness of despair,
He roared, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink,
Bereft of sleep; he loaths his meat and drink.
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murdered man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves:
In solitary groves he makes his moan, [268]
Walks early out, and ever is alone:
Nor, mixed in mirth, in youthful pleasures shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.
His spirits are so low, his voice is drowned;
He hears as from afar, or in a swoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncombed his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire;
But full of museful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endured a year and more,
Now wholly changed from what he was before,
It happened once, that, slumbering as he lay,
He dreamed, (his dream began at break of day,)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appeared,
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheered:
His hat, adorned with wings, disclosed the God,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod;
Such as he seemed, when, at his sire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.
Arise, he said, to conquering Athens go,
There fate appoints an end of all thy woe.—[150]
The fright awakened Arcite with a start,
Against his bosom bounced his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce-recovered breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire.—
By chance he spied a mirror while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his altered look;
Wondering, he saw his features and his hue
So much were changed, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,— [269]
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see, unknown, my mistress day by day.—
He said, and clothed himself in coarse array;
A labouring hind in shew: then forth he went,
And to the Athenian towers his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,

Made conscious of his master's enterprize.
Arrived at Athens, soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestioned in that thick resort;
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befel him, that for little gain
He served at first Emilia's chamberlain;
And, watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And, as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refused no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And used his noble hands the wood to hew.
He passed a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and called Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteemed, so well beloved as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That, exercised within a higher sphere, [270]
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite praised,
And by great Theseus to high favour raised;
Among his menial servants first enrolled,
And largely entertained with sums of gold;
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent.
This well employed, he purchased friends and fame,
But cautiously concealed from whence it came.
Thus for three years he lived with large increase,
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus' person he was ever near,
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON AND ARCITE,

OR,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK II.

[271]

While Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immured, the captive knight
Had dragged his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty and love at once he bore;
His prison pained him much, his passion more;
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.
But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May, within the Twins, received the sun,
Were it by chance, or forceful destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,
Assisted by a friend, one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight.
A pleasant beverage he prepared before [272]
Of wine and honey, mixed with added store
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallowed, unaware, the sleepy draught,
And snored secure till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drowned.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.
A thick-spread forest near the city lay,
To this, with lengthened strides, he took his way,
(For far he could not fly, and feared the day.)
Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted, in her song, the morning gray;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all the horizon laughed to see the joyous sight.
He, with his tepid rays, the rose renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, resolved to pay
Observance to the month of merry May:
Forth, on his fiery steed, betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trode:
At ease he seemed, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turned only to the grove his horse's reins,
(The grove I named before,) and lighting there,
A woodbine garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turned his face against the rising day, [273]
And raised his voice to welcome in the May:—
For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest, of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun

The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,
Nor goats, with venomed teeth, thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.—
  His vows addressed, within the grove he strayed,
Till Fate, or Fortune, near the place conveyed
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who, flying death, had there concealed his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight;
And less he knew him for his hated foe,
But feared him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been said of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears,
For this the wise are ever on their guard,
For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepared.
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
And less than all suspected Palamon,
Who, listening, heard him, while he searched the grove,
And loudly sung his roundelay of love.
But on the sudden stopped, and silent stood,
As lovers often muse, and change their mood;
Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell,
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite having sung, with altered hue [274]
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desperate sigh, accusing Heaven and Fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate:—
Cursed be the day when first I did appear!
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.
Still will the jealous queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceases not her hate; for all, who come
From Cadmus, are involved in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree!
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate, I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caused my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame,
Has forced me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy;
Mars ruined Thebes; his mother[151] ruined me.
Of all the royal race remains but one,
Besides myself, the unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure;
But love's a malady without a cure:
Fierce Love has pierced me with his fiery dart;
He fries within, and hisses at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.
Of such a goddess no time leaves record,
Who burned the temple where she was adored:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleased with my sufferings, if you knew my pain.—
  At this, a sickly qualm his heart assailed,
His ears ring inward, and his senses failed.
No word missed Palamon, of all he spoke; [275]
But soon to deadly pale he changed his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer staid, but, starting from his place,
Discovered stood, and shewed his hostile face:—
False traitor, Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found forsworn, for Emily,

And darest attempt her love, for whom I die.
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrowed name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him, who set thee free.
But rest assured, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily;
For, though unarmed I am, and (freed by chance)
Am here without my sword, or pointed lance,
Hope not, base man, unquestioned hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.—
  Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His sword unsheathed, and fiercely thus began:—
Now, by the gods, who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last; or, in this grove,
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love!
The surety, which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know, that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury!
Know, I will serve the fair in thy despite;
But, since thou art my kinsman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow, in this grove,
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And heaven so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both unknown,
With arms of proof, both for myself and thee; [276]
Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.
And, that at better ease thou may'st abide,
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou may'st be
A conquest better won, and worthy me.—
His promise Palamon accepts; but prayed
To keep it better than the first he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn;
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
  Oh Love! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign;
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite proved and Palamon,
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite returned, and, as in honour tied,
His foe with bedding, and with food, supplied;
Then, ere the day, two suits of armour sought,
Which, borne before him, on his steed he brought;
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure,
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
Now at the time, and in the appointed place,
The challenger and challenged, face to face,
Approach; each other, from afar, they knew,
And from afar their hatred changed their hue.
So stands the Thracian herdsman, with his spear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
His course, at distance, by the bending trees;
And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A generous chillness seizes every part;
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
  Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets, for none the greeting will return;
But in dumb surliness, each armed, with care, [277]
His foe profest, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
Against each other, armed with sword and lance.
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.
Thus two long hours, in equal arms, they stood,
And, wounded, wound, till both were bathed in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the spot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tyger fared,

And like a lion Palamon appeared:
Or, as two boars, whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws,
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.
The power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heaven foresees,
Called Providence, or Chance, or Fatal Sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds, or makes, her way;
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,
One moment can retard the appointed hour;
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happened not in centuries of years:
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on powers above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And, by foresight, necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears, whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chace in forests to destroy;
This gentle knight, inspired by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen, [278]
And Emily, attired in lively green,
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart, within the covert nigh:
And, as he followed Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way, that Theseus took, was to the wood,
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:
The lawn, in which they fought, the appointed place,
In which the uncoupled hounds began the chace.
Thither, forth-right, he rode to rouze the prey,
That, shaded by the fern, in harbour lay;
And, thence dislodged, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.
Approached, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,
Like lightning flamed their faulchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they struck.
There seemed less force required to fell an oak.
He gazed with wonder on their equal might,
Looked eager on, but knew not either knight.
Resolved to learn, he spurred his fiery steed
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt them on the place;
And, with his sword unsheathed, on pain of life,
Commands both combatants to cease their strife:
Then, with imperious tone pursues his threat:—
What are you? Why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,
As in a listed field to fight your cause,
Unasked the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?—
Then Palamon, with scarce recovered breath,
Thus hasty spoke:—We both deserve the death,
And both would die; for, look the world around,
A pair so wretched is not to be found.
Our life's a load; encumbered with the charge, [279]
We long to set the imprisoned soul at large.
Now, as thou art a sovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me;
Let neither find thy grace, for grace is cruelty.
Me first, O kill me first, and cure my woe,
Then sheath the sword of justice on my foe:
Or kill him first; for when his name is heard,
He foremost will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he, thy mortal foe,
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow;
But first contracted, that, if ever found,

By day or night, upon the Athenian ground,
His head should pay the forfeit; see returned
The perjured knight, his oath and honour scorned:
For this is he, who, with a borrowed name
And proffer'd service, to thy palace came,
Now called Philostratus; retained by thee,
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains;—from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myself the unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man, since no disgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke thy chain,
Nor promised I thy prisoner to remain:
The love of liberty with life is given,
And life itself the inferior gift of heaven.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I, with this Arcite, am thy mortal foe:
Then, give me death, since I thy life pursue;
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.
More wouldst thou know, I love bright Emily,
And for her sake, and in her sight, will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no less
Deserves, and I thy righteous doom will bless,
Assured, that what I lose, he never shall
possess.—
To this replied the stern Athenian prince, [280]
And sourly smiled:—In owning your offence
You judge yourself, and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your desert, the death you have decreed;
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed:
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.—
He said; dumb sorrow seized the standers by.
The queen, above the rest, by nature good,
(The pattern formed of perfect womanhood,)
For tender pity wept: when she began,
Through the bright choir the infectious virtue ran.
All dropped their tears, even the contended maid,
And thus, among themselves, they softly said:—
What eyes can suffer this unworthy sight!
Two youths of royal blood, renowned in fight,
The mastership of heaven in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind:
See their wide-streaming wounds; they neither came
For pride of empire, nor desire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause;
But love for love alone, that crowns the lover's cause.—
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,
They left their steeds, and, prostrate on the place,
From the fierce king implored the offenders' grace.
He paused a while, stood silent in his mood;
For yet his rage was boiling in his blood:
But soon his tender mind the impression felt,
As softest metals are not slow to melt,
And pity soonest runs in gentle minds:[152]
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds
His passion cast a mist before his sense, [281]
And either made, or magnified, the offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judged the cause?
The prisoner freed himself by Nature's laws:
Born free, he sought his right; the man he freed
Was perjured, but his love excused the deed:
Thus pondering, he looked under with his eyes,
And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which moved compassion more: he shook his head,
And softly, sighing, to himself he said:—
Curse on the unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorse; who rules by lions' law;
And, deaf to prayers, by no submission bowed,
Rends all alike, the penitent and proud!—
At this, with look serene, he raised his head;
Reason resumed her place, and passion fled.
Then thus aloud he spoke:—The power of Love,

In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod;
By daily miracles declared a god:
He blinds the wise, gives eye-sight to the blind,
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hindered either, in their native soil,
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil?
But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought them in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserved; for well they know,
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe.
The proverb holds,—that to be wise, and love,
Is hardly granted to the gods above.
See how the madmen bleed! behold the gains
With which their master, Love, rewards their pains!
For seven long years, on duty every day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on; [282]
And, ask the fools, they think it wisely done;
Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life itself, regard;
For 'tis their maxim,—Love is love's reward.
This is not all,—the fair, for whom they strove,
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was the occasion of the war.
But sure a general doom on man is past,
And all are fools and lovers, first or last:
This, both by others and myself, I know,
For I have served their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learned how far the god can human hearts constrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of those,
Who for the offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives, on this accord,
To do me homage, as their sovereign lord;
And, as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person, and assert my right.—
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtained;
Then thus the king his secret thoughts explained:—
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you, knights, may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known.
But should you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed.
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to Destiny.
Now hear the award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air, [283]
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;
But on the day when this returning sun
To the same point through every sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,
In royal lists, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom Fate, or happy Chance,
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars[153] to force his opposite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquished party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine to adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war for champions so renowned;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And heaven of me so judge, as I shall judge aright.

If both are satisfied with this accord,
Swear, by the laws of knighthood, on my sword.—
  Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravished Arcite seems to touch the sky:
The whole assembled troop was pleased as well,
Extol the award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious king. The knights, with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look, [284]
And from her eyes their inspiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
  It might be deemed, on our historian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vast magnificence
Of royal Theseus, and his large expence.
He first inclosed for lists a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around;
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
Within an amphitheatre appeared,
Raised in degrees; to sixty paces reared;
That when a man was placed in one degree,
Height was allowed for him above to see.
  Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorned the western opposite.
A nobler object than this fabric was,
Rome never saw, nor of so vast a space:
For, rich with spoils of many a conquered land,
All arts and artists Theseus could command:
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame,
The master-painters, and the carvers, came.
So rose within the compass of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eastern gate was raised above
A temple, sacred to the queen of love;
An altar stood below; on either hand
A priest with roses crowned, who held a myrtle wand.
  The dome of Mars was on the gate opposed,
And on the north a turret was inclosed,
Within the wall of alabaster white,
And crimson coral for the queen of night,
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.
  Within these oratories might you see [285]
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery;
Where every figure to the life expressed
The godhead's power to whom it was addressed.
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen
The broken slumbers of enamoured men;
Prayers that even spoke, and pity seemed to call,
And issuing sighs that smoked along the wall;
Complaints, and hot desires, the lover's hell,
And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell;
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries;
Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury,
And spritely Hope, and short-enduring Joy;
And Sorceries to raise the infernal powers,
And Sigils framed in planetary hours;
Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
And doubts of motley hue, and dark despair;
Suspicions, and fantastical surmise,
And Jealousy suffused, with jaundice in her eyes,
Discolouring all she viewed, in tawny dressed,
Down-looked, and with a cuckow on her fist.
Opposed to her, on t'other side advance
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
Minstrels, and music, poetry, and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All these were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before,
And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come;
For there, the Idalian mount, and Citheron,

The court of Venus, was in colours drawn;
Before the palace-gate, in careless dress,
And loose array, sat portress Idleness;
There, by the fount, Narcissus pined alone;
There Sampson was, with wiser Solomon,[154]
And all the mighty names by love undone.
Medea's charms were there, Circean feasts,
With bowls that turned enamoured youths to beasts.
Here might be seen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowess, to the power of love submit;
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid,
And lovers all betray, and are betrayed.
The goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;
Smiling she seemed, and full of pleasing thought;
From ocean, as she first began to rise,
And smoothed the ruffled seas, and cleared the skies,
She trod the brine, all bare below the breast,
And the green waves but ill concealed the rest:
A lute she held; and on her head was seen
A wreath of roses red, and myrtles green;
Her turtles fanned the buxom air above;
And, by his mother, stood an infant Love,
With wings unfledged; his eyes were banded o'er,
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supplied with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.
  But in the dome of mighty Mars the red,
With different figures all the sides were spread;
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the first in Thrace;
For that cold region was the loved abode,
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare,
Where neither beast nor human kind repair;
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground, [287]
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deformed and old;
Headless the most, and hideous to behold;
A rattling tempest through the branches went,
That stripped them bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above, severe; the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appeared the standing hail.
Such was the face without; a mountain stood
Threat'ning from high, and overlooked the wood;
Beneath the lowring brow, and on a bent,[155]
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burnished steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seemed to thaw the freezing air.
A strait long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over head;
Thence issued such a blast, and hollow roar,
As threatened from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which, hewed by Mars himself, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clenched to make it strong.
A tun about was every pillar there;
A polished mirror shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
And midwife Time the ripened plot to murders brought.
There the red Anger dared the pallid Fear;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer; [288]
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown;
The assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And, far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On t'other side there stood Destruction bare

On t'other side there stood Destruction bare,
Unpunished Rapine, and a waste of war;
Contest, with sharpened knives, in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language base;
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled
the place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congealed was clotted in his hair;
With eyes half-closed, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breathed his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome, Misfortune sat,
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And armed complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murdered corpse in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes displayed;
The city to the soldier's rage resigned;
Successless wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forced on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars;
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame, and steel;
The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruined house, that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,
Were there; the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpened faulchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tower was placed,
With shouts, and soldiers' acclamations graced:
A pointed sword hung threat'ning o'er his head, [289]
Sustained but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall;
The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheathed in arms, and gruffly looked the God;
Two geomantic figures were displayed
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,[156]
One when direct, and one when retrograde.
[157]

Tired with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple, of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the sides, and in the midst a lawn;
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursued the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calisto there stood manifest of shame,
And, turned a bear, the northern star became:
Her son was next, and, by peculiar grace,
In the cold circle held the second place:
The stag Acteon in the stream had spied
The naked huntress, and for seeing died;
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue
The chace, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne too was there, to see [290]
Apollo's love before, and now his tree.
The adjoining fane the assembled Greeks expressed,
And hunting of the Caledonian beast.
Oenides' valour, and his envied prize;
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murdress mother, and consuming son;
The Volscian queen extended on the plain;
The treason punished, and the traitor slain.
The rest were various huntings, well designed,

And savage beasts destroyed, of every kind.
The graceful goddess was arrayed in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watched, with upward eyes, the motions
of their queen.
Her legs were buskined, and the left before,
In act to shoot, a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that soon would wane,
And, drinking borrowed light, be filled again;
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway.
Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And called Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose.
All these the painter drew with such command,
That Nature snatched the pencil from his hand,
Ashamed and angry that his art could feign,
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of every God,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestowed.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus raised, the lists enclosed,
And all with vast magnificence disposed,
We leave the monarch pleased, and haste to bring
The knights to combat, and their arms to sing.

PALAMON AND ARCITE;

OR,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK III.

[291]

THE day approached when Fortune should decide
The important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now the rivals round the world had sought,
And each his number, well-appointed, brought.
The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
And send the flower of war by public voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army seemed alone:
Beside the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood loved, and deeds of chivalry,
Thronged to the lists, and envied to behold
The names of others, not their own, enrolled.
Nor seems it strange; for every noble knight,
Who loves the fair, and is endued with might,
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground,
(An isle for love, and arms, of old renowned,)
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name;
And had the land selected of the best,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approved in fight, and men of mighty name;
Their arms were several, as their nations were,
But furnished all alike with sword and spear.
Some wore coat armour, imitating scale,
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail;
Some wore a breastplate and a light juppon,
Their horses clothed with rich caparison;
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use,
Of folded hides, and others shields of Pruce.[158]
One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace to stun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux[159] armed, and double plates of steel;[160]
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve embroidered by his love.
With Palamon, above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face:
The balls of his broad eyes rolled in his head,
And glared betwixt a yellow and a red;
He looked a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair;
Big-boned, and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
Broad-shouldered, and his arms were round and long:
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
Were yoked to draw his car of burnished gold.
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,
Conspicuous from afar, and overlooked the field.
His surcoat was a bear-skin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven-black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet
With sparkling diamonds, and with rubies set;
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and coursed around his chair

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[293]

around his chair;
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear.
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks surround.
Thus through the field Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name!
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horse embossed with barbarous gold.
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorned with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set;
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire;
His amber-coloured locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue;
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin:
His awful presence did the crowd surprise, [294]
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes;
Eyes that confessed him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flashed intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appeared,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound;
A laurel wreathed his temples, fresh and green,
And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mixed between.
Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaimed, and lily white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All armed for battle, save their heads were bare.
Words and devices blazed on every shield,
And pleasing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might see,
Like sparkling stars, though different in degree,
All for the increase of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquered Indies rode,
And beasts in gambols frisked before the honest god.
In this array, the war of either side
Through Athens passed with military pride.
At prime, they entered on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts[161] adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feasts;
So Theseus willed, in honour of his guests:
Himself with open arms the kings embraced,
Then all the rest in their degrees were graced.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.
I pass the royal treat, nor must relate [295]
The gifts bestowed, nor how the champions sate;
Who first, who last, or how the knights addressed
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprise;
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes.
The rivals call my muse another way,
To sing their vigils for the ensuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night,
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,
Promised the sun; ere day began to spring,
The tuneful lark already stretched her wing,
And flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing,
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took to the royal lists his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.

pray.
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,
He thus implored with prayers her power divine:—
Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliss of men below, and Gods above!
Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddess, thee the storms of winter fly,
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
For thee the lion loaths the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood;
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair;
All nature is thy province, life thy care;
Thou mad'st the world, and dost the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun!
If e'er Adonis touched thy tender heart, [296]
Have pity, Goddess, for thou know'st the smart!
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow would be some relief:
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O Goddess, tell thyself what I would say,
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe profest to barren chastity.
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let fate, or partial chance, dispose the rest:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's God; in him it lies
On whom he favours to confer the prize;
With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The fates but only spin the coarser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the sisters cut below your line:
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But, if you this ambitious prayer deny,
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality,)
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And I, once dead, let him possess her charms!—
Thus ended he; then, with observance due,
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddess gave the sign, [297]
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine:
Pleased Palamon the tardy omen took;
For, since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To distance driven, and joy adjourned with long delay.
Now morn with rosy light had streaked the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Addressed her early steps to Cynthia's fane,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and odorous gums, and covered fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,
Nor wanted aught besides in honour of the moon.
Now while the temple smoked with hallowed steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;
The secret ceremonies I conceal

The secret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use required,
Performed by women when the men retired,
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to scandal, or obscene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncombed, was loosely spread,
A crown of mastless oak adorned her head:
When to the shrine approached, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid:
(The rites were such as were observed of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told.)
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,
Thus lowly she preferred her chaste request:—
  O Goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts, [298]
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
(Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing through the skies the feathered deaths were dealt,)
As I desire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.
Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty, on the female side;
On their's mere sensual gust, and sought with surly pride.
Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heaven, earth, hell, and every where a queen,
Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love;
Or if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord, within whose faithful breast
Is fixed my image, and who loves me best.
But, oh! even that avert! I chuse it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chace my prey!—
  The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid addressed her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire, that shone so bright,
Flew off all sudden, with extinguished light,
And left one altar dark a little space,
Which turned self-kindled, and renewed the blaze;
That[162] other victor-flame a moment stood, [299]
Then fell, and lifeless left the extinguished wood;
For ever lost, the irrevocable light
Forsook the black'ning coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropped the dew;
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.
  The maid from that ill omen turned her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies;
Nor knew what signified the boding sign,
But found the powers displeased, and feared the wrath divine.
  Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.
The Power, behold! the Power in glory shone,
By her bent bow and her keen arrows known;
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood

The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.
Then gracious thus began:—Dismiss thy fear,
And heaven's unchanged decrees attentive hear:
More powerful gods have torn thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doomed a bride:
The two contending knights are weighed above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of love:
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breast;
This he pronounced, 'tis he who loves thee best.
The fire, that, once extinct, revived again,
Foreshews the love allotted to remain.
Farewell!—she said, and vanished from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaimed, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting Goddess thus she prayed;
Propitious still, be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once-favoured maid.
—
Then sighing she returned; but smiled betwixt, [300]
With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mixt.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who shared the heptarchy of power,
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
To adore with pagan rites the power armipotent:
Then prostrate low before his altar lay,
And raised his manly voice, and thus began to pray:—
Strong God of Arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honoured most:
There most; but every where thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers even the strong;
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew—
Acknowledged as thou art, accept my prayer!
If aught I have achieved deserve thy care;
If to my utmost power with sword and shield
I dared the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, still kept the field,
Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustained,
That Emily by conquest may be gained.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has softened into love:
Now, by her blandishments and powerful charms,
When yielded she lay curling in thy arms,
Even by thy shame, if shame it may be called,
When Vulcan had thee in his net enthralled;
(O envied ignominy, sweet disgrace,
When every God that saw thee wished thy place!)
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade, [301]
The fool of love, unpractised to persuade:
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myself, lie struggling in the snare;
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well, and pays me with disdain.
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless, by thee
Endued with force, I gain the victory;
Then for the fire which warmed thy generous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart.
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal, be the business of my life;
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,
High on the burnished roof, my banner shall be hung,
Ranked with my champions' bucklers, and below

Ranked with my champions' bucklers; and below,
With arms reversed, the achievements of my foe;
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine,
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
This bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserved for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more, let fate dispose the rest.—
The champion ceased: there followed in the close
A hollow groan; a murmuring wind arose;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung: [302]
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,
The storm rushed in, and Arcite stood aghast;
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fanned by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet smelling as accepted sacrifice:
This omen pleased, and, as the flames aspire,
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statue clashed his arms,
And with a sullen sound and feeble cry,
Half-sunk, and half-pronounced the word of victory.
For this, with soul devout, he thanked the God,
And, of success secure, returned to his abode.
These vows, thus granted, raised a strife above
Betwixt the God of War and Queen of Love.
She, granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus, but he feared his wife,
And seemed unwilling to decide the strife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,
And found a way the difference to compose:
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,
He seldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught,
To please both parties, for ill ends, he sought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.
By fortune he was now to Venus trined,
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was joined:
Of him disposing in his own abode,
He soothed the Goddess, while he gulled the God:—
Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife;
Thy Palamon shall have his promised wife:
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.
Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place, [303]
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I press the ethereal plains;
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the shipwreck, in a watery sign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blasting winds, and poisoned air,
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from
despair.
The throttling quinsey 'tis my star appoints,
And rheumatisms ascend to rack the joints:
When churls rebel against their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;
And housing in the lion's hateful sign,
Bought senates, and deserting troops are mine.[163]
Mine is the privy poisoning; I command
Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.
By me king's palaces are pushed to ground,
And miners crushed beneath their mines are found.

'Twas I slew Sampson, when the pillared hall
Fell down, and crushed the many with the fall.
My looking is the sire of pestilence,
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art;
Mars shall be pleased, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,
The family of heaven for men should war.—
The expedient pleased, where neither lost his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chronos' care;
Now turn we to the effect, and sing the war.
In Athens, all was pleasure, mirth, and play, [304]
All proper to the spring, and spritely May:
Which every soul inspired with such delight,
'Twas jesting all the day, and love at night.
Heaven smiled, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world as when it first began.
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
And dreamt the future fight, and early rose.
Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd arose; confused and high,
Even from the heaven, was heard a shouting cry,
For Mars was early up, and rouzed the sky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharpening their sights, and leaning from their stars.
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
For battle by the busy groom prepared:
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
Clattering of armour, furbished for the field.
Crowds to the castle mounted up the street,
Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet:
The greedy sight might there devour the gold
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold;
And polished steel, that cast the view aside,
And crested morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.
One laced the helm, another held the lance;
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser pawed the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foamed, and champed the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,
And nails for loosened spears, and thongs for shields provide.[164]
The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands; [305]
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.
The trumpets, next the gate, in order placed,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast:
The palace-yard is filled with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst; the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk:
Factious, and favouring this or t'other side.
As their strong fancies and weak reason guide.
Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is placed.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend,
His rising muscles, and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe, and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.
All spoke as partial favour moved the mind;
And, safe themselves, at others' cost divined.
Waked by the cries, the Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;
And passing through the obsequious guards, he sate

Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;
There, for the two contending knights he sent;
Armed cap-a-pee, with reverence low they bent;
He smiled on both, and with superior look
Alike their offered adoration took.
The people press on every side to see [306]
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to the heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoined; then thus aloud
The king at arms bespeaks the knights and listening crowd:—
Our sovereign lord has pondered in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,
He modifies his first severe decree,
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death should terminate their strife,
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life;
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That slings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be banished from the field; that none shall dare
With shortened sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The tourney is allowed but one career,
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear;
But knights unhorsed may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at mischief[165] taken, on the ground
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,
At either barrier placed; nor (captives made,)
Be freed, or armed anew the fight invade.
The chief of either side, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord; now, valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill with swords and maces long.—
The herald ends: The vaulted firmament [307]
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent:
Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets sound,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the windows rolled.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread.
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side.
Next after these, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause, and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshalled in degree.
Thus through the southern gate they take their way,
And at the lists arrived ere prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And wheeling east and west, before their many ride.
The Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen and Emily:
Next these, the kindred of the crown are graced
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies placed.
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rushed at once a rude promiscuous crowd:
The guards, and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.
Now changed the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow;
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is placed aloft, that bears the God of war,
Proud Arcite, entering armed before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and displayed abroad [308]

The bloody colours of his patron God.
At that self moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising Sun;
Waved by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From east to west, look all the world around,
Two troops so matched were never to be found;
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature sized; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye could no distinction make,
Where lay the advantage, or what side to take.
Thus ranged, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answered to their names:
For so the king decreed, to shun with[166] care
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
The tale was just, and then the gates were closed;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop opposed.
The heralds last retired, and loudly cried,—
The fortune of the field be fairly tried!
At this, the challenger, with fierce defy,
His trumpets sounds; the challenged makes reply.
With clangour rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.
Their vizors closed, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.
A cloud of smoke envelopes either host,
And all at once the combatants are lost:
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
Coursers with coursers jostling, men with men:
As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
They look anew; the beauteous form of fight [309]
Is changed, and war appears a grizzly sight.[167]
Two troops in fair array one moment shewed,
The next, a field with fallen bodies strewed:
Not half the number in their seats are found;
But men and steeds lie grovelling on the ground.
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
The steeds without their riders scour the field.
The knights, unhorsed, on foot renew the fight;
The glittering faulchions cast a gleaming light;
Hauberks and helms are hewed with many a wound;
Out spins the streaming blood, and dyes the ground.
The mighty maces with such haste descend,
They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend.
This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:
That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
And floundring throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this disabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he must abide;
There goes a captive led on t'other side.
By fits they cease; and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
Full oft the rivals met, and neither spared [310]
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the saddle bent,
That[168] other backward to the crupper sent:
Both were by turns unhorsed; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.
So deep their faulchions bite, that every stroke
Pierced to the quick, and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and steel they meet again.
So when a tyger sucks the bullock's blood,
A famished lion issuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fastened on the prey.

But both their paws are fastened on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come armed between, and both to distance drive.
  At length, as fate foredoomed, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to west was far declined,
And both afresh in mortal battle joined,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For turning short, he[169] struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of the unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he staggered with the blow,
And turned him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he felled him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevailed in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpowered, at length, they force him to the ground, [311]
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
  Who now laments but Palamon, compelled
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!
  The royal judge on his tribunal placed,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,
Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,
And round the royal lists the heralds cried,—
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride!
  The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is owned even by the Gods above,
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.
So laughed he, when the rightful Titan failed,
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevailed.
Laughed all the powers who favour tyranny,
And all the standing army of the sky.[170]
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And, weeping, on the lists distilled her tears;
Her will refused, which grieves a woman most,
And, in her champion foiled, the cause of Love is lost.
Till Saturn said:—Fair daughter, now be still:
The blustering fool has satisfied his will;
His boon is given; his knight has gained the day,
But lost the prize; the arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.
  Now while the heralds run the lists around, [312]
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth resound;
A miracle (nor less could it be called)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow palled.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
(Part for his ease, the greater part for pride,)
Bare-headed, popularly low he bowed,
And paid the salutations of the crowd;
Then, spurring, at full speed, ran endlong on
Where Theseus sat on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where next the queen was placed his Emily;
Then passing, to the saddle-bow he bent;
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent;
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way;)
Just then from earth sprung out a flashing fire,[171]
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seized with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pommel cast the knight:
Forward he flew, and, pitching on his head,
He quivered with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little space,

For all the blood was gathered in his face.
Help was at hand: they reared him from the ground,
And from his cumberous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanced a vein, and watched returning breath;
It came, but clogged with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had prest,
All bruised and mortified his manly breast.
Him still entranced, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed conveyed.
At length he waked, and with a feeble cry, [313]
The word he first pronounced was Emily.
Meantime the king, though inwardly he mourned,
In pomp triumphant to the town returned,
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;
(Now friendly mixed, and in one troop compelled.)
Composed his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain.
The surgeons soon despoiled them of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of sage.
The king, in person, visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds, for thrice three days, a royal feast.
None were disgraced, for falling is no shame,
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The venturous knight is from the saddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own:
If crowns and palms the conquering side adorn,
The victor under better stars was born:
The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor, overpowered with arms, deserts his cause;
Unshamed, though foiled, he does the best he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theseus smiled on all with equal grace,
And each was set according to his place;
With ease were reconciled the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expired,
Well pleased, and to their several homes retired.
Well pleased, and to their several homes retired. [314]
Meanwhile the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches' cares:
Swollen is his breast, his inward pains increase,
All means are used, and all without success.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art;
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping, will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mould of nature's fabric is destroyed,
Her vessels discomposed, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begins to swell;
All out of frame is every secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Those breathing organs, thus within opprest,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandoned life,
Nor vomits upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmost region battered and destroyed,
When nature cannot work, the effect of art is void;
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doomed to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gained hardly, against right, and unenjoyed.
When 'twas declared all hope of life was past,
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)
Caused him to send for Emily in haste.
With her, at his desire, came Palamon;

Then, on his pillow raised, he thus began:—
"No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most:
But to your service I bequeath my ghost;
Which, from this mortal body when untied,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend, [315]
But wait officious, and your steps attend.
How I have loved, excuse my faultering tongue,
My spirits feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die,
Because I lose my charming Emily.
To die, when heaven had put you in my power!
Fate could not chuse a more malicious hour.
What greater curse could envious fortune give,
Than just to die, when I began to live!
Vain men! how vanishing a bliss we crave,
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, O never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not blessed, before my death.
Farewell! but take me, dying, in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah, could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and, thus embraced,
Am pleased to die; but hear me speak my last:
Ah, my sweet foe! for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injured Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds;
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much, I doubt, should heaven my life prolong,
I should return to justify my wrong;
For, while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursued his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife;
Nor I, but as I loved; yet all combined,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right, in point of time; [316]
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justified his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight,
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is comprised in good;
So help me heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be loved as Palamon.
He loves you too, with such a holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vowed affections both have often tried,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then, by my love's inviolable band,
By my long-suffering, and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.—
  This was his last; for death came on amain,
And exercised below his iron reign;
Then upward to the seat of life he goes;
Sense fled before him, what he touched he froze:
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
Though less and less of Emily he saw;
So, speechless, for a little space he lay;
Then grasped the hand he held, and sighed his soul away.
  But whither went his soul, let such relate
Who search the secrets of the future state:
Divines can say but what themselves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative;
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
And faith itself be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly, then, is sure the best;
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.

The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, though less they know.
In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent he wept, ashamed to show his tears.
Emilia shrieked but once; and then, oppressed [317]
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:
Till Theseus in his arms conveyed, with care,
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
When just approaching to the nuptial state:
But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
That all at once it falls, and cannot last.
The face of things is changed, and Athens now,
That laughed so late, becomes the scene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Nor[172] greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death, but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deformed their hoary hair;
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.
"Why would'st thou go, (with one consent they cry,)
When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily!"[173]
Theseus himself, who should have cheered the grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief:
Old Egeus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known,
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a steady state:
Good after ill, and, after pain, delight,
Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.
Since every man, who lives, is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve too much, for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims, to the appointed place we tend; [318]
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Even kings but play; and, when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfied,
And so they would have been had Theseus died.
But he, their king, was labouring in his mind,
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead designed.
And, after long debate, at last he found
(As love itself had marked the spot of ground)
That grove, for ever green, that conscious lawnd,[174]
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand;
That, where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burned his heart.
This once resolved, the peasants were enjoined,
Sere-wood, and firs, and doddered oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, split, and lay the fuel on a row;
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepared,
On which the lifeless body should be reared,
Covered with cloth of gold; on which was laid
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes arrayed.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mixed with myrtle, spread.
A sword, keen-edged, within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquered field.
Bare was his manly visage on the bier;
Menaced his countenance, even in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight, [319]
To lie in solemn state, a public sight:
Groans, cries, and howlings, fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.
Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dewed with gushing tears;
His auburn locks on either shoulder flowed,

Which to the funeral of his friend he vowed:
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.
And, that the princely obsequies might be
Performed according to his high degree,
The steed, that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapped with polished steel, all shining bright,
And covered with the achievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreast; and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow; and, glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnished gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And, weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they marched, and often staid,
And through the master-street the corpse conveyed.
The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And even the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right side of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl, of work divine,
With honey filled, and milk, and mixed with ruddy wine.
Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain;
And after him appeared the illustrious train.
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With covered fire, the funeral pile to light.
With high devotion was the service made,
And all the rites of pagan honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad, [320]
With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strowed.
The fabric seemed a wood of rising green,
With sulphur and bitumen cast between,
To feed the flames; the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear;
The mourner-yew, and builder-oak, were there;
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a softer grain,
And laurels, which the gods for conquering chiefs ordain.
How they were ranked shall rest untold by me,
With nameless nymphs that lived in every tree;
Nor how the dryads, and the woodland train,
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain;
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repaired,
Or beasts that bolted out, and saw the forest bared;
Nor how the ground, now cleared, with ghastly fright,
Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.
The straw, as first I said, was laid below;
Of chips, and sere-wood, was the second row;
The third of greens, and timber newly felled;
The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array;
In midst of which, embalmed, the body lay.
The service sung, the maid, with mourning eyes,
The stubble fired; the smouldering flames arise:
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;
But what she spoke, recovered from her swoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dress;
But, by themselves, the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave the[175] warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood, [321]
Were poured upon the pile of burning wood;
And hissing flames receive, and, hungry, lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound.
Hail and farewell! they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turned again:

Still, as they turned, they beat their clattering shields;
The women mix their cries, and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral-games were played at new-returning light:
Who, naked, wrestled best, besmeared with oil,
Or who, with gauntlets, gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haste to my long story's end.
I pass the rest. The year was fully mourned,
And Palamon long since to Thebes returned.
When, by the Grecians' general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament;
Among the laws that passed, it was decreed,
That conquered Thebes from bondage should be freed;
Reserving homage to the Athenian throne,
To which the sovereign summoned Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.
The monarch mounts the throne, and, placed on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily.
So called, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And first soft whispers through the assembly went;
With silent wonder then they watched the event:
All hushed, the king arose with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face:
At length he sighed, and, having first prepared [322]
The attentive audience, thus his will declared:—
The Cause and Spring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth, the golden chain of Love;
Great was the effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent:
Fire, flood, and earth, and air, by this were bound,
And love, the common link, the new creation crowned.
The chain still holds; for, though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has placed,
How long those perishable forms shall last;
Nor can they last beyond the time assigned
By that all-seeing, and all-making Mind:
Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
But never pass the appointed destiny.
So men oppressed, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.
Then, since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unaltered cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole;
Who gives us life, and animating soul.
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He, perfect, stable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beasts, and man; and, as our organs are,
We, more or less, of his perfection share.
But, by a long descent, the ethereal fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire.
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass.
This law the Omniscient Power was pleased to give,
That every kind should by succession live;
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees, [323]
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays:
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forsaken of their springs, and leave their channels dry:
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then formed, the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;

Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and, issuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began;
Retchless of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne;
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.
Some thus, but thousands more in flower of age;
For few arrive to run the latter stage.
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelmed beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordained to die,
To make a virtue of necessity;
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well sustain;
And could we chuse the time, and chuse aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well secured our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose.
So should we make our death a glad relief [324]
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief;
Enjoying, while we live, the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.
Then round our death-bed every friend should run,
And joyous of our conquest early won;
While the malicious world, with envious tears,
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the gods decreed?
With grief as just, a friend may be deplored,
From a foul prison to free air restored.
Ought he to thank his kinsman or his wife,
Could tears recal him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost;
And, worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but, after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy;
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point the extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renewed,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propose, that Palamon shall be
In marriage joined with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gained the assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deserved, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault, since Emily,
By Arcite's death, from former vows is free;
If you, fair sister, ratify the accord,
And take him for your husband and your lord.
'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race;
And were he less, yet years of service past, [325]
From grateful souls, exact reward at last.
Pity is heaven's and your's; nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind.—
He said: she blushed; and, as o'erawed by might,
Seemed to give Theseus what she gave the knight.
Then, turning to the Theban, thus he said:—
Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command:—
And, speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smiled Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight;
And blessed, with nuptial bliss, the sweet laborious night.

Eros and Anteros, on either side,
One fired the bridegroom, and one warmed the bride;
And long-attending Hymen, from above,
Showered on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discoloured with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believed,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceived.
Thus heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.
   So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success!

THE

COCK AND THE FOX.

The accurate Tyrwhitt detected the original of this fable in the translation of "Æsop," made by Marie of France into Norman-French for the amusement of the court of England, by which that language was used down to the reign of Edward. But the hand of genius gilds what it touches; and the naked Apologue, which may be found in Tyrwhitt's "Preliminary Discourse," was amplified by Chaucer into a poem, which, in grave, ironical narrative, liveliness of illustration, and happiness of humorous description, yields to none that ever was written. Dryden, whom "The Hind and Panther" had familiarized with this species of composition, has executed a version at once literal and spirited, which seldom omits what is valuable in his original, and often adds those sparks which genius strikes out, when in collision with the work of a kindred spirit.

[327]

THE

COCK AND THE FOX;

OR, THE

TALE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST.

THERE lived, as authors tell, in days of yore,
A widow, somewhat old, and very poor;
Deep in a cell her cottage lonely stood,
Well thatched, and under covert of a wood.
This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
Since last she laid her husband in the ground,
A simple sober life in patience led,
And had but just enough to buy her bread;
But housewifing the little heaven had lent,
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
And pinched her belly, with her daughters two,
To bring the year about with much ado.
The cattle in her homestead were three sows,
An ewe called Mally, and three brinded cows.
Her parlour-window stuck with herbs around,
Of savoury smell, and rushes strewed the ground.
A maple dresser in her hall she had,
On which full many a slender meal she made:
For no delicious morsel passed her throat; [328]
According to her cloth she cut her coat.
No poignant sauce she knew, no costly treat,
Her hunger gave a relish to her meat.
A sparing diet did her health assure;
Or sick, a pepper posset was her cure.
Before the day was done, her work she sped,
And never went by candle-light to bed.
With exercise she sweat ill humours out;
Her dancing was not hindered by the gout.
Her poverty was glad, her heart content,
Nor knew she what the spleen or vapours meant.
Of wine she never tasted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely cheer;
Brown bread and milk, (but first she skimmed her bowls,)
And rashers of singed bacon on the coals;
On holidays an egg, or two at most;
But her ambition never reached to roast.
A yard she had, with pales enclosed about,
Some high, some low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homestead lived, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whose singing did surpass
The merry notes of organs at the mass.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And sooner than the mattin-bell was rung,
He clapped his wings upon his roost, and sung:
For when degrees fifteen ascended right,
By sure instinct he knew 'twas one at night.
High was his comb, and coral-red withal,
In dents embattled like a castle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and shone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet;
White were his nails, like silver to behold,
His body glittering like the burnished gold.
This gentle cock, for solace of his life, [329]
Six misses had, beside his lawful wife;
Scandal, that spares no king, though ne'er so good,

Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood;
His sisters, both by sire and mother's side,
And sure their likeness shewed them near allied.
But make the worst, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When incest is for interest of a nation,
'Tis made no sin by holy dispensation.
Some lines have been maintained by this alone,
Which by their common ugliness are known.
  But passing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet[176] was the sovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feathered her a hundred times a day;
And she, that was not only passing fair,
But was withal discreet, and debonair,
Resolved the passive doctrine to fulfil,
Though loth, and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the church's precept had enjoined.
Even since she was a se'nnight old, they say,
Was chaste and humble to her dying day,
Nor chick nor hen was known to disobey.
  By this her husband's heart she did obtain;
What cannot beauty, joined with virtue, gain!
She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walked, went pecking by his side;
If, spurning up the ground, he sprung a corn, [330]
The tribute in his bill to her was borne.
But oh! what joy it was to hear him sing
In summer, when the day began to spring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
Solus cum sola, then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts
Were bred to speak, and sing, and learn the liberal arts.
  It happ'd that perching on the parlour-beam,
Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Just at the dawn; and sighed, and groaned so fast,
As every breath he drew would be his last.
Dame Partlet, ever nearest to his side,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cried
For help from Gods and men; and sore aghast
She pecked and pulled, and wakened him at last.
Dear heart, said she, for love of heaven declare
Your pain, and make me partner of your care.
You groan, Sir, ever since the morning-light,
As something had disturbed your noble sprite.—
  And, madam, well I might, said Chanticleer,
Never was shrovetide-cock in such a fear.
Even still I run all over in a sweat,
My princely senses not recovered yet.
For such a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be shent:
It bodes I shall have wars and woeful strife,
Or in a loathsome dungeon end my life.
Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breast,
That in our yard I saw a murderous beast,
That on my body would have made arrest.
With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow;
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
Tipped was his tail, and both his pricking ears,
With black, and much unlike his other hairs:
The rest, in shape a beagle's whelp throughout, [331]
With broader forehead, and a sharper snout:
Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,
That yet, methinks, I see him with surprise.
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy sweat,
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.—
Now fie for shame! quoth she; by heaven above,
Thou hast for ever lost thy lady's love.
No woman can endure a recreant knight;
He must be bold by day, and free by night:
Our sex desires a husband or a friend,
Who can our honour and his own defend;

Wise, hardy, secret, liberal of his purse;
A fool is nauseous, but a coward worse:
No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight,
How dar'st thou talk of love, and dar'st not fight?
How dar'st thou tell thy dame thou art affeared?
Hast thou no manly heart, and hast a beard?
If aught from fearful dreams may be divined,
They signify a cock of dunghill kind.
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred;
From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,
These foolish fancies, you have had to-night,
Are certain symptoms (in the canting style)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gall, that in your stomach floats,
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguished by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear, [332]
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound;
With rheums oppressed, we sink in rivers drowned.
More I could say, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wise,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.[177]
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preserve your body sound,
And purge the peccant humours that abound.
I should be loth to lay you on a bier;
And though there lives no 'pothecary near,
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,
And save long bills, and a damned doctor's fees.
Two sovereign herbs, which I by practice know,
And both at hand, (for in our yard they grow,)
On peril of my soul shall rid you wholly
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
You must both purge and vomit; but obey,
And for the love of heaven make no delay.
Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
Beware the sun when in a vernal sign;
For when he mounts exalted in the Ram,
If then he finds your body in a flame,
Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
A tertian ague is at least your lot.
Perhaps a fever (which the Gods forefend)
May bring your youth to some untimely end:
And therefore, sir, as you desire to live,
A day or two before your laxative,
Take just three worms, nor under nor above, [333]
Because the Gods unequal numbers love.
These digestives prepare you for your purge;
Of fumetery, centaury, and spurge,
And of ground-ivy add a leaf, or two,
All which within our yard or garden grow.
Eat these, and be, my lord, of better cheer;
Your father's son was never born to fear.—
Madam, quoth he, gramercy for your care,
But Cato, whom you quoted, you may spare.
'Tis true, a wise and worthy man he seems,
And (as you say) gave no belief to dreams;
But other men of more authority,
And, by the immortal powers, as wise as he,
Maintain, with sounder sense, that dreams forebode;
For Homer plainly says they come from God.
Nor Cato said it; but some modern fool
Imposed in Cato's name on boys at school.
Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreshow
The events of things, and future weal or woe:

Some truths are not by reason to be tried,
But we have sure experience for our guide.
An ancient author,[178] equal with the best,
Relates this tale of dreams among the rest.
  Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On some far pilgrimage together went.
It happened so, that, when the sun was down,
They just arrived by twilight at a town;
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feast, and every inn so full,
That no void room in chamber, or on ground,
And but one sorry bed was to be found;
And that so little it would hold but one, [334]
Though till this hour they never lay alone.
  So were they forced to part; one staid behind,
His fellow sought what lodging he could find:
At last he found a stall where oxen stood,
And that he rather chose than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his ease, well littered was the floor.
  His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,
Was weary, and without a rocker slept:
Supine he snored; but in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appeared before his sight,
Who, with a ghastly look and doleful cry,
Said, help me, brother, or this night I die:
Arise, and help, before all help be vain,
Or in an ox's stall I shall be slain.
  Rouzed from his rest, he wakened in a start,
Shivering with horror, and with aching heart;
At length to cure himself by reason tries;
'Twas but a dream, and what are dreams but lies?
So thinking changed his side, and closed his eyes.
His dream returns; his friend appears again:
The murderers come, now help, or I am slain:—
'Twas but a vision still, and visions are but vain.
  He dreamt the third; but now his friend appeared
Pale, naked, pierced with wounds, with blood besmeared:
Thrice warned, awake, said he; relief is late,
The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
Tardy of aid, unseal thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day arise:
Take to the western gate thy ready way,
For by that passage they my corpse convey:
My corpse is in a tumbrel laid, among
The filth, and ordure, and inclosed with dung.
That cart arrest, and raise a common cry;
For sacred hunger of my gold I die:—
Then shewed his grisly wounds; and last he drew [335]
A piteous sigh, and took a long adieu.
  The frighted friend arose by break of day,
And found the stall where late his fellow lay.
Then of his impious host inquiring more,
Was answered that his guest was gone before:
Muttering he went, said he, by morning light,
And much complained of his ill rest by night.
This raised suspicion in the pilgrim's mind;
Because all hosts are of an evil kind,
And oft to share the spoil with robbers joined.
  His dream confirmed his thought; with troubled look
Straight to the western gate his way he took;
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carried compost forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim saw, he stretched his throat,
And cried out murder with a yelling note.
My murdered fellow in this cart lies dead;
Vengeance and justice on the villain's head!
You, magistrates, who sacred laws dispense,
On you I call to punish this offence.—
  The word thus given, within a little space,
The mob came roaring out, and thronged the place.
All in a trice they cast the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murdered body found;

Though breathless, warm, and reeking from the wound.
Good heaven, whose darling attribute we find
Is boundless grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wondrous ways reveals in open light:
Murder may pass unpunished for a time,
But tardy justice will o'ertake the crime.
And oft a speedier pain the guilty feels,
The hue and cry of heaven pursues him at the heels,
Fresh from the fact, as in the present case: [336]
The criminals are seized upon the place;
Carter and host confronted face to face.
Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
On engines they distend their tortured joints;
So was confession forced, the offence was known,
And public justice on the offenders done.
Here may you see that visions are to dread;
And in the page that follows this, I read
Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
Induced in partnership to cross the main;
Waiting till willing winds their sails supplied,
Within a trading-town they long abide,
Full fairly situate on a haven's side.
One evening it befel, that, looking out,
The wind they long had wished was come about;
Well pleased they went to rest; and if the gale
Till morn continued, both resolved to sail.
But as together in a bed they lay,
The younger had a dream at break of day.
A man, he thought, stood frowning at his side,
}
Who warned him for his safety to provide,
Nor put to sea, but safe on shore abide.
I come, thy genius, to command thy stay;
Trust not the winds, for fatal is the day,
And death unhoped[179] attends the watry way.
The vision said, and vanished from his sight. [337]
The dreamer wakened in a mortal fright;
Then pulled his drowsy neighbour, and declared,
What in his slumber he had seen and heard.
His friend smiled scornful, and, with proud contempt,
Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
Stay, who will stay; for me no fears restrain,
Who follow Mercury, the god of gain;
Let each man do as to his fancy seems,
I wait not, I, till you have better dreams.
Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes;
When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes;
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of coblers, and a court of kings:[180]
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad;
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes, forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurse's legends are for truths received,
And the man dreams but what the boy believed.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day,
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.
In short, the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more absurd, or less.
You, who believe in tales, abide alone;
Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.—
Thus while he spoke, he heard the shouting crew [338]
That called aboard, and took his last adieu.
The vessel went before a merry gale,
And for quick passage put on every sail;
But when least feared, and even in open day,
The mischief overtook her in the way:
Whether she sprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether she was overset with wind

Or whether she was overset with wind,
Or that some rock below her bottom rent,
But down at once with all the crew she went.
Her fellow-ships from far her loss descried;
But only she was sunk, and all were safe beside.
  By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and visions are not always vain;
But if, dear Partlet, you are yet in doubt,
Another tale shall make the former out.
  Kenelm, the son of Kenulph, Mercia's king,[181]
Whose holy life the legends loudly sing,
Warned in a dream, his murder did foretel,
From point to point as after it befel:
All circumstances to his nurse he told,
(A wonder from a child of seven years old;)
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treason counselled him to guard his life;
But close to keep the secret in his mind,
For a boy's vision small belief would find.
The pious child, by promise bound, obeyed,
Nor was the fatal murder long delayed;
By Quenda slain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his sister's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede, [339]
Which, at your better leisure, you may read.
  Macrobius too relates the vision sent
To the great Scipio, with the famed event;
Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often prophecies.
  Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his vision did forget,
Could word for word the wondrous dream repeat.
Nor less of patriarch Joseph understand,
Who by a dream enslaved the Egyptian land,
The years of plenty and of death foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they sold.
Nor must the exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whose dream presaged his hanging lot.
  And did not Crœsus the same death foresee,
Raised in his vision on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmost pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he died:[182]
Well was he warned from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warned in vain;
He dared the dream, and by his fatal foe was slain.
  Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,
For see the ruddy day begins to break:
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity;
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only serve to make a well-man sick;
Of these his gain the sharp physician makes,
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes;
They not correct, but poison all the blood, [340]
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all,
With every work of 'pothecary's hall.
  These melancholy matters I forbear;
But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and swear,
That when I view the beauties of thy face,
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor disgrace;
So may my soul have bliss, as when I spy
The scarlet red about thy partridge eye,
While thou art constant to thy own true knight,
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,
All sorrows at thy presence take their flight.
For true it is, as *in principio*,[183]
Mulier est hominis confusio.[184]
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,
That woman is to man his sovereign bliss.
For when by night I feel your tender side,
Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,

Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride;
Yet I have such a solace in my mind,
That all my boding cares are cast behind,
And even already I forget my dream.—
He said, and downward flew from off the beam,
For day light now began apace to spring,
The thrush to whistle, and the lark to sing.
Then crowing, clapped his wings, the appointed call,
To chuck his wives together in the hall.
By this the widow had unbarred the door,
And Chanticleer went strutting out before,
With royal courage, and with heart so light, [341]
As shewed he scorned the visions of the night.
Now roaming in the yard, he spurned the ground,
And gave to Partlet the first grain he found.
Then often feathered her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day;
And took by turns and gave so much delight,
Her sisters pined with envy at the sight.
He chucked again, when other corns he found,
And scarcely deigned to set a foot to ground;
But swaggered like a lord about his hall,
And his seven wives came running at his call.
'Twas now the month in which the world began,
(If March beheld the first created man;)
And since the vernal equinox, the sun
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;
When casting up his eyes against the light,
Both month, and day, and hour, he measured right,
And told more truly than the Ephemeris;
For art may err, but nature cannot miss.
Thus numbering times and seasons in his breast,
His second crowing the third hour confessed.
Then turning, said to Partlet,—See, my dear,
How lavish nature has adorned the year;
How the pale primrose and blue violet spring,
And birds essay their throats disused to sing:
All these are ours; and I with pleasure see,
Man strutting on two legs, and aping me;
An unfledged creature, of a lumpish frame,
Endued with fewer particles of flame:
Our dame sits cowering o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire;
And even this day in more delight abound,
Than, since I was an egg, I ever found.—
The time shall come, when Chanticleer shall wish
His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss;
The crested bird shall by experience know, [342]
Jove made not him his masterpiece below,
And learn the latter end of joy is woe.
The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,
And Heaven will have him taste his other tun.
Ye wise! draw near and hearken to my tale,
Which proves that oft the proud by flattery fall;
The legend is as true I undertake
As Tristram is, and Launcelot of the lake;
Which all our ladies in such reverence hold,
As if in book of martyrs it were told.
A Fox, full-fraught with seeming sanctity,
That feared an oath, but, like the devil, would lie;[185]
Who looked like Lent, and had the holy leer,
And durst not sin before he said his prayer;
This pious cheat, that never sucked the blood,
Nor chewed the flesh of lambs, but when he could,
Had passed three summers in the neighboring wood;
And musing long, whom next to circumvent,
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent;
And in his high imagination cast,
By stratagem to gratify his taste.
The plot contrived, before the break of day,
Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way;
The pale was next, but proudly, with a bound,
He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground;
Yet fearing to be seen, within a bed
Of coleworts he concealed his wily head:

Of coleworts he concealed his wily head;
There sculked till afternoon, and watched his time,
(As murderers use,) to perpetrate his crime.
  O hypocrite, ingenious to destroy!
O traitor, worse than Sinon was to Troy!
O vile subverter of the Gallic reign, [343]
More false than Gano was to Charlemaign![186]
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour
Didst thou forsake the safety of thy bower;
Better for thee thou hadst believed thy dream,
And not that day descended from the beam!
  But here the doctors eagerly dispute;
Some hold predestination absolute;
Some clerks maintain, that Heaven at first foresees,
And in the virtue of foresight decrees.
If this be so, then prescience binds the will,
And mortals are not free to good or ill;
For what he first foresaw, he must ordain,
Or its eternal prescience may be vain;
As bad for us as prescience had not been;
For first, or last, he's author of the sin.
And who says that, let the blaspheming man
Say worse even of the devil, if he can.
For how can that Eternal Power be just
To punish man, who sins because he must?
Or, how can he reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us, but first decreed?
  I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin[187] and holy Austin can:
If prescience can determine actions so,
That we must do, because he did foreknow,
Or that foreknowing, yet our choice is free,
Not forced to sin by strict necessity;
This strict necessity they simple call, [344]
Another sort there is conditional.
The first so binds the will, that things foreknown
By spontaneity, not choice, are done.
Thus galley-slaves tug willing at their oar,
Consent to work, in prospect of the shore;
But would not work at all, if not constrained
  before.
That other does not liberty constrain,
But man may either act, or may refrain.
Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,
And forced it not, though he foresaw the will.
Freedom was first bestowed on human race,
And prescience only held the second place.
  If he could make such agents wholly free,
I not dispute; the point's too high for me:
For heaven's unfathomed power what man can sound,
Or put to his omnipotence a bound?
He made us to his image, all agree;
That image is the soul, and that must be,
Or not the Maker's image, or be free.
But whether it were better man had been
By nature bound to good, not free to sin,
I wave, for fear of splitting on a rock;
The tale I tell is only of a cock;
Who had not run the hazard of his life,
Had he believed his dream, and not his wife:
For women, with a mischief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.
A woman's counsel brought us first to woe,
And made her man his paradise forego,
Where at heart's ease he lived; and might have been
As free from sorrow as he was from sin.
For what the devil had their sex to do,
That, born to folly, they presumed to know,
And could not see the serpent in the grass? [345]
But I myself presume, and let it pass.
  Silence in times of suffering is the best,
'Tis dangerous to disturb a hornet's nest.
In other authors you may find enough,
But all they say of dames is idle stuff.
Legends of lying wits together bound,

The wife of Bath would throw them to the ground:
These are the words of Chanticleer, not mine,
I honour dames, and think their sex divine.
Now to continue what my tale begun.
Lay madam Partlet basking in the sun,
Breast-high in sand; her sisters, in a row,
Enjoyed the beams above, the warmth below.
The cock, that of his flesh was ever free,
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea;
And so befel, that as he cast his eye,
Among the colworts, on a butterfly,
He saw false Reynard where he lay full low;
I need not swear he had no list to crow;
But cried, *cock, cock*, and gave a sudden start,
As sore dismayed and frighted at his heart.
For birds and beasts, informed by nature, know
Kinds opposite to theirs, and fly their foe.
So Chanticleer, who never saw a fox,
Yet shunned him, as a sailor shuns the rocks.
But the false loon, who could not work his will
By open force, employed his flattering skill:
I hope, my lord, said he, I not offend;
Are you afraid of me, that am your friend?
I were a beast indeed to do you wrong,
I, who have loved and honoured you so long:
Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a false alarm,
For, on my soul, I never meant you harm!
I come no spy, nor as a traitor press,
To learn the secrets of your soft recess:
Far be from Reynard so profane a thought, [346]
But by the sweetness of your voice was brought:
For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard
The song as of an angel in the yard;
A song that would have charmed the infernal gods,
And banished horror from the dark abodes:
Had Orpheus sung it in the nether sphere,
So much the hymn had pleased the tyrant's ear,
The wife had been detained, to keep the husband there.
My lord, your sire familiarly I knew,
A peer deserving such a son as you:
He, with your lady-mother, (whom heaven rest!)
Has often graced my house, and been my guest:
To view his living features does me good,
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood;
And in my cottage should be proud to see
The worthy heir of my friend's family.
But since I speak of singing, let me say,
As with an upright heart I safely may,
That, save yourself, there breathes not on the ground
One like your father for a silver sound.
So sweetly would he wake the winter-day,
That matrons to the church mistook their way,
And thought they heard the merry organ play.
And he to raise his voice with artful care,
(What will not beaux attempt to please the fair?)
On tiptoe stood to sing with greater strength,
And stretched his comely neck at all the length:
And while he strained his voice to pierce the skies,
As saints in raptures use, would shut his eyes,
That the sound striving through the narrow throat,
His winking might avail to mend the note.
By this, in song, he never had his peer,
From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
Not Maro's muse, who sung the mighty man,
Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a swan.
Your ancestors proceed from race divine: [347]
From Brennus and Belinus is your line;
Who gave to sovereign Rome such loud alarms,
That even the priests were not excused from arms.
Besides, a famous monk of modern times[188]
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes,
That of a parish priest the son and heir,
(When sons of priests were from the proverb clear,)

Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
And either lamed his legs, or struck him blind;
For which the clerk his father was disgraced,
And in his benefice another placed.
Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,
Yet for the sake of sweet saint charity;
Make hills and dales, and earth and heaven, rejoice,
And emulate your father's angel-voice.—
  The cock was pleased to hear him speak so fair,
And proud beside, as solar people are;
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,
So was he ravished with this flattery:
So much the more, as from a little elf,
He had a high opinion of himself;
Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,
Concluding all the world was made for him.
  Ye princes, raised by poets to the gods,
And Alexandered up in lying odes,
Believe not every flattering knave's report,
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
And he shall be received with more regard, [348]
And listened to, than modest truth is heard.
  This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,
Stood high upon his toes, and clapped his wings;
Then stretched his neck, and winked with both his eyes,
Ambitious, as he sought the Olympic prize.
But while he pained himself to raise his note,
False Reynard rushed, and caught him by the throat.
Then on his back he laid the precious load,
And sought his wonted shelter of the wood;
Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,
Of all unheeded, and pursued by none.
  Alas! what stay is there in human state,
Or who can shun inevitable fate?
The doom was written, the decree was past,
Ere the foundations of the world were cast!
In Aries though the sun exalted stood,
His patron-planet to procure his good;
Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
In Libra raised, opposed the same degree:
The rays both good and bad, of equal power,
Each thwarting other, made a mingled hour.
  On Friday-morn he dreamt this direful dream,
Cross to the worthy native,[189] in his scheme.
Ah blissful Venus! goddess of delight!
How couldst thou suffer thy devoted knight,
On thy own day, to fall by foe oppressed,
The wight of all the world who served thee best?
Who, true to love, was all for recreation,
And minded not the work of propagation?
Ganfride, who couldst so well in rhyme complain
The death of Richard with an arrow slain,
Why had not I thy muse, or thou my heart, [349]
To sing this heavy dirge with equal art!
That I like thee on Friday might complain;
For on that day was Cœur de Lion slain.—[190]
  Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
Were sent to heaven by woful Trojan dames,
When Pyrrhus tossed on high his burnished blade,
And offered Priam to his father's shade,
Than for the cock the widowed poultry made.
Fair Partlet first, when he was borne from sight,
With sovereign shrieks bewailed her captive knight;
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
When Asdrubal her husband lost his life,
When she beheld the smouldring flames ascend,
And all the Punic glories at an end:
Willing into the fires she plunged her head,
With greater ease than others seek their bed.
Not more aghast the matrons of renown,
When tyrant Nero burned the imperial town,
Shrieked for the downfal in a doleful cry,
For which their guiltless lords were doomed to die.
  Now to my story I return again:

Now to my story I return again.
The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
Of those distracted damsels in the yard;
And starting up, beheld the heavy sight,
How Reynard to the forest took his flight,
And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,
The hope and pillar of the house was borne.
The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry; [350]
Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh:
The vicar first, and after him the crew,
With forks and staves the felon to pursue.
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand:
Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
In panic horror of pursuing dogs;
With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,
Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.
The shouts of men, the women in dismay,
With shrieks augment the terror of the day.
The ducks, that heard the proclamation cried,
And feared a persecution might betide,
Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.
The geese fly o'er the barn; the bees, in arms,
Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.
Jack Straw at London-stone, with all his rout,
Struck not the city with so loud a shout;
Not when with English hate they did pursue
A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew;[191]
Not when the welkin rung with *one and all*,
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall;
Earth seemed to sink beneath, and heaven above to fall.
With might and main they chaced the murd'rous fox,
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military sounds,
Nor wanted horns to inspire sagacious hounds.
But see how fortune can confound the wise, [351]
And when they least expect it, turn the dice.
The captive-cock, who scarce could draw his breath,
And lay within the very jaws of death;
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,
And fear supplied him with this happy thought:
Your's is the prize, victorious prince, said he,
The vicar my defeat, and all the village see.[192]
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
And bid the churls that envy you the prey
Call back their mongrel curs, and cease their cry:
See fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,
And Chanticleer in your despite shall die;
He shall be plucked and eaten to the bone.—
'Tis well advised, in faith it shall be done;
This Reynard said: but as the word he spoke,
The prisoner with a spring from prison broke;
Then stretched his feathered fans with all his might,
And to the neighbouring maple winged his flight.
Whom, when the traitor safe on tree beheld,
He cursed the gods, with shame and sorrow filled:
Shame for his folly; sorrow out of time,
For plotting an unprofitable crime:
Yet, mastering both, the artificer of lies,
Renews the assault, and his last battery tries.
Though I, said he, did ne'er in thought offend,
How justly may my lord suspect his friend?
The appearance is against me, I confess,
Who seemingly have put you in distress.
You, if your goodness does not plead my cause,
May think I broke all hospitable laws,
To bear you from your palace-yard by might, [352]
And put your noble person in a fright.
This, since you take it ill, I must repent,
Though heaven can witness, with no bad intent
I practised it, to make you taste your cheer

With double pleasure, first prepared by fear.
So loyal subjects often seize their prince,
Forced (for his good) to seeming violence,
Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.
Descend; so help me, Jove, as you shall find,
That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind.—
Nay, quoth the cock; but I beshrew us both,
If I believe a saint upon his oath:
An honest man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only will be cozened twice:
Once warned is well bewared; no flattering lies
Shall sooth me more to sing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.
Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he should see, has he deserved to swim?—
Better, sir cock, let all contention cease,
Come down, said Reynard, let us treat of peace.—
A peace with all my soul, said Chanticleer;
But, with your favour, I will treat it here:
And lest the truce with treason should be mixt,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.[193]

THE MORAL.

In this plain fable you the effect may see
Of negligence, and fond credulity:
And learn besides of flatterers to beware,
Then most pernicious when they speak too fair.
The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, though the tale a lie.
Who spoke in parables, I dare not say;
But sure he knew it was a pleasing way,
Sound sense, by plain example, to convey.
And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleasure with instruction should be joined;
So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind.

[354]

THE
FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

The argument of this piece, as given by the editors of Chaucer, runs thus:—

"*A gentlewoman, out of an arbour, in a grove, seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance, upon the green grass. The which being ended, they all kneel down, and do honour to the daisy, some to the flower, and some to the leaf. Afterwards this gentlewoman learneth, by one of these ladies, the meaning hereof, which is this: They which honour the flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure; but they that honour the leaf, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects.*"

Some farther allegory was perhaps implied in this poem. Froissart, and other French poets, had established a sort of romantic devotion to the *marguerite*, or daisy, probably because the homage was capable of being allegorically transferred to any distinguished lady bearing that name. Chaucer might obliquely insinuate the superior valour of the warriors, and virtue of the ladies of Albion, by proposing to them the worship of the laurel, as a more worthy object of devotion than the flower. Nor is this interpretation absolutely disproved by the homage which Chaucer himself pays to the daisy in the Legend of Alcestis.[194] A poet is no more obliged to be consistent in his mythological creed, than constant in his devotion to one beauty, and may shift from the Grecian to the Gothic creed, or from the worship of Venus to that of Bellona. If every separate poem is consistent with itself, it would be hard to require any further uniformity.

Mr Godwin has elegantly and justly characterized the present version:—"The poem of the 'Floure and the Lefe' is a production of Chaucer, with which Dryden was 'so particularly pleased, both for [355] the invention and the moral,' as to induce him to transfuse it into modern English. He has somewhat obscured the purpose of the tale, which in the original is defective in perspicuity; but he has greatly heightened the enchantment of its character. He has made its personages fairies, who annually hold a jubilee, such as is here described, on the first of May; Chaucer had left the species of the beings he employs vague and unexplained. In a word, the poem of Dryden, regarded merely as the exhibition of a soothing and delicious luxuriance of fancy, may be classed with the most successful productions of human genius." *Life of Chaucer*, Vol I. p. 344.

FLOWER AND THE LEAF;

OR, THE

LADY IN THE ARBOUR.

A VISION.

Now turning from the wintry signs, the sun
His course exalted through the Ram had run,
And whirling up the skies, his chariot drove
Through Taurus, and the lightsome realms of love;
Where Venus from her orb descends in showers,
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers:
When first the tender blades of grass appear,
And buds, that yet the blast of Eurus fear,
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year;
Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains,
Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
Then, at their call emboldened, out they come,
And swell the gems, and burst the narrow room;
Broader and broader yet, their blooms display, [357]
Salute the welcome sun, and entertain the day.
Then from their breathing souls the sweets repair
To scent the skies, and purge the unwholesome air:
Joy spreads the heart, and, with a general song,
Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.
  In that sweet season, as in bed I lay,
And sought in sleep to pass the night away,
I turned my weary[195] side, but still in vain,
Though full of youthful health, and void of pain.
Cares I had none, to keep me from my rest,
For love had never entered in my breast;
I wanted nothing fortune could supply,
Nor did she slumber till that hour deny.
I wondered then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dried away the balmy dew:
Seas would be pools, without the brushing air,
To curl the waves; and sure some little care
Should weary nature so, to make her want repair.
  When Chanticleer the second watch had sung,
Scorning the scorner sleep, from bed I sprung;
And dressing, by the moon, in loose array,
Passed out in open air, preventing day,
And sought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order stood
Of oaks unshorn, a venerable wood;
Fresh was the grass beneath, and every tree,
At distance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal space
Stretched to their neighbours with a long embrace:
And the new leaves on every bough were seen,
Some ruddy-coloured, some of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the spring,
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.
Both eyes and ears received a like delight,
Enchanting music, and a charming sight,
On Philomel I fixed my whole desire, [358]
And listened for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing,
And wanted yet an omen to the spring.
  Attending long in vain, I took the way,
Which through a path, but scarcely printed, lay:

Which through a path, but scarcely printed, lay,
In narrow mazes oft it seemed to meet,
And looked as lightly pressed by fairy feet.
Wandering I walked alone, for still methought
To some strange end so strange a path was wrought:
At last it led me where an arbour stood,
The sacred receptacle of the wood:
This place unmarked, though oft I walked the green,
In all my progress I had never seen;
And seized at once with wonder and delight,
Gazed all around me, new to the transporting sight.
'Twas benched with turf, and, goodly to be seen,
The thick young grass arose in fresher green:
The mound was newly made, no sight could pass
Betwixt the nice partitions of the grass;
The well-united sods so closely lay,
And all around the shades defended it from day;
For sycamores with eglantine were spread,
A hedge about the sides, a covering over head.
And so the fragrant brier was wove between,
The sycamore and flowers were mixed with green,
That nature seemed to vary the delight,
And satisfied at once the smell and sight.
The master workman of the bower was known
Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon;
Who twining leaves with such proportion drew,
They rose by measure, and by rule they grew;
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell,
For none but hands divine could work so well.
Both roof and sides were like a parlour made
A soft recess, and a cool summer shade;
The hedge was set so thick, no foreign eye [359]
The persons placed within it could espy;
But all that passed without with ease was seen,
As if nor fence nor tree was placed between.
'Twas bordered with a field; and some was plain
With grass, and some was sowed with rising grain,
That (now the dew with spangles decked the ground)
A sweeter spot of earth was never found.
I looked and looked, and still with new delight;
Such joy my soul, such pleasures filled my sight;
And the fresh eglantine exhaled a breath,
Whose odours were of power to raise from death.
Nor sullen discontent, nor anxious care,
Even though brought thither, could inhabit there:
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe;
For this sweet place could only pleasure know.
  Thus as I mused, I cast aside my eye,
And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The spreading branches made a goodly shew,
And full of opening blooms was every bough:
A goldfinch there I saw with gaudy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopped from side to side,
Still pecking as she passed; and still she drew
The sweets from every flower, and sucked the dew:
Sufficed at length, she warbled in her throat,
And tuned her voice to many a merry note,
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,
Yet such as soothed my soul, and pleased my ear.
  Her short performance was no sooner tried,
When she I sought, the nightingale, replied:
So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,
That the grove echoed, and the valleys rung;
And I so ravished with her heavenly note,
I stood entranced, and had no room for thought,
But all o'er-powered with ecstasy of bliss,
Was in a pleasing dream of paradise;
At length I waked, and, looking round the bower, [360]
Searched every tree, and pryed on every flower,
If any where by chance I might espy
The rural poet of the melody;
For still methought she sung not far away:
At last I found her on a laurel spray.
Close by my side she sate, and fair in sight,
Full in a line, against her opposite;
Where stood with eglantine the laurel twined,

Where stood with eglantine the laurel twined,
And both their native sweets were well conjoined.
On the green bank I sat, and listened long;
(Sitting was more convenient for the song:)
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,
But wished to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too swiftly passed,
And every note I feared would be the last.
My sight, and smell, and hearing, were employed,
And all three senses in full gust enjoyed.
And what alone did all the rest surpass,
The sweet possession of the fairy place;
Single and conscious to myself alone
Of pleasures to the excluded world unknown;
Pleasures which no where else were to be found,
And all Elysium in a spot of ground.
Thus while I sat intent to see and hear,
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,
All suddenly I heard the approaching sound
Of vocal music, on the enchanted ground:
An host of saints it seemed, so full the quire;
As if the blessed above did all conspire
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.
At length there issued from the grove behind
A fair assembly of the female kind:
A train less fair, as ancient fathers tell,
Seduced the sons of heaven to rebel.
I pass their forms, and every charming grace;
Less than an angel would their worth debase:
But their attire, like liveries of a kind, [361]
All rich and rare, is fresh within my mind.
In velvet white as snow the troop was gowned,
The seams with sparkling emeralds set around:
Their hoods and sleeves the same; and purfled o'er
With diamonds, pearls, and all the shining store
Of eastern pomp: their long-descending train,
With rubies edged, and sapphires, swept the plain:
High on their heads, with jewels richly set,
Each lady wore a radiant coronet.
Beneath the circles, all the quire was graced
With chaplets green on their fair foreheads placed;
Of laurel some, of woodbine many more,
And wreaths of *Agnus castus* others bore:
These last, who with those virgin crowns were dressed,
Appeared in higher honour than the rest.
They danced around; but in the midst was seen
A lady of a more majestic mien;
By stature, and by beauty, marked their sovereign queen.
She in the midst began with sober grace;
Her servants' eyes were fixed upon her face,
And as she moved or turned, her motions viewed,
Her measures kept and step by step pursued.
Methought she trod the ground with greater grace,
With more of godhead shining in her face;
And as in beauty she surpassed the quire,
So, nobler than the rest was her attire.
A crown of ruddy gold inclosed her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a show:
A branch of *Agnus castus* in her hand
She bore aloft (her sceptre of command;)
Admired, adored by all the circling crowd,
For wheresoe'er she turned her face, they bowed:
And as she danced, a roundelay she sung,
In honour of the laurel, ever young:
She raised her voice on high, and sung so clear, [362]
The fawns came scudding from the groves to hear,
And all the bending forest lent an ear.
At every close she made, the attending throng
Replied, and bore the burden of the song:
So just, so small, yet in so sweet a note,
It seemed the music melted in the throat.
Thus dancing on, and singing as they danced,
They to the middle of the mead advanced.

Till round my arbour a new ring they made,
And footed it about the secret shade.
O'erjoyed to see the jolly troop so near,
But somewhat awed, I shook with holy fear;
Yet not so much, but that I noted well
Who did the most in song or dance excel.
  Not long I had observed, when from afar
I heard a sudden symphony of war;
The neighing coursers, and the soldiers' cry,
And sounding trumps that seemed to tear the sky:
I saw soon after this, behind the grove
From whence the ladies did in order move,
Come issuing out in arms a warrior train,
That like a deluge poured upon the plain:
On barbed steeds they rode in proud array,
Thick as the college of the bees in May,
When swarming o'er the dusky fields they fly,
New to the flowers, and intercept the sky.
So fierce they drove, their coursers were so fleet,
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.
  To tell their costly furniture were long,
The summer's day would end before the song:
To purchase but the tenth of all their store,
Would make the mighty Persian monarch poor.
Yet what I can, I will: before the rest
The trumpets issued in white mantles dressed;
A numerous troop, and all their heads around
With chaplets green of cerrial-oak were crowned,
And at each trumpet was a banner bound;
Which, waving in the wind, displayed at large [363]
Their master's coat-of-arms, and knightly charge.
Broad were the banners, and of snowy hue,
A purer web the silk-worm never drew.
The chief about their necks the scutcheons wore,
With orient pearls and jewels powdered o'er:
Broad were their collars too, and every one
Was set about with many a costly stone.[196]
Next these, of kings-at-arms a goodly train
In proud array came prancing o'er the plain:
Their cloaks were cloth of silver mixed with gold,
And garlands green around their temples rolled:
Rich crowns were on their royal scutcheons placed,
With sapphires, diamonds, and with rubies graced:
And as the trumpets their appearance made,
So these in habits were alike arrayed;
But with a pace more sober, and more slow,
And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a-row.
The pursuivants came next, in number more;
And like the heralds each his scutcheon bore:
Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,
With each an oaken chaplet on his head.
  Nine royal knights in equal rank succeed,
Each warrior mounted on a fiery steed,
In golden armour glorious to behold;
The rivets[197] of their arms were nailed with gold.
Their surcoats of white ermine-fur were made; [364]
With cloth of gold between, that cast a glittering shade.
The trappings of their steeds were of the same;
The golden fringe even set the ground on flame,
And drew a precious trail: a crown divine
Of laurel did about their temples twine.
  Three henchmen[198] were for every knight assigned,
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind;
White velvet, but unshorn, for cloaks they wore,
And each within his hand a truncheon bore:
The foremost held a helm of rare device;
A prince's ransom would not pay the price.
The second bore the buckler of his knight,
The third of cornel-wood a spear upright,
Headed with piercing steel, and polished bright.
Like to their lords their equipage was seen,
And all their foreheads crowned with garlands green.

And after these came armed with spear and shield
An host so great, as covered all the field:
And all their foreheads, like the knights' before,
With laurels ever-green were shaded o'er,
Or oak, or other leaves of lasting kind,
Tenacious of the stem, and firm against the wind.
Some in their hands, beside the lance and shield,
The boughs of woodbine or of hawthorn held,
Or branches for their mystic emblems took, [365]
Of palm, of laurel, or of cerrial oak.
Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty sound,
Drawn in two lines adverse they wheeled around,
And in the middle meadow took their ground.
Among themselves the tourney they divide,
In equal squadrons ranged on either side;
Then turned their horses' heads, and man to man,
And steed to steed opposed, the justs began.
They lightly set their lances in the rest,
And, at the sign, against each other pressed;
They met. I sitting at my ease beheld
The mixed events, and fortunes of the field.
Some broke their spears, some tumbled horse and man,
And round the fields the lightened coursers ran.
An hour and more, like tides, in equal sway
They rushed, and won by turns, and lost the day:
At length the nine (who still together held)
Their fainting foes to shameful flight compelled,
And with resistless force o'er-ran the field.
Thus, to their fame, when finished was the fight,
The victors from their lofty steeds alight:
Like them dismounted all the warlike train,
And two by two proceeded o'er the plain;
Till to the fair assembly they advanced,
Who near the secret arbour sung and danced.
The ladies left their measures at the sight,
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight,
And each with open arms embraced her chosen knight.
Amid the plain a spreading laurel stood,
The grace and ornament of all the wood:
That pleasing shade they sought, a soft retreat
From sudden April showers, a shelter from the heat:
Her leafy arms with such extent were spread,
So near the clouds was her aspiring head,
That hosts of birds, that wing the liquid air, [366]
Perched in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
And flocks of sheep beneath the shade from far
Might hear the rattling hail, and wintry war;
From heaven's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoyed the cool, and shunned the scorching heat:
A hundred knights might there at ease abide,
And every knight a lady by his side:
The trunk itself such odours did bequeath,
That a Moluccan breeze to these was common breath.
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeisance made,
And seemed to venerate the sacred shade.
These rites performed, their pleasures they pursue,
With songs of love, and mix with measures[199] new;
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And every champion leads his chosen dame.
I cast my sight upon the farther field,
And a fresh object of delight beheld:
For from the region of the west I heard
New music sound, and a new troop appeared;
Of knights, and ladies mixed a jolly band,
But all on foot they marched, and hand in hand.
The ladies dressed in rich symars were seen
Of Florence sattin, flowered with white and green,
And for a shade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.

The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row;
And every damsel wore upon her head
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.
Attired in mantles all the knights were seen,
That gratified the view with cheerful green:
Their chaplets of their ladies' colours were,
Composed of white and red, to shade their shining hair.
Before the merry troop the minstrels played;
All in their masters' liveries were arrayed,
And clad in green, and on their temples wore [367]
The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
Their instruments were various in their kind,
Some for the bow, and some for breathing wind;
The sawtry,[200] pipe, and hautboy's noisy band,
And the soft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
A tuft of daisies on a flowery lea
They saw, and thitherward they bent their way;
To this both knights and dames their homage made,
And due obeisance to the daisy paid.
And then the band of flutes began to play,
To which a lady sung a virelay:[201]
And still at every close she would repeat
The burden of the song, *The daisy is so sweet*.
The daisy is so sweet, when she begun,
The troop of knights and dames continued on.
The concert and the voice so charmed my ear,
And soothed my soul, that it was heaven to hear.
  But soon their pleasure passed; at noon of day,
The sun with sultry beams began to play:
Not Sirius shoots a fiercer flame from high,
When with his poisonous breath he blasts the sky;
Then drooped the fading flowers (their
      beauty fled)
And closed their sickly eyes, and hung the
      head,
And, rivelled up with heat, lay dying in their bed.
The ladies gasped, and scarcely could respire
The breath they drew, no longer air but fire;
The fainty knights were scorched; and knew not where
To run for shelter, for no shade was near.
And after this the gathering clouds amain
Poured down a storm of rattling hail and rain;
And lightning flashed betwixt: the field, and flowers, [368]
Burnt up before, were buried in the showers.
The ladies and the knights, no shelter nigh,
Bare to the weather and the wintry sky,
Were dropping wet, disconsolate, and wan,
And through their thin array received the rain;
While those in white, protected by the tree,
Saw pass the vain assault, and stood from danger free.
But as compassion moved their gentle minds,
When ceased the storm, and silent were the winds,
Displeased at what, not suffering, they had seen,
They went to cheer the faction of the green:
The queen in white array, before her band,
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,
And with behaviour sweet their foes embrace.
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,—
Fair sister, I have suffered in your woe;
Nor shall be wanting aught within my power
For your relief in my refreshing bower.—
That other answered with a lowly look,
And soon the gracious invitation took:
For ill at ease both she and all her train
The scorching sun had borne, and beating rain.
Like courtesy was used by all in white,
Each dame a dame received, and every knight a knight.
The laurel champions with their swords invade
The neighboring forests, where the justs were made,
And sere wood from the rotten hedges took,
And seeds of latent fire from flints provoke:
A cheerful blaze arose, and by the fire
They warmed their frozen feet, and dried their wet attire.

They warmed their frozen feet, and dried their wet attire.
Refreshed with heat, the ladies sought around
For virtuous herbs, which gathered from the ground
They squeezed the juice, and cooling ointment made, [369]
Which on their sun-burnt cheeks, and their chapt skins,
they laid;
Then sought green sallads, which they bade them eat,
A sovereign remedy for inward heat.
The Lady of the Leaf ordained a feast,
And made the Lady of the Flower her guest:
When lo, a bower ascended on the plain,
With sudden seats adorned, and large for either train.
This bower was near my pleasant arbour placed,
That I could hear and see whatever passed:
The ladies sat with each a knight between,
Distinguished by their colours, white and green;
The vanquished party with the victors joined,
Nor wanted sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind.
Meantime the minstrels played on either side,
Vain of their art, and for the mastery vied:
The sweet contention lasted for an hour,
And reached my secret arbour from the bower.
The sun was set; and Vesper, to supply
His absent beams, had lighted up the sky:
When Philomel, officious all the day
To sing the service of the ensuing May,
Fled from her laurel shade, and winged her flight
Directly to the queen arrayed in white;
And hopping sat familiar on her hand,
A new musician, and increased the band.
The goldfinch, who, to shun the scalding heat,
Had changed the medlar for a safer seat,
And hid in bushes 'scaped the bitter shower,
Now perched upon the Lady of the Flower;
And either songster holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renewed their notes;
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehearsed, to sing by night.
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danced by star-light and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen [370]
Supplied with steeds the lady of the green.
Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day.
This when I saw, inquisitive to know
The secret moral of the mystic show,
I started from my shade, in hopes to find
Some nymph to satisfy my longing mind;
And as my fair adventure fell, I found
A lady all in white, with laurel crowned,
Who closed the rear, and softly paced along,
Repeating to herself the former song.
With due respect my body I inclined,
As to some being of superior kind,
And made my court according to the day,
Wishing her queen and her a happy May.
Great thanks, my daughter, with a gracious bow
She said; and I, who much desired to know
Of whence she was, yet fearful how to break
My mind, adventured humbly thus to speak:—
Madam, might I presume and not offend,
So may the stars and shining moon attend
Your nightly sports, as you vouchsafe to tell,
What nymphs they were who mortal forms
excel,
And what the knights who fought in listed fields so well.—
To this the dame replied: Fair daughter, know,
That what you saw was all a fairy show;
And all those airy shapes you now behold,
Were human bodies once, and clothed with earthly mold:
Our souls, not yet prepared for upper light,
Till doomsday wander in the shades of night;
This only holiday of all the year,
We, privileged, in sunshine may appear;
With songs and dance we celebrate the day,
And with due honours usher in the May.

And with due honours usher in the May.
At other times we reign by night alone, [371]
And posting through the skies pursue the moon;
But when the morn arises, none are found,
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
He drives the wretch before, and lashes into night.
All courteous are by kind; and ever proud
With friendly offices to help the good.
In every land we have a larger space
Than what is known to you of mortal race;
Where we with green adorn our fairy bowers,
And even this grove, unseen before, is ours.
Know farther; every lady clothed in white,
And, crowned with oak and laurel every knight,
Are servants to the leaf, by liveries known
Of innocence; and I myself am one.
Saw you not her so graceful to behold
In white attire, and crowned with radiant gold?
The sovereign lady of our land is she,
Diana called, the queen of chastity;
And, for the spotless name of maid she bears,
That *Agnus castus* in her hand appears;
And all her train, with leafy chaplets crowned,
Were for unblamed virginity renowned;
But those the chief and highest in command
Who bear those holy branches in their hand:
The knights adorned with laurel crowns are they,
Whom death nor danger ever could dismay,
Victorious names, who made the world obey:
Who, while they lived, in deeds of arms excelled,
And after death for deities were held.
But those, who wear the woodbine on their brow,
Were knights of love, who never broke their vow;
Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free
From fears, and fickle chance, and jealousy.
The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear,
As true as Tristram and Isotta were.—
But what are those, said I, the unconquered nine, [372]
Who, crowned with laurel-wreaths, in golden armour shine?
And who the knights in green, and what the train
Of ladies dressed with daisies on the plain?
Why both the bands in worship disagree,
And some adore the flower, and some the tree?—
Just is your suit, fair daughter, said the dame:
Those laurelled chiefs were men of mighty fame;
Nine worthies were they called of different rites,
Three Jews, three Pagans, and three Christian knights. [202]
These, as you see, ride foremost in the field,
As they the foremost rank of honour held,
And all in deeds of chivalry excelled:
Their temples wreathed with leaves, that still renew,
For deathless laurel is the victor's due.
Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,
Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemain;
For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,
Emblems of valour, and of victory.[203]
Behold an order yet of newer date, [373]
Doubling their number, equal in their state;
Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,
In battle brave, protectors of their prince;
Unchanged by fortune, to their sovereign true,
For which their manly legs are bound with blue.
These, of the garter called, of faith unstained,
In fighting fields the laurel have obtained,
And well repaid those honours which they gained.
The laurel wreaths were first by Cæsar worn,
And still they Cæsar's successors adorn;
One leaf of this is immortality,
And more of worth than all the world can buy.—
One doubt remains, said I; the dames in green,

What were their qualities, and who their queen?—
Flora commands, said she, those nymphs and knights,
Who lived in slothful ease and loose delights;
Who never acts of honour durst pursue,
The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue;
Who, nursed in idleness, and trained in courts,
Passed all their precious hours in plays and sports,
Till death behind came stalking on, unseen,
And withered (like the storm) the freshness of their green.
These, and their mates, enjoy the present hour,
And therefore pay their homage to the flower.
But knights in knightly deeds should persevere,
And still continue what at first they were;
Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career.
No room for cowardice, or dull delay;
From good to better they should urge their way.
From good to better they should urge their way. [374]
For this with golden spurs the chiefs are graced,
With pointed rowels armed, to mend their haste;
For this with lasting leaves their brows are bound;
For laurel is the sign of labour crowned,
Which bears the bitter blast, nor shaken falls to ground:
From winter winds it suffers no decay,
For ever fresh and fair, and every month is May.
Even when the vital sap retreats below,
Even when the hoary head is hid in snow,
The life is in the leaf, and still between
The fits of falling snows appears the streaky green.
Not so the flower, which lasts for little space,
A short-lived good, and an uncertain grace:
This way and that the feeble stem is driven,
Weak to sustain the storms and injuries of heaven.
Propped by the spring, it lifts aloft the head,
But of a sickly beauty, soon to shed;
In summer living, and in winter dead.
For things of tender kind, for pleasure made,
Shoot up with swift increase, and sudden are decayed.—
With humble words, the wisest I could frame,
And proffered service, I repaid the dame;
That, of her grace, she gave her maid to know
The secret meaning of this moral show.
And she, to prove what profit I had made
Of mystic truth, in fables first conveyed,
Demanded till the next returning May,
Whether the leaf or flower I would obey?
I chose the leaf; she smiled with sober cheer,
And wished me fair adventure for the year,
And gave me charms and sigils, for defence
Against ill tongues that scandal innocence:—
But I, said she, my fellows must pursue,
Already past the plain, and out of view.—
We parted thus; I homeward sped my way, [375]
Bewildered in the wood till dawn of day;
And met the merry crew, who danced about the May.
Then late refreshed with sleep, I rose to write
The visionary vigils of the night.
Blush, as thou may'st, my little book, for shame,
Nor hope with homely verse to purchase fame;
For such thy maker chose, and so designed
Thy simple style to suit thy lowly kind.

THE WIFE OF BATH.

The original of this tale should probably be sought in some ancient metrical romance. At least, we know, that there exists a ballad connected with the Round Table Romances, entitled "The Marriage of Sir Gawain," which seems to have been taken, not from Chaucer, but some more ancient and romantic legend. Gower also had seized upon this subject, and wrought it into the tale, entitled "Florent," which is the most pleasing in his dull *Confessio Amantis*. But what was a mere legendary tale of wonder in the rhime of the minstrel, and a vehicle for trite morality in that of Gower, in the verse of Chaucer reminds us of the resurrection of a skeleton, reinvested by miracle with flesh, complexion, and powers of life and motion. Of all Chaucer's multifarious powers, none is more wonderful than the humour, with which he touched upon natural frailty, and the truth with which he describes the inward feelings of the human heart; at a time when all around were employed in composing romantic legends, in which the real character of their heroes was as effectually disguised by the stiffness of their manners, as their shapes by the sharp angles and unnatural projections of their plate armour.

Dryden, who probably did not like the story worse, that it contained a passing satire against priests and women, has bestowed considerable pains upon his version. It is, perhaps, not to be regretted, that he left the Prologue to Pope, who has drawn a veil over the coarse nakedness of Father Chaucer. The tale is characteristically placed by the original author, in the mouth of the buxom Wife of Bath, whose mode of governing her different husbands is so ludicrously described in the Prologue.

[377]

THE

WIFE OF BATH

HER

TALE.

IN days of old, when Arthur filled the throne,
Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown;
The king of elves, and little fairy queen,
Gambolled on heaths, and danced on every green;
And where the jolly troop had led the round,
The grass unbidden rose, and marked the ground.
Nor darkling did they dance;[204] the silver light
Of Phœbe served to guide their steps aright,
And, with their tripping pleased, prolonged the night.
Her beams they followed, where at full she played,
Nor longer than she shed her horns they staid,
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands conveyed.
Above the rest our Britain held they dear;
More solemnly they kept their Sabbaths here,
And made more spacious rings, and revelled half the year.
I speak of ancient times; for now the swain, [378]
Returning late, may pass the woods in vain,
And never hope to see the nightly train;
In vain the dairy now with mints is dressed,
The dairy-maid expects no fairy guest
To skim the bowls, and after pay the feast.
She sighs, and shakes her empty shoes in vain,
No silver penny to reward her pain;
For priests, with prayers, and other godly gear,
Have made the merry goblins disappear;
And where they played their merry pranks before,
Have sprinkled holy water on the floor;
And friars, that through the wealthy regions run,
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the sun,
Resort to farmers rich, and bless their halls,
And exorcise the beds, and cross the walls:
This makes the fairy quires forsake the place,
When once 'tis hallowed with the rites of grace.
But in the walks, where wicked elves have been,
The learning of the parish now is seen;
The midnight parson, posting o'er the green,
With gown tucked up to wakes; for Sunday next,
With humming ale encouraging his text;
Nor wants the holy leer to country-girl betwixt.
From fiends and imps he sets the village free,
There haunts not any incubus but he.
The maids and women need no danger fear
To walk by night, and sanctity so near;
For by some haycock, or some shady thorn,
He bids his beads both even-song and morn.[205]
It so befel in this king Arthur's reign, [379]
A lusty knight was pricking o'er the plain;
A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.
It happened as he rode, a damsel gay,
In russet robes, to market took her way;
Soon on the girl he cast an amorous eye;

So straight she walked, and on her pasterns high:
If seeing her behind he liked her pace,
Now turning short, he better liked her face.
He lights in haste, and, full of youthful fire,
By force accomplished his obscene desire.
This done, away he rode, not unespied,
For, swarming at his back, the country cried;
And, once in view, they never lost the sight,
But seized, and, pinioned, brought to court the knight.
  Then courts of kings were held in high renown,
Ere made the common brothels of the town;
There virgins honourable vows received,
But chaste as maids in monasteries lived;
The king himself, to nuptial ties a slave,
No bad example to his poets gave.
And they, not bad but in a vicious age,
Had not, to please the prince, debauched the stage.[206]
  Now, what should Arthur do? He loved the knight, [380]
But sovereign monarchs are the source of right:
Moved by the damsel's tears and common cry,
He doomed the brutal ravisher to die.
But fair Geneura[207] rose in his defence,
And prayed so hard for mercy from the prince,
That to his queen the king the offender gave,
And left it in her power to kill or save.
This gracious act the ladies all approve,
Who thought it much a man should die for love;
And, with their mistress, joined in close debate,
(Covering their kindness with dissembled hate,)
If not to free him, to prolong his fate.
At last agreed, they called him by consent
Before the queen and female parliament.
And the fair speaker, rising from her chair,
Did thus the judgment of the house declare:—
  Sir knight, though I have asked thy life, yet still
Thy destiny depends upon my will:
Nor hast thou other surety, than the grace,
Not due to thee, from our offended race.
But as our kind is of a softer mold,
And cannot blood, without a sigh, behold,
I grant thee life; reserving still the power
To take the forfeit when I see my hour;
Unless thy answer to my next demand
Shall set thee free from our avenging hand.
The question, whose solution I require,
Is, what the sex of women most desire?
In this dispute thy judges are at strife;
Beware, for on thy wit depends thy life.
Yet (lest surprised, unknowing what to say, [381]
Thou damn thyself) we give thee farther day;
A year is thine to wander at thy will,
And learn from others, if thou want'st the skill;
But, not to hold our proffer'd turn in scorn,
Good sureties will we have for thy return,
That at the time prefixed thou shalt obey,
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.—
  Woe was the knight at this severe command,
But well he knew 'twas bootless to withstand.
The terms accepted, as the fair ordain,
He put in bail for his return again;
And promised answer at the day assigned,
The best, with heaven's assistance, he could find.
  His leave thus taken, on his way he went
With heavy heart, and full of discontent,
Misdoubting much, and fearful of the event.
'Twas hard the truth of such a point to find,
As was not yet agreed among the kind.
Thus on he went; still anxious more and more,
Asked all he met, and knocked at every door;
Enquired of men; but made his chief request
To learn from women what they loved the best.
They answered each, according to her mind

They answered each, according to her mind,
To please herself, not all the female kind.
One was for wealth, another was for place;
Crones, old and ugly, wished a better face.
The widow's wish was oftentimes to wed;
The wanton maids were all for sport a-bed.
Some said the sex were pleased with handsome lies,
And some gross flattery loved without disguise.
Truth is, says one, he seldom fails to win
Who flatters well; for that's our darling sin.
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,
Will work even with the wisest of the kind.
One thought the sex's prime felicity
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free;
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free; [382]
Their pleasures, hours, and actions, all their own,
And, uncontrouled, to give account to none.
Some wish a husband-fool; but such are cursed,
For fools perverse of husbands are the worst.
All women would be counted chaste and wise,
Nor should our spouses see but with our eyes;
For fools will prate; and though they want the wit
To find close faults, yet open blots will hit;
Though better for their ease to hold their tongue,
For womankind was never in the wrong.
So noise ensues, and quarrels last for life;
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.
And some men say, that great delight have we
To be for truth extolled, and secrecy;
And constant in one purpose still to dwell,
And not our husbands' counsels to reveal.
But that's a fable; for our sex is frail,
Inventing rather than not tell a tale.
Like leaky sieves no secrets we can hold;
Witness the famous tale that Ovid told.[208]
Midas the king, as in his book appears,
By Phœbus was endowed with asses ears,
Which under his long locks he well concealed,
(As monarchs' vices must not be revealed,)
For fear the people have them in the wind,
Who, long ago, were neither dumb nor blind;
Nor apt to think from heaven their title springs,
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.
This Midas knew; and durst communicate
To none but to his wife his ears of state;
One must be trusted, and he thought her fit,
As passing prudent, and a parlous wit.
To this sagacious confessor he went, [383]
And told her what a gift the gods had sent;
But told it under matrimonial seal,
With strict injunction never to reveal.
The secret heard, she plighted him her troth,
(And sacred sure is every woman's oath,)
The royal malady should rest unknown,
Both for her husband's honour and her own:
But ne'ertheless she pined with discontent,
The counsel rumbled till it found a vent.
The thing she knew she was obliged to hide;
By interest and by oath the wife was tied,
But, if she told it not, the woman died.
Loth to betray a husband and a prince,
But she must burst or blab, and no pretence
Of honour tied her tongue from self-defence.
A marshy ground commodiously was near,
Thither she ran, and held her breath for fear,
Lest if a word she spoke of any thing,
That word might be the secret of the king.
Thus full of counsel to the fen she went,
Griped all the way, and longing for a vent;
Arrived, by pure necessity compelled,
On her majestic marrow-bones she kneeled:
Then to the water's brink she laid her head,
And as a bittour bumps[209] within a reed,—
To thee alone, O lake! she said, I tell,
(And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal:)

Beneath his locks, the king my husband wears
A goodly royal pair of asses ears:
Now I have eased my bosom of the pain,
Till the next longing fit return again.—
  Thus through a woman was the secret known; [384]
Tell us, and, in effect, you tell the town.
But to my tale: The knight, with heavy cheer,
Wandering in vain, had now consumed the year;
One day was only left to solve the doubt,
Yet knew no more than when he first set out.
But home he must; and, as the award had been,
Yield up his body captive to the queen.
In this despairing state he hap'd to ride,
As fortune led him, by a forest side;
Lonely the vale, and full of horror stood,
Brown with the shade of a religious wood;
When full before him, at the noon of night,
(The moon was up, and shot a gleamy light,)
He saw a quire of ladies in a round,
That featly footing seemed to skim the ground.
Thus dancing hand in hand, so light they were,
He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.
At speed he drove, and came a sudden guest;
In hope, where many women were, at least
Some one, by chance, might answer his request.
But faster than his horse the ladies flew,
And in a trice were vanished out of view.
  One only hag remained; but fouler far
Than grandame apes in Indian forests are;
Against a withered oak she leaned her weight,
Propped on her trusty staff, not half upright,
And dropped an awkward courtesy to the knight.
Then said, What makes you, sir, so late abroad
Without a guide, and this no beaten road?
Or want you aught that here you hope to find,
Or travel for some trouble in your mind?
The last I guess; and if I read aright,
Those of our sex are bound to serve a knight.
Perhaps good counsel may your grief assuage,
Then tell your pain, for wisdom is in age.—
Then tell your pain, for wisdom is in age.— [385]
  To this the knight: Good mother, would you know
The secret cause and spring of all my woe?
My life must with to-morrow's light expire,
Unless I tell what women most desire.
Now could you help me at this hard essay,
Or for your inborn goodness, or for pay,
Yours is my life, redeemed by your advice,
Ask what you please, and I will pay the price:
The proudest kerchief of the court shall rest
Well satisfied of what they love the best.—
Plight me thy faith, quoth she, that what I ask,
Thy danger over, and performed the task,
That shalt thou give for hire of thy demand,
(Here take thy oath, and seal it on my hand,)
I warrant thee, on peril of my life,
Thy words shall please both widow, maid, and wife.—
  More words there needed not to move the knight,
To take her offer, and his truth to plight.
With that she spread her mantle on the ground,
And, first inquiring whither he was bound,
Bade him not fear, though long and rough the way,
At court he should arrive ere break of day:
His horse should find the way without a guide,
She said: with fury they began to ride,
He on the midst, the beldam at his side.
The horse, what devil drove I cannot tell,
But only this, they sped their journey well;
And all the way the crone informed the knight,
How he should answer the demand aright.
  To court they came; the news was quickly spread
Of his returning to redeem his head.

The female senate was assembled soon,
With all the mob of women in the town:
The queen sat lord chief-justice of the hall,
And bade the crier cite the criminal.
The knight appeared, and silence they proclaim:
Then first the culprit answered to his name;
And, after forms of law, was last required [386]
To name the thing that women most desired.—
  The offender, taught his lesson by the way,
And by his counsel ordered what to say,
Thus bold began:—My lady liege, said he,
What all your sex desire is—SOVEREIGNTY.
The wife affects her husband to command;
All must be her's, both money, house, and land:
The maids are mistresses even in their name,
And of their servants full dominion claim.
This, at the peril of my head, I say,
A blunt plain truth, the sex aspires to sway,
You to rule all, while we, like slaves, obey.—
  There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,
But said the knight had well deserved his life.
Even fair Geneura, with a blush, confessed,
The man had found what women love the best.
  Up starts the beldam, who was there unseen,
And, reverence made, accosted thus the queen:—
My liege, said she, before the court arise,
May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes,
To grant my just request: 'twas I who taught
The knight this answer, and inspired his thought.
None but a woman could a man direct
To tell us women what we most affect.
But first I swore him on his knightly troth,
(And here demand performance of his oath,)
To grant the boon that next I should desire;
He gave his faith, and I expect my hire.
My promise is fulfilled: I saved his life,
And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.—
The knight was asked, nor could his oath deny,
But hoped they would not force him to comply.
The women, who would rather wrest the laws,
Than let a sister-plaintiff lose the cause,
(As judges on the bench more gracious are,
And more attent to brothers of the bar,)
Cried one and all, the suppliant should have right, [387]
And to the grandame hag adjudged the knight.
  In vain he sighed, and oft with tears desired,
Some reasonable suit might be required.
But still the crone was constant to her note;
The more he spoke, the more she stretched her throat.
In vain he proffered all his goods, to save
His body, destined to that living grave.
The liquorish hag rejects the pelf with scorn,
And nothing but the man would serve her turn.
Not all the wealth of eastern kings, said she,
Has power to part my plighted love, and me;
And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,
Yet never will I break the faith I swore;
For mine thou art by promise, during life,
And I thy loving and obedient wife.—
  My love! nay rather my damnation thou,
Said he: nor am I bound to keep my vow;
The fiend thy sire has sent thee from below,
Else how couldst thou my secret sorrows know?
Avaunt, old witch, for I renounce thy bed:
The queen may take the forfeit of my head,
Ere any of my race so foul a crone shall wed.
  —
Both heard, the judge pronounced against the knight;
So was he married in his own despite:
And all day after hid him as an owl,
Not able to sustain a sight so foul.
Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,
To pass the marriage-feast, and nuptial song:
Mirth there was none, the man was *a-la-mort*,
And little courage had to make his court.

To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride:
Was never such an ill-paired couple tied!
Restless he tossed, and tumbled to and fro,
And rolled, and wriggled further off, for woe.
The good old wife lay smiling by his side,
And caught him in her quivering arms, and cried,—
When you my ravished predecessor saw,
You were not then become this man of straw;
Had you been such, you might have 'scaped
the law.
Is this the custom of king Arthur's court?
Are all round-table knights of such a sort?
Remember I am she who saved your life,
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife:
Not thus you swore in your unhappy hour,
Nor I for this return employed my power.
In time of need I was your faithful friend;
Nor did I since, nor ever will offend.
Believe me, my loved lord, 'tis much unkind;
What fury has possessed your altered mind?
Thus on my wedding-night—without pretence—
Come turn this way, or tell me my offence.
If not your wife, let reason's rule persuade;
Name but my fault, amends shall soon be made.—
Amends! nay that's impossible, said he,
What change of age or ugliness can be?
Or could Medea's magic mend thy face,
Thou art descended from so mean a race,
That never knight was matched with such
disgrace.
What wonder, madam, if I move my side,
When, if I turn, I turn to such a bride?—
And is this all that troubles you so sore?—
And what the devil couldst thou wish me more?—
Ah Benedicite! replied the crone:
Then cause of just complaining have you none.
The remedy to this were soon applied,
Would you be like the bridegroom to the bride:
But, for you say a long-descended race,
And wealth and dignity, and power, and place,
Make gentlemen, and that your high degree
Is much disparaged to be matched with me,—
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood
Is but a glittering and fallacious good:
The nobleman is he, whose noble mind [389]
Is filled with inborn worth, unborrowed from his kind.
The King of Heaven was in a manger laid,
And took his earth but from an humble maid:
Then what can birth, or mortal men, bestow,
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow?
We, who for name and empty honour strive,
Our true nobility from him derive.
Your ancestors, who puff your mind with pride,
And vast estates to mighty titles tied,
Did not your honour, but their own, advance;
For virtue comes not by inheritance.
If you tralineate from your father's mind,
What are you else but of a bastard-kind?
Do, as your great progenitors have done,
And by their virtues prove yourself their son.
No father can infuse, or wit, or grace;
A mother comes across, and mars the race.
A grandsire or a grandame taints the blood;
And seldom three descents continue good.
Were virtue by descent, a noble name
Could never villanize his father's fame;
But, as the first, the last of all the line,
Would, like the sun, even in descending shine.
Take fire, and bear it to the darkest house,
Betwixt king Arthur's court and Caucasus,
If you depart, the flame shall still remain,
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain;
Nor, till the fuel perish, can decay,
By nature formed on things combustible to prey.
Such is not man, who, mixing better seed

With worse, begets a base degenerate breed.
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind
No trace of all the great begetter's mind.
The father sinks within his son, we see,
And often rises in the third degree;
If better luck a better mother give, [390]
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.
Such as our atoms were, even such are we,
Or call it chance, or strong necessity:
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.
And thus it needs must be; for seed conjoined
Lets into nature's work the imperfect kind;
But fire, the enlivener of the general frame,
Is one, its operation still the same.
Its principle is in itself: while ours
Works, as confederates war, with mingled powers;
Or man or woman, which soever fails;
And, oft, the vigour of the worse prevails.
Æther, with sulphur blended, alters hue,
And casts a dusky gleam of Sodom blue.
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends,
And the fair mermaid in a fish descends:
The line is gone; no longer duke or earl;
But, by himself degraded, turns a churl.
Nobility of blood is but renown
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known,
And a long trail of light, to thee descending down.
If in thy smoke it ends, their glories shine;
But infamy and villanage are thine.
Then what I said before is plainly showed,
That true nobility proceeds from God:
Not left us by inheritance, but given
By bounty of our stars, and grace of heaven.
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius rose,
Whom for his virtues the first Romans chose.
Fabricius from their walls repelled the foe,
Whose noble hands had exercised the plough.
From hence, my lord, and love, I thus conclude,
That, though my homely ancestors were rude,
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace
To make you father of a generous race.
And noble then am I, when I begin, [391]
In virtue clothed, to cast the rags of sin.
If poverty be my upbraided crime,
And you believe in heaven, there was a time
When he, the great controller of our fate,
Deigned to be man, and lived in low estate;
Which he who had the world at his dispose,
If poverty were vice, would never choose.
Philosophers have said, and poets sing,
That a glad poverty's an honest thing;
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind,
And happy he who can that treasure find;
But the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods on his gold, and, griping still at more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor;
The ragged beggar, though he wants relief,
Has not to lose, and sings before the thief.[210]
Want is a bitter and a hateful good,
Because its virtues are not understood.
Yet many things, impossible to thought,
Have been, by need, to full perfection brought:
The daring of the soul proceeds from thence,
Sharpness of wit, and active diligence;
Prudence at once, and fortitude, it gives,
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives;
For even that indigence, that brings me low,
Makes me myself, and him above, to know;
A good which none would challenge, few would choose,
A fair possession, which mankind refuse.
If we from wealth to poverty descend,
Want gives to know the flatterer from the friend.
If I am old and ugly, well for you, [392]

No lewd adulterer will my love pursue;
Nor jealousy, the bane of married life,
Shall haunt you for a withered homely wife;
For age and ugliness, as all agree,
Are the best guards of female chastity.
  Yet since I see your mind is worldly bent,
I'll do my best to further your content;
And therefore of two gifts in my dispose,—
Think ere you speak,—I grant you leave to choose:
Would you I should be still deformed and old,
Nauseous to touch, and loathsome to behold;
On this condition, to remain for life
A careful, tender, and obedient wife,
In all I can contribute to your ease,
And not in deed, or word, or thought displease?
Or would you rather have me young and fair,
And take the chance that happens to your share?
Temptations are in beauty, and in youth.
And how can you depend upon my truth?
Now weigh the danger with the doubtful bliss,
And thank yourself, if aught should fall amiss,—
  Sore sighed the knight, who this long sermon heard;
At length considering all, his heart he cheered,
And thus replied:—My lady, and my wife,
To your wise conduct I resign my life:
Choose you for me, for well you understand
The future good and ill, on either hand:
But if an humble husband may request,
Provide, and order all things for the best;
Your's be the care to profit, and to please,
And let your subject-servant take his ease.—
  Then thus in peace, quoth she, concludes the strife,
Since I am turned the husband, you the wife:
The matrimonial victory is mine, [393]
Which, having fairly gained, I will resign;
Forgive, if I have said or done amiss,
And seal the bargain with a friendly kiss.
I promised you but one content to share,
But now I will become both good and fair.
No nuptial quarrel shall disturb your ease;
The business of my life shall be to please:
And for my beauty, that, as time shall try;
But draw the curtain first, and cast your eye.—
  He looked, and saw a creature heavenly fair,
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.
With joy he turned, and seized her ivory arm;
And, like Pygmalion, found the statue warm.
Small arguments there needed to prevail,
A storm of kisses poured as thick as hail.
  Thus long in mutual bliss they lay embraced,
And their first love continued to the last;
One sunshine was their life, no cloud between,
Nor ever was a kinder couple seen.
  And so may all our lives like their's be led;
Heaven send the maids young husbands fresh in bed!
May widows wed as often as they can,
And ever for the better change their man.
And some devouring plague pursue their lives,
Who will not well be governed by their wives.

THE

CHARACTER OF A GOOD PARSON.

This beautiful copy of a beautiful original makes us regret, that Dryden had not translated the whole Introduction to the "Canterbury Tales," in which the pilgrims are so admirably described. Something might have been lost for want of the ancient Gothic lore, which the writers of our poet's period did not think proper to study; but when Dryden's learning failed, his native stores of fancy and numbers would have helped him through the task.

"The Character of the Good Priest" may be considered as an *amende honorable* to the reverend order whom Dryden had often satirized, and he himself seems to wish it to be viewed in that light. See Preface, p. 225. With a freedom which he has frequently employed elsewhere, Dryden has added the last forty lines, in which, availing himself of the Revolution, which in Chaucer's time placed Henry IV. on the throne, he represents the political principles of his priest as the same with those of the non-juring clergy of his own day. Indeed, the whole piece is greatly enlarged upon Chaucer's sketch.

THE

CHARACTER

OF

A GOOD PARSON.

A PARISH priest was of the pilgrim train;
An awful, reverend, and religious man.
His eyes diffused a venerable grace,
And charity itself was in his face.
Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor,
(As God had clothed his own ambassador;)
For such on earth his blessed Redeemer bore.
Of sixty years he seemed, and well might last
To sixty more, but that he lived too fast;
Refined himself to soul, to curb the sense,
And made almost a sin of abstinence.
Yet had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promised him sincere;
Nothing reserved or sullen was to see,
But sweet regards, and pleasing sanctity;
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was armed,
Though harsh the precept, yet the preacher charmed.
For, letting down the golden chain from high, [396]
He drew his audience upward to the sky;
And oft, with holy hymns, he charmed their ears,
(A music more melodious than the spheres,)
For David left him, when he went to rest,
His lyre; and after him he sung the best.
He bore his great commission in his look,
But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke.
He preached the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,
And warned the sinner with becoming zeal;
But on eternal mercy loved to dwell.
He taught the gospel rather than the law,
And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw.
For fear but freezes minds; but love, like heat,
Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat.
To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,
Wrapped in his crimes, against the storm prepared;
But when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
Lightnings and thunder, (heaven's artillery,)
As harbingers before the Almighty fly:
Those but proclaim his style, and disappear;
The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there.
The tithes, his parish freely paid, he took,
But never sued, or cursed with bell and book;
With patience bearing wrong, but offering none,
Since every man is free to lose his own.
The country churls, according to their kind,
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind,)
The less he sought his offerings, pinched the more,
And praised a priest contented to be poor.
Yet of his little he had some to spare,
To feed the famished, and to clothe the bare;
For mortified he was to that degree,
A poorer than himself he would not see.
True priests, he said, and preachers of the word,
Were only stewards of their sovereign Lord;
Nothing was theirs, but all the public store

Nothing was theirs, but all the public store; [397]
Intrusted riches, to relieve the poor;
Who, should they steal, for want of his relief,
He judged himself accomplice with the thief.
  Wide was his parish; not contracted close
In streets, but here and there a straggling house;
Yet still he was at hand, without request,
To serve the sick, to succour the distressed;
Tempting on foot alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempestuous night.
  All this, the good old man performed alone,
Nor spared his pains; for curate he had none.
Nor durst he trust another with his care;
Nor rode himself to Paul's, the public fair,
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where bishoprics and sinecures are sold;
But duly watched his flock by night and day,
And from the prowling wolf redeemed the prey,
And hungry sent the wily fox away.
  The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered;
Nor to rebuke the rich offender feared.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought;
(A living sermon of the truths he taught;)
For this by rules severe his life he squared,
That all might see the doctrine which they heard.
For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest;
(The gold of heaven, who bear the God impressed;)
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The Sovereign's image is no longer seen.
If they be foul on whom the people trust,
Well may the baser brass contract a rust.
  The prelate, for his holy life he prized;
The worldly pomp of prelacy despised;
His Saviour came not with a gaudy show,
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind, [398]
These marks of church and churchmen he designed,
And living taught, and dying left behind.
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn;
In purple he was crucified, not born.
They, who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.
  Not but he knew the signs of earthly power
Might well become Saint Peter's successor;
The Holy Father holds a double reign,
The prince may keep his pomp, the fisher must be plain.
[211]

  Such was the saint, who shone with every grace,
Reflecting, Moses-like, his Maker's face.
God saw his image lively was expressed;
And his own work, as in creation, blessed.
  The tempter saw him too with envious eye,
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was deposed,
And high and low with happy Harry closed.
This prince, though great in arms, the priest withstood:
Near though he was, yet not the next of blood.
Had Richard, unconstrained, resigned the throne,
A king can give no more than is his own:
The title stood entailed, had Richard had a son.
  Conquest, an odious name, was laid aside;
Where all submitted, none the battle tried.
The senseless plea of right by Providence
Was, by a flattering priest, invented since;
And lasts no longer than the present sway, [399]
But justifies the next who comes in play.
  The people's right remains; let those who dare
Dispute their power, when they the judges are.
  He joined not in their choice, because he knew
Worse might, and often did, from change ensue.
Much to himself he thought, but little spoke;
And, undeprived, his benefice forsook.

Now, through the land, his cure of souls he stretched,
And like a primitive apostle preached.
Still cheerful; ever constant to his call;
By many followed; loved by most, admired by all.
With what he begged, his brethren he relieved,
And gave the charities himself received;
Gave, while he taught; and edified the more,
Because he shewed, by proof, 'twas easy to be poor.
He went not, with the crowd, to see a shrine;
But fed us, by the way, with food divine.
In deference to his virtues, I forbear
To shew you what the rest in orders were:
This brilliant is so spotless, and so bright,
He needs no foil, but shines by his own proper light.

FABLES.

TRANSLATIONS FROM BOCCACE.

SIGISMONDA AND GUISCARDO.

[403]

This celebrated tale was probably taken by Boccacio from some ancient chronicle or traditional legend. It excited great attention among the learned of his time, and was translated into Latin by Leonardo Aretino. Francesco di Michele Accolti de Arezzo, who was accounted one of the best civilians of his age, rendered into Italian verse the lamentation of Sigismonda over her lover's heart; and the learned Philip Beroald made a Latin poetical version of the whole fable. Translations and imitations without number have been executed in foreign languages, without mentioning the tragedies which have been founded upon it. In England, the story was translated and versified in the octave stanza by William Walter, a follower of Sir Henry Marney, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.[212] A prose translation is to be found in Painter's "Palace of Pleasure;" and the tale being wrought into a tragedy by Robert Wilmot and others, was presented before Queen Elizabeth, at the Inner Temple, in 1568.[213] Dryden will not readily be suspected of deriving much aid from his black-lettered predecessors. He made Boccacio's story his own, and told it in his own way. One gross fault he has engrafted upon his original; I mean the coarseness of Sigismonda's character, whose love is that of temperament, not of affection. This error, grounded upon Dryden's false view of the passion and of the female character, and perhaps arising from the depravity of the age rather than of the poet, pervades and greatly injures the effect of the tale. Yet it is more than counterbalanced by preponderating beauties. Without [404] repeating the praise, elsewhere given to the majesty of the poet's versification, and which this piece alone would be sufficient to justify, the reader's attention may be solicited to the colours with which Dryden has drawn a mind wrought up to the highest pitch of despair. Sigismonda is placed in that situation, in which, above all others, the human disposition seems to acquire a sort of supernatural strength or obstinacy: for although guilty of a crime, she is punished in a degree far exceeding the measure of the offence. In such a situation, that acuteness of feeling, which would otherwise waste itself in fluctuations betwixt shame, fear, and remorse, is willingly and eagerly turned into the channel of resistance and recrimination; and perhaps no readier mode can be discovered of hardening the human heart, even to the consistence of the nether millstone. It is in this state, that Sigismonda resolutely, and even joyfully, embraces death, in order to punish her father, and rejoin her lover. The previous arguments with Tancred, sufficiently, and, in the circumstances, naturally, intimate the tone of her mind, and are a striking instance of Dryden's power in painting passion wrought up to desperation.

The scene is laid in the middle ages, when the principality of Salerno was ruled by a dynasty of Norman princes, deriving their family from the celebrated Robert de Guiscard.

[405]

SIGISMONDA
AND
GUISCARDO.

WHILE Norman Tancred in Salerno reigned,
The title of a gracious prince he gained;
Till turned a tyrant in his latter days,
He lost the lustre of his former praise,
And, from the bright meridian where he stood
Descending, dipped his hands in lovers' blood.
  This prince, of fortune's favour long possessed,
Yet was with one fair daughter only blessed;
And blessed he might have been with her alone,
But oh! how much more happy had he none!
She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
Most in his thought, and ever in his sight:
Next, nay beyond his life, he held her dear;
She lived by him, and now he lived in her.
For this, when ripe for marriage, he delayed
Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,
As envying any else should share a part
Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.
At length, as public decency required,
And all his vassals eagerly desired,
With mind averse, he rather underwent [406]
His people's will, than gave his own consent.
So was she torn as from a lover's side,
And made, almost in his despite, a bride.
  Short were her marriage-joys; for in the prime
Of youth, her lord expired before his time;
And to her father's court in little space
Restored anew, she held a higher place;
More loved, and more exalted into grace.
This princess, fresh and young, and fair and wise,
The worshipped idol of her father's eyes,
Did all her sex in every grace exceed,
And had more wit beside than women need.
  Youth, health, and ease, and most an
      amorous mind,
To second nuptials had her thoughts inclined,
And former joys had left a secret sting behind.
But, prodigal in every other grant,
Her sire left unsupplied her only want;
And she, betwixt her modesty and pride,
Her wishes, which she could not help, would hide.
  Resolved at last to lose no longer time,
And yet to please herself without a crime,
She cast her eyes around the court, to find
A worthy subject suiting to her mind,
To him in holy nuptials to be tied,
A seeming widow, and a secret bride.
Among the train of courtiers, one she found
With all the gifts of bounteous nature crowned;
Of gentle blood, but one whose niggard fate
Had set him far below her high estate:
Guiscard his name was called, of blooming age,
Now squire to Tancred, and before his page:
To him, the choice of all the shining crowd,
Her heart the noble Sigismonda vowed.
  Yet hitherto she kept her love concealed,
And with close glances every day beheld
The graceful youth; and every day increased [407]
The raging fire that burned within her breast:
Some secret charm did all his acts attend,
And what his fortune wanted, hers could mend;
Till, as the fire will force its outward way,
Or, in the prison pent, consume the prey,
So long her earnest eyes on his were set

So long her earnest eyes on his were set,
At length their twisted rays together met;
And he, surprised with humble joy, surveyed
One sweet regard, shot by the royal maid.
Not well assured, while doubtful hopes he nursed,
A second glance came gliding like the first;
And he, who saw the sharpness of the dart,
Without defence received it in his heart.
In public, though their passion wanted speech,
Yet mutual looks interpreted for each:
Time, ways, and means of meeting, were denied;
But all those wants ingenious love supplied.
The inventive God, who never fails his part,
Inspires the wit, when once he warms the heart.
  When Guiscard next was in the circle seen,
Where Sigismonda held the place of queen,
A hollow cane within her hand she brought,
But in the concave had inclosed a note;
With this she seemed to play, and, as in sport,
Tossed to her love, in presence of the court:
Take it, she said; and when your needs require,
This little brand will serve to light your fire.—
He took it with a bow, and soon divined
The seeming toy was not for nought designed:
But when retired, so long with curious eyes
He viewed the present, that he found the prize.
Much was in little writ; and all conveyed
With cautious care, for fear to be betrayed
By some false confident, or favourite maid.
The time, the place, the manner how to meet,
Were all in punctual order plainly writ:
But since a trust must be, she thought it best [408]
To put it out of laymen's power at least,
And for their solemn vows prepared a priest.
  Guiscard (her secret purpose understood)
With joy prepared to meet the coming good;
Nor pains nor danger was resolved to spare,
But use the means appointed by the fair.
  Near the proud palace of Salerno stood
A mount of rough ascent, and thick with wood;
Through this a cave was dug with vast expence,
The work it seemed of some suspicious prince,
Who, when abusing power with lawless might,
From public justice would secure his flight.
The passage made by many a winding way,
Reached even the room in which the tyrant lay.
Fit for his purpose, on a lower floor
He lodged, whose issue was an iron door;
From whence, by stairs descending to the ground,
In the blind grot a safe retreat he found.
Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown
With brambles, choked by time, and now unknown.
A rift there was, which from the mountain's height
Conveyed a glimmering and malignant light,
A breathing place to draw the damps away,
A twilight of an intercepted day.
The tyrant's den, whose use, though lost to fame,
Was now the apartment of the royal dame;
The cavern, only to her father known,
By him was to his darling daughter shewn.
  Neglected long she let the secret rest,
Till love recalled it to her labouring breast,
And hinted as the way by heaven designed,
The teacher, by the means he taught, to blind.
What will not women do, when need inspires
Their wit, or love their inclination fires!
Though jealousy of state the invention found,
Yet love refined upon the former ground.
That way, the tyrant had reserved to fly [409]
Pursuing hate, now served to bring two lovers nigh.
The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,
Bold by desire, explored the secret way;
Now tried the stairs, and wading through the night,
Searched all the deep recess, and issued into light.
All this her letter had so well explained,
The instructed youth might compass what remained.

The instructed youth might compass what remained;
The cavern mouth alone was hard to find,
Because the path, disused, was out of mind:
But in what quarter of the copse it lay,
His eye by certain level could survey:
Yet (for the wood perplexed with thorns he knew)
A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew;[214]
And, thus provided, searched the brake around,
Till the choked entry of the cave he found.
Thus, all prepared, the promised hour arrived,
So long expected, and so well contrived:
With love to friend, the impatient lover went,
Fenced from the thorns, and trod the deep descent.
The conscious priest, who was suborned before,
Stood ready posted at the postern door;
The maids in distant rooms were sent to rest,
And nothing wanted but the invited guest.
He came, and, knocking thrice without delay,
The longing lady heard, and turned the key;
At once invaded him with all her charms,
And the first step he made was in her arms:
The leathern outside, boisterous as it was,
Gave way, and bent beneath her strict embrace:
On either side the kisses flew so thick, [410]
That neither he nor she had breath to speak.
The holy man, amazed at what he saw,
Made haste to sanctify the bliss by law;
And muttered fast the matrimony o'er,
For fear committed sin should get before.
His work performed, he left the pair alone,
Because he knew he could not go too soon;
His presence odious, when his task was done.
What thoughts he had beseems not me to say;
Though some surmise he went to fast and pray,
And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.
The foe once gone, they took their full delight;
'Twas restless rage, and tempest all the night;
For greedy love each moment would employ,
And grudged the shortest pauses of their joy.
Thus were their loves auspiciously begun,
And thus with secret care were carried on.
The stealth itself did appetite restore,
And looked so like a sin, it pleased the more.
The cave was now become a common way,
The wicket, often opened, knew the key:
Love rioted secure, and, long enjoyed,
Was ever eager, and was never cloyed.
But as extremes are short, of ill and good,
And tides at highest mark regorge the flood;
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy.
Tancred, who fondly loved, and whose delight
Was placed in his fair daughter's daily sight,
Of custom, when his state affairs were done,
Would pass his pleasing hours with her alone;
And, as a father's privilege allowed,
Without attendance of the officious crowd.
It happened once, that when in heat of day
He tried to sleep, as was his usual way,
The balmy slumber fled his wakeful eyes, [411]
And forced him, in his own despite, to rise:
Of sleep forsaken, to relieve his care,
He sought the conversation of the fair;
But with her train of damsels she was gone,
In shady walks the scorching heat to shun:
He would not violate that sweet recess,
And found besides a welcome heaviness,
That seized his eyes; and slumber, which forgot
When called before to come, now came unsought.
From light retired, behind his daughter's bed,
He for approaching sleep composed his head;
A chair was ready, for that use designed,
So quilted, that he lay at ease reclined;
The curtains closely drawn, the light to skreen,

As if he had contrived to lie unseen:
Thus covered with an artificial night,
Sleep did his office soon, and sealed his sight.
  With heaven averse in this ill-omened hour,
Was Guiscard summoned to the secret bower,
And the fair nymph, with expectation fired,
From her attending damsels was retired:
For, true to love, she measured time so right,
As not to miss one moment of delight.
The garden, seated on the level floor,
She left behind, and locking every door,
Thought all secure; but little did she know,
Blind to her fate, she had inclosed her foe.
Attending Guiscard, in his leathern frock,
Stood ready, with his thrice-repeated knock:
Thrice with a doleful sound the jarring grate
Rung deaf and hollow, and presaged their fate.
The door unlocked, to known delight they haste,
And, panting in each other's arms, embraced;
Rush to the conscious bed, a mutual freight,
And heedless press it with their wonted weight.
And heedless press it with their wonted weight. [412]
  The sudden bound awaked the sleeping sire,
And shewed a sight no parent can desire;
His opening eyes at once with odious view
The love discovered, and the lover knew:
He would have cried; but hoping that he dreamt,
Amazement tied his tongue, and stopped the attempt.
The ensuing moment all the truth declared,
But now he stood collected, and prepared;
For malice and revenge had put him on his guard.
So like a lion that unheeded lay,
Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray,
With inward rage he meditates his prey.
The thoughtless pair, indulging their desires,
Alternate kindled, and then quenched their fires;
Nor thinking in the shades of death they played,
Full of themselves, themselves alone surveyed,
And, too secure, were by themselves betrayed.
Long time dissolved in pleasure thus they lay,
Till nature could no more suffice their play;
Then rose the youth, and, through the cave again
Returned, the princess mingled with her train.
  Resolved his unripe vengeance to defer,
The royal spy, when now the coast was clear,
Sought not the garden, but retired unseen,
To brood in secret on his gathered spleen,
And methodize revenge: to death he grieved;
And, but he saw the crime, had scarce believed.
The appointment for the ensuing night he heard,
And therefore in the cavern had prepared
Two brawny yeomen of his trusty guard.
  Scarce had unwary Guiscard set his foot
Within the foremost entrance of the grot,
When these in secret ambush ready lay,
And rushing on the sudden seized the prey:
Encumbered with his frock, without defence,
An easy prize, they led the prisoner thence,
And, as commanded, brought before the prince.
The gloomy sire, too sensible of wrong, [413]
To vent his rage in words, restrained his tongue,
And only said,—Thus servants are preferred,
And, trusted, thus their sovereigns they reward.
Had I not seen, had not these eyes received
Too clear a proof, I could not have believed.—
  He paused, and choked the rest. The youth, who saw
His forfeit life abandoned to the law,
The judge the accuser, and the offence to him
Who had both power and will to avenge the crime.
No vain defence prepared; but thus replied:—

The faults of love by love are justified:
With unresisted might the monarch reigns,
He levels mountains, and he raises plains;
And not regarding difference of degree,
Abased your daughter, and exalted me.—
  This bold return with seeming patience heard,
The prisoner was remitted to the guard.
The sullen tyrant slept not all the night,
But lonely walking by a winking light,
Sobbed, wept, and groaned, and beat his withered breast,
But would not violate his daughter's rest;
Who long expecting lay, for bliss prepared,
Listning for noise, and grieved that none she heard;
Oft rose, and oft in vain employed the key,
And oft accused her lover of delay,
And passed the tedious hours in anxious thoughts away.
  The morrow came; and at his usual hour
Old Tancred visited his daughter's bower;
Her cheek (for such his custom was) he kissed,
Then blessed her kneeling, and her maids dismissed.
The royal dignity thus far maintained,
Now left in private, he no longer feigned;
But all at once his grief and rage appeared, [414]
And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.
  O Sigismonda,—he began to say:
Thrice he began, and thrice was forced to stay,
Till words with often trying found their way:—
I thought, O Sigismonda, (but how blind
Are parents' eyes, their children's faults to find!)
Thy virtue, birth, and breeding, were above
A mean desire, and vulgar sense of love;
Nor less than sight and hearing could convince
So fond a father, and so just a prince,
Of such an unforeseen and unbelieved offence.
Then what indignant sorrow must I have,
To see thee lie subjected to my slave!
A man so smelling of the people's lee,
The court received him first for charity;
And since with no degree of honour graced,
But only suffered, where he first was placed.
A grovelling insect still; and so designed
By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind:
A thing, by neither man nor woman prized,
And scarcely known enough to be despised.
To what has heaven reserved my age? Ah! why
Should man, when nature calls, not chuse to die,
Rather than stretch the span of life, to find
Such ills as fate has wisely cast behind,
For those to feel, whom fond desire to live
Makes covetous of more than life can give!
Each has his share of good; and when 'tis gone,
The guest, though hungry, cannot rise too soon.
But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
Protracting life, have lived a day too long.
If yesterday could be recalled again,
Even now would I conclude my happy reign;
But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,
And a dark cloud o'ertakes my setting sun.
Had'st thou not loved, or, loving, saved the shame, [415]
If not the sin, by some illustrious name,
This little comfort had relieved my mind,
'Twas frailty, not unusual to thy kind:
But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood,
Shews downward appetite to mix with mud.
Thus not the least excuse is left for thee,
Nor the least refuge for unhappy me.
  For him I have resolved; whom by surprise
I took, and scarce can tell it, in disguise;
For such was his attire, as, with intent
Of nature, suited to his mean descent:
The harder question yet remains behind,
What pains a parent and a prince can find
To punish an offence of this degenerate kind.

To punish an offence of this degenerate kind.
  As I have loved, and yet I love thee more
Than ever father loved a child before,
So that indulgence draws me to forgive:
Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live.
But, as a public parent of the state,
My justice, and thy crime, requires thy fate.
Fain would I choose a middle course to steer;
Nature's too kind, and justice too severe:
Speak for us both, and to the balance bring
On either side the father and the king.
Heaven knows, my heart is bent to favour thee;
Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest to me.—
  Here stopping with a sigh, he poured a flood
Of tears, to make his last expression good.
She, who had heard him speak, nor saw alone
The secret conduct of her love was known,
But he was taken who her soul possessed,
Felt all the pangs of sorrow in her breast:
And little wanted, but a woman's heart,
With cries and tears, had testified her smart:
But inborn worth, that fortune can controul,
New-strung, and stiffer bent her softer soul;
The heroine assumed the woman's place, [416]
Confirmed her mind, and fortified her face:
Why should she beg, or what could she pretend,
When her stern father had condemned her friend!
Her life she might have had; but her despair
Of saving his, had put it past her care:
Resolved on fate, she would not lose her breath,
But, rather than not die, solicit death.
Fixed on this thought, she, not as women use,
Her fault by common frailty would excuse;
But boldly justified her innocence,
And while the fact was owned, denied the offence:
Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,
She met his glance mid-way, and thus undaunted spoke:—
  Tancred, I neither am disposed to make
Request for life, nor offered life to take;
Much less deny the deed; but least of all
Beneath pretended justice weakly fall.
My words to sacred truth shall be confined,
My deeds shall shew the greatness of my mind.
That I have loved, I own; that still I love,
I call to witness all the powers above:
Yet more I own; to Guiscard's love I give
The small remaining time I have to live;
And if beyond this life desire can be,
Not fate itself shall set my passion free.
This first avowed; nor folly warped my mind,
Nor the frail texture of the female kind
Betrayed my virtue; for, too well I knew
What honour was, and honour had his due:
Before the holy priest my vows were tied,
So came I not a strumpet, but a bride.
This for my fame, and for the public voice;
Yet more, his merits justified my choice:
Which had they not, the first election thine,
That bond dissolved, the next is freely mine:
Or grant I erred, (which yet I must deny) [417]
Had parents power even second vows to tie,
Thy little care to mend my widowed nights,
Has forced me to recourse of marriage-rites,
To fill an empty side, and follow known
    delights.
What have I done in this, deserving blame?
State-laws may alter; nature's are the same;
Those are usurped on helpless womankind,
Made without our consent, and wanting power to bind.
  Thou, Tancred, better shouldst have understood,
That, as thy father gave thee flesh and blood,
So gavest thou me: not from the quarry hewed,
But of a softer mould, with sense endued;
Even softer than thy own, of suppler kind,
More exquisite of taste, and more than man refined.
Nor needst thou by thy daughter to be told

Nor need st thou by thy daughter to be told,
Though now thy spritely blood with age be cold,
Thou hast been young; and canst remember still,
That when thou hadst the power, thou hadst the will;
And from the past experience of thy fires,
Canst tell with what a tide our strong desires
Come rushing on in youth, and what their
rage requires.
And grant thy youth was exercised in arms,
When love no leisure found for softer charms,
My tender age in luxury was trained,
With idle ease and pageants entertained;
My hours my own, my pleasures
unrestrained.
So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
That seemed even warranted by thy consent;
For when the father is too fondly kind,
Such seed he sows, such harvest shall he find.
Blame then thyself, as reason's law requires,
(Since nature gave, and thou foment'st my fires;)
If still those appetites continue strong, [418]
Thou may'st consider I am yet but young.
Consider too, that, having been a wife,
I must have tasted of a better life;
And am not to be blamed, if I renew,
By lawful means, the joys which then I knew.
Where was the crime, if pleasure I procured;
Young, and a woman, and to bliss inured?
That was my case, and this is my defence:—
I pleased myself, I shunned incontinence,
And, urged by strong desires, indulged my
sense.
Left to myself, I must avow, I strove
From public shame to screen my secret love,
And, well acquainted with thy native pride,
Endeavoured what I could not help, to hide;
For which a woman's wit an easy way
supplied.
How this, so well contrived, so closely laid,
Was known to thee, or by what chance betrayed,
Is not my care; to please thy pride alone,
I could have wished it had been still unknown.
Nor took I Guiscard by blind fancy led,
Or hasty choice, as many women wed;
But with deliberate care, and ripened thought,
At leisure first designed, before I wrought.
On him I rested, after long debate,
And, not without considering, fixed my fate.
His flame was equal, though by mine inspired;
(For so the difference of our birth required:)
Had he been born like me, like me his love
Had first begun, what mine was forced to move:
But thus beginning, thus we persevere;
Our passions yet continue what they were,
Nor length of trial makes our joys the less
sincere.
At this my choice, though not by thine allowed,
(Thy judgment herding with the common crowd,)
Thou tak'st unjust offence; and, led by them,
Dost less the merit than the man esteem.
Dost less the merit than the man esteem. [419]
Too sharply, Tancred, by thy pride betrayed,
Hast thou against the laws of kind inveighed;
For all the offence is in opinion placed,
Which deems high birth by lowly choice debased.
This thought alone with fury fires thy breast,
(For holy marriage justifies the rest,)
That I have sunk the glories of the state,
And mixed my blood with a plebeian mate:
In which I wonder thou shouldst oversee
Superior causes, or impute to me
The fault of fortune, or the Fates' decree.
Or call it heaven's imperial power alone,
Which moves on springs of justice, though unknown;
Yet this we see, though ordered for the best,
The bad exalted, and the good oppressed:

The bad exalted, and the good oppressed;
Permitted laurels grace the lawless brow;
The unworthy raised, the worthy cast below.
  But leaving that: search we the secret springs,
And backward trace the principles of things;
There shall we find, that, when the world began,
One common mass composed the mould of man;
One paste of flesh on all degrees bestowed,
And kneaded up alike with moistening blood.
The same Almighty Power inspired the frame
With kindled life, and formed the souls the same:
The faculties of intellect and will
Dispensed with equal hand, disposed with equal skill,
Like liberty indulged, with choice of good or ill.
Thus born alike, from virtue first began
The difference that distinguished man from man:
He claimed no title from descent of blood,
But that which made him noble made him good.
Warmed with more particles of heavenly flame,
He winged his upward flight, and soared to fame;
The rest remained below, a tribe without a name.
  This law, though custom now diverts the course, [420]
As nature's institute, is yet in force;
Uncancelled, though disused: and he, whose mind
Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind;
Though poor in fortune, of celestial race;
And he commits the crime, who calls him base.
  Now lay the line, and measure all thy court
By inward virtue, not external port,
And find whom justly to prefer above
The man on whom my judgment placed my love;
So shalt thou see his parts and person shine,
And, thus compared, the rest a base degenerate line.
Nor took I, when I first surveyed thy court,
His valour or his virtues on report;
But trusted what I ought to trust alone,
Relying on thy eyes, and not my own;
Thy praise (and thine was then the public voice)
First recommended Guiscard to my choice:
Directed thus by thee, I looked, and found
A man I thought deserving to be crowned;
First by my father pointed to my sight,
Nor less conspicuous by his native light;
His mind, his mien, the features of his face,
Excelling all the rest of human race:
These were thy thoughts, and thou couldst judge aright,
Till interest made a jaundice in thy sight.
Or should I grant thou didst not rightly see,
Then thou wert first deceived, and I deceived by thee.
But if thou shalt allege, through pride of mind,
Thy blood with one of base condition joined,
'Tis false; for 'tis not baseness to be poor:
His poverty augments thy crime the more;
Upbraids thy justice with the scant regard
Of worth; whom princes praise, they should reward.
Are these the kings entrusted by the crowd
With wealth, to be dispensed for common good?
The people sweat not for their king's delight, [421]
To enrich a pimp, or raise a parasite;
Theirs is the toil; and he, who well has served
His country, has his country's wealth deserved.
Even mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,
And kings by birth to lowest rank return;
All subject to the power of giddy chance,
For fortune can depress, or can advance:
But true nobility is of the mind,
Not given by chance, and not to chance resigned.
  For the remaining doubt of thy decree,
What to resolve, and how dispose of me;
Be warned to cast that useless care aside,
Myself alone will for myself provide.
If in thy doating and decrepit age,
Thy soul, a stranger in thy youth to rage,

Thy soul, a stranger in thy youth to rage,
Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,
Gorge with my blood thy barbarous appetite;
For I so little am disposed to pray
For life, I would not cast a wish away.
Such as it is, the offence is all my own;
And what to Guiscard is already done,
Or to be done is doomed by thee decree,
That, if not executed first by thee,
Shall on my person be performed by me.
  Away! with women weep, and leave me here,
Fixed, like a man, to die without a tear;
Or save, or slay us both this present hour,
'Tis all that fate has left within thy power.—
  She said; nor did her father fail to find,
In all she spoke, the greatness of her mind;
Yet thought she was not obstinate to die,
Nor deemed the death she promised was so nigh.
Secure in this belief, he left the dame,
Resolved to spare her life, and save her shame;
But that detested object to remove,
To wreck his vengeance, and to cure her love.
  Intent on this, a secret order signed [422]
The death of Guiscard to his guards enjoined;
Strangling was chosen, and the night the time;
A mute revenge, and blind as was the crime.
His faithful heart, a bloody sacrifice,
Torn from his breast, to glut the tyrant's eyes,
Closed the severe command; for (slaves to pay)
What kings decree, the soldier must obey:
Waged against foes; and when the wars are o'er,
Fit only to maintain despotic power;
Dangerous to freedom, and desired alone
By kings, who seek an arbitrary throne.[215]
Such were these guards; as ready to have slain
The prince himself, allured with greater gain:
So was the charge performed with better will,
By men inured to blood, and exercised in ill.
  Now, though the sullen sire had eased his mind,
The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,
A pomp prepared to grace the present he designed.
A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,
Of depth and breadth the precious pledge to hold,
With cruel care he chose; the hollow part
Inclosed, the lid concealed the lover's heart.
Then of his trusted mischiefs one he sent,
And bade him, with these words, the gift present:—
"Thy father sends thee this to cheer thy breast,
And glad thy sight with what thou lov'st the best;
As thou hast pleased his eyes, and joyed his mind,
With what he loved the most of human kind."—
  Ere this, the royal dame, who well had weighed
The consequence of what her sire had said,
Fixed on her fate, against the expected hour,
procured the means to have it in her power;
For this, she had distilled, with early care, [423]
The juice of simples, friendly to despair,
A magazine of death; and thus prepared,
Secure to die, the fatal message heard:
Then smiled severe; nor with a troubled look,
Or trembling hand, the funeral present took;
Even kept her countenance, when the lid removed
Disclosed the heart, unfortunately loved.
She needed not be told, within whose breast
It lodged; the message had explained the rest.
Or not amazed, or hiding her surprise,
She sternly on the bearer fixed her eyes;
Then thus:—Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,
The gold, though precious, equals not the heart:
But he did well to give his best; and I,
Who wished a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.—
  At this she curbed a groan, that else had come,
And, pausing, viewed the present in the tomb;
Then to the heart, adored devoutly, glued
Her lips, and, raising it, her speech renewed.

Her lips, and, raising it, her speech renewed:—
Even from my day of birth to this, the bound
Of my unhappy being, I have found
My father's care and tenderness expressed;
But this last act of love excels the rest:
For this so dear a present, bear him back
The best return that I can live to make.—
  The messenger dispatched, again she viewed
The loved remains, and, sighing, thus pursued:—
Source of my life, and lord of my desires,
In whom I lived, with whom my soul expires!
Poor heart! no more the spring of vital heat;
Cursed be the hands that tore thee from thy seat!
The course is finished which thy fates decreed,
And thou from thy corporeal prison freed:
Soon hast thou reached the goal with mended pace;
A world of woes dispatched in little space.
Forced by thy worth, thy foe, in death become [424]
Thy friend, has lodged thee in a costly tomb.
There yet remained thy funeral exequies,
The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes;
And those indulgent heaven has found the way,
That I, before my death, have leave to pay.
My father even in cruelty is kind,
Or heaven has turned the malice of his mind
To better uses than his hate designed;
And made the insult, which in his gift appears,
The means to mourn thee with my pious tears;
Which I will pay thee down before I go,
And save myself the pains to weep below,
If souls can weep. Though once I meant to meet
My fate with face unmoved, and eyes unwet,
Yet, since I have thee here in narrow room,
My tears shall set thee first afloat within thy tomb.
Then (as I know thy spirit hovers nigh)
Under thy friendly conduct will I fly
To regions unexplored, secure to share
Thy state; nor hell shall punishment appear;
And heaven is double heaven, if thou art
        there.—
  She said: Her brimful eyes, that ready stood,
And only wanted will to weep a flood,
Released their watery store, and poured amain,
Like clouds low-hung, a sober shower of rain;
Mute solemn sorrow, free from female noise,
Such as the majesty of grief destroys;
For, bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed,
Seemed by the posture to discharge her head,
O'er-filled before; and (oft her mouth applied
To the cold heart) she kissed at once, and cried.
Her maids, who stood amazed, nor knew the cause
Of her complaining, nor whose heart it was,
Yet all due measures of her mourning kept,
Did office at the dirge, and by infection wept,
And oft enquired the occasion of her grief, [425]
(Unanswered but by sighs) and offered vain relief.
At length, her stock of tears already shed,
She wiped her eyes, she raised her drooping head,
And thus pursued:—O ever faithful heart,
I have performed the ceremonial part,
The decencies of grief; it rests behind,
That, as our bodies were, our souls be joined;
To thy whate'er abode my shade convey,
And, as an elder ghost, direct the way!—
She said; and bade the vial to be brought,
Where she before had brewed the deadly draught;
First pouring out the med'cinable bane,
The heart, her tears had rinsed, she bathed again;
Then down her throat the death securely throws,
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.
  This done, she mounts the genial bed, and there
(Her body first composed with honest care)
Attends the welcome rest; her hands yet hold,
Close to her heart, the monumental gold;
Nor farther word she spoke, but closed her sight,
And quiet sought the covert of the night.

And quiet sought the covert of the night.
The damsels, who the while in silence mourned,
Not knowing, nor suspecting death suborned,
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred sent,
Who, conscious of the occasion, feared the event.
Alarmed, and with presaging heart, he came,
And drew the curtains, and exposed the dame
To loathsome light; then, with a late relief,
Made vain efforts to mitigate her grief.
She, what she could, excluding day, her eyes
Kept firmly sealed, and sternly thus replies:—
Tancred, restrain thy tears, unsought by me,
And sorrow unavailing now to thee:
Did ever man before afflict his mind,
To see the effect of what himself designed?
Yet if thou hast remaining in thy heart [426]
Some sense of love, some unextinguished part
Of former kindness, largely once professed,
Let me by that adjure thy hardened breast,
Not to deny thy daughter's last request:
The secret love which I so long enjoyed,
And still concealed, to gratify thy pride,
Thou hast disjoined; but, with my dying breath,
Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death:
Where'er his corpse by thy command is laid,
Thither let mine in public be conveyed;
Exposed in open view, and side by side,
Acknowledged as a bridegroom and a bride.—
The prince's anguish hindered his reply;
And she, who felt her fate approaching nigh,
Seized the cold heart, and heaving to her breast,—
Here, precious pledge, she said, securely rest.—
These accents were her last; the creeping death
Benumbed her senses first, then stopped her breath.
Thus she for disobedience justly died;
The sire was justly punished for his pride;
The youth, least guilty, suffered for the offence,
Of duty violated to his prince;
Who, late repenting of his cruel deed,
One common sepulchre for both decreed;
Entombed the wretched pair in royal state,
And on their monument inscribed their fate.

ORIGINAL, FROM THE DECAMERON. [427]

THE FOURTH DAY.

NOVEL I.

Tancred, prince of Salerno, puts his daughter's lover to death, and sends his heart to her in a golden cup; she pours water upon it, which she had poisoned, and so dies.

Our king has given us a most melancholy subject for this day's discourse; considering that, as we came hither to be merry, we must now recount other people's misfortunes, which cannot be related without moving compassion, as well in those who tell, as in those who hear them. Perhaps it is designed as an allay to the mirth of the preceding days. But, whatever his reason may be for it, I have no business to make any alteration with regard to his pleasure. I shall, therefore, mention an unhappy story to you, worthy of your most tender compassion.

Tancred, prince of Salerno, was a most humane and generous lord, had he not, in his old age, defiled his hands in a lover's blood. He, through the whole course of his life, had one only daughter; and happy had he been not to have possessed her. No child could be more dear to a parent than she was, which made him loth to part with her in marriage: at length, not till she was a little advanced in years, he married her to the duke of Capoa, when she was soon left a widow, and came home again to her father. She was a lady of great beauty and understanding, and continuing thus in the court of her father, who took no care to marry her again, and it seeming not so modest in her to ask it, she resolved at last to have a lover privately. Accordingly, she made choice of a person of low parentage, but noble qualities, whose name was Guiscard, with whom she became violently in love; and by often seeing him, and evermore commending his [428] manner and behaviour, he soon became sensible of it, and devoted himself entirely to the love of her. Affecting each other thus in secret, and she desiring nothing so much as to be with him, and not daring to trust any person with the affair, contrived a new stratagem in order to apprise him of the means. She wrote a letter, wherein she mentioned what she would have him do the next day for her; this she put into a hollow cane, and giving it to him one day, she said, pleasantly, "You may make a pair of bellows of this, for your servant to blow the fire with this evening." He received it, supposing, very justly, that it had some meaning, and, taking it home, found the letter; which, when he had thoroughly considered, and knew what he had to do, he was the most overjoyed man that could be; and he applied himself accordingly to answer her assignation, in the manner she had directed him. On one side of the palace, and under a mountain, was a grotto, which had been made time out of mind, and into which no light could come but through a little opening dug in the mountain, and which, as the grotto had been long in disuse, was now grown over with briers and thorns. Into this grotto was a passage, by a private stair-case, out of one of the rooms of the palace, which belonged to the lady's apartment, and was secured by a very strong door. This passage was so far out of every one's thoughts, having been disused for so long a time, that nobody remembered any thing about it; but love, whose notice nothing can escape, brought it fresh into the mind of the enamoured lady; who, to keep this thing entirely private, laboured some days before she could get the door open; when having gone down into the cave, and observed the opening, and how high it might be from thence to the bottom, she acquainted him with the fact. Guiscard then provided a ladder of cords; and casing himself well with leather, to be defended from the thorns, fixing one end of the ladder to the stump of a tree which was near, he slid down by the help of it to the bottom, where he stayed expecting the lady. The following day, therefore, having sent her maids out of the way, under pretence that she was going to lie down, and locking herself up alone in her chamber, she opened the door, and descended into the grotto, where they met to their mutual satisfaction. From thence she shewed him the way to her chamber, where they were together the greatest part of the day, and taking proper measures for the time to come, he went away through the cave, and she returned to her maids. The same he did the next night; and he followed this course for a considerable time, when fortune, as if she envied them their happiness, thought fit to change their mirth into mourning. Tancred used sometimes to come into his daughter's chamber, to pass a little time away with her; and going thither one day after dinner, whilst the lady, whose name was Ghismond, was with her [429] maids in the garden; and being perceived by no one, nor yet willing to take her from her diversion, finding also the windows shut, and the curtains drawn to the feet of the bed, he threw himself down in a great chair, which stood in a corner of the room, leaning his head upon the bed, and drawing the curtain before him, as if he concealed himself on purpose, when he chanced to fall asleep. In the mean time, Ghismond having made an appointment with her lover, left the maids in the garden, and came into her chamber, which she secured, not thinking of any person being there, and went to meet Guiscard, who was in the cave waiting for her, and brought him into her chamber; when her father awoke, and was a witness to all that passed between them. This was the utmost affliction to him, and he was about to cry out; but, upon second thoughts, he resolved to keep it private, if possible, that he might be able to do more securely, and with less disgrace, what he had resolved upon. The lovers stayed together their usual time, without

perceiving any thing of Tancred, who, after they were departed, got out of the window into the garden, old as he was, and went, without being seen by any one, very sorrowful to his chamber. The next night, according to his orders, Guiscard was seized by two men as he was coming out of the cave, and carried by them, in his leathern doublet, to Tancred, who, as soon as he saw him, said, with tears in his eyes: "Guiscard, you have ill requited my kindness towards you, by this outrage and shame which you have brought upon me, and of which this very day I have been an eye-witness." When he made no other answer but this: "Sir, love hath greater power than either you or I." Tancred then ordered a guard to be set over him. And the next day he went to his daughter's apartment as usual, she knowing nothing of what had happened, and shutting the door, that they might be private together, he said to her, weeping, "Daughter, I had such an opinion of your modesty and virtue, that I could never have believed, had I not seen it with my own eyes, that you would have violated either, even so much as in thought. My reflecting on this will make the small pittance of life that is left very grievous to me. As you were determined to act in that manner, would to heaven you had made choice of a person more suitable to your own quality; but for this Guiscard, he is one of the very meanest persons about my court. This gives me such concern, that I scarcely know what to do. As for him, he was secured by my order last night, and his fate is determined. But, with regard to yourself, I am influenced by two different motives; on one side, the tenderest regard that a father can have for a child; and on the other, the justest vengeance for the great folly you have committed. One pleads strongly in your behalf; and the other would excite me to do an act contrary to my nature. But before I come to a [430] resolution, I would hear what you have to say for yourself." And when he said this, he hung down his head, and wept like a child. She hearing this from her father, and perceiving that their amour was not only discovered, but her lover in prison, was under the greatest concern imaginable, and was going to break out into loud and grievous lamentations, as is the way of women in distress; but getting the better of this weakness, and putting on a settled countenance, as supposing Guiscard was dead, and being resolved firmly in her own mind not to outlive him, she spoke therefore with all the composure in the world to this purpose: "Sir, to deny what I have done, or to entreat any favour of you, is no part of my design at present; for as the one can avail me nothing, so I intend the other shall be of little service. I will take no advantage of your love and tenderness towards me; but shall first, by an open confession, endeavour to vindicate myself, and then do what the greatness of my soul prompts me to. 'Tis most true that I have loved, and do still love, Guiscard; and while I live, which will not be long, shall continue to love him: and if such a thing as love be after death, even that shall not dissolve it. To this I was induced by no frailty, so much as his superior virtue, and the little care you took to marry me again. I preferred him before all the world; and as to the meanness of his station, to which you so much object, that is more the fault of fortune, who often raises the most unworthy to an high estate, neglecting those of greater merit. We are all formed of the same materials, and by the same hand. The first difference amongst mankind was made by virtue; they who were virtuous were deemed noble, and the rest were all accounted otherwise. Though this law therefore may have been obscured by contrary custom, yet is it discarded neither by nature, nor good manners. If you then alone regard the worth and virtue of your courtiers, and consider that of Guiscard, you will find him the only noble person, and the others a set of poltroons. With regard to his worth and valour, I appeal to yourself. Who ever commended man more for every thing that was praise-worthy, than you have commended him? and deservedly in my judgement; but if I was deceived, it was by following your opinion. If you say then, that I have had an affair with a person base and ignoble, I deny it; if with a poor one, it is to your shame, to let such merit go unrewarded. Now concerning your last doubt, namely, how you are to deal with me; use your pleasure. If you are disposed to commit an act of cruelty, I shall say nothing to prevent such a resolution. But this I must apprise you of, that unless you do the same to me, which you either have done, or mean to do to Guiscard, my own hands shall do it for you. Reserve your tears then for women; and if you mean to act with severity, cut us off both together, if it appears to you that we have deserved it." The prince knew [431] full well the greatness of her soul; but yet he could by no means persuade himself, that she would have resolution enough to do what her words seemed to threaten. Leaving her then, with a design of being favourable to her, and intending to wean her affection from her lover by taking him off, he gave orders to the two men, who guarded him, to strangle him privately in the night, and to take his heart out of his body, and bring it to him. Accordingly they executed his commands, and the next day he called for a golden cup, and putting the heart into it, he had it conveyed by a trusty servant to his daughter, with this message: "Your father sends this present to comfort you, with what was most dear to you; even as he was comforted by you, in what was most dear to him." She had departed from her father, not at all moved as to her resolution, and therefore had prepared the juices of some poisonous plants, which she had mixed with water to be at hand, if what she feared should come to pass. When the servant had delivered the present, and reported the message according to his order, she took the cup, without changing countenance, and seeing the heart therein, and knowing by the words that it must be Guiscard's, she looked stedfastly at the servant, and said: "My father has done very wisely; such a heart as this requires no worse a sepulchre than that of gold." And upon this she lifted it to her mouth and kissed it, thus continuing; "All my life long, even to this last period of it, have I found my father's love most abundant towards me; but now more than ever: therefore return him, in my name, the last thanks that I shall ever be able to give him for such a present." Looking then towards the cup, which she held fast in her hand, she said: "Alas! the dearest end and centre of all my wishes! Cursed be the cruelty of him, by whom these eyes now see you; although my soul had long viewed and known you. You have finished your course; such a one indeed as fortune has thought fit to allot you; you are arrived at the goal to which we all tend; you have left the miseries of this world far behind, and have obtained such a sepulchre from your very enemy, as your merit required. Nothing remained to make your obsequies complete, but the tears of her who was so

dear to you whilst you were living; and which, that you should not now want, heaven put it into the mind of my relentless father to send you to me. And you shall have them, though I had purposed to die unmoved, and without shedding a tear; and when I have done, I will instantly join my soul to yours: for in what other company can I go better and safer to those unknown regions? as I make no doubt your soul is hovering here, expecting mine." When she had done speaking, she shed a flood of tears, kissing the heart a thousand times; whilst the damsels who were about [432] her knew neither what heart it was, nor what those her words imported; but being moved with pity, they joined with her, begging to know the cause of her grief, and endeavouring all they could to comfort her. After she had lamented as much as she thought proper, she raised up her head, and wiping her eyes, said, "Thou heart, most dearly beloved! all my duty is now performed towards thee; nothing more remains, but for my soul to accompany thine." Upon this she bade them reach the vessel of water, which she had prepared the day before, and pouring it into the cup with the heart, which she had sufficiently washed with her tears, she drank it all off without the least dread or apprehension; and then threw herself upon the bed with the cup in her hand, composing her body as decently as she could, and pressing her lover's heart to her's, she lay without uttering a word more, expecting death. The maids, when they saw this, though they knew not what it was she had drunk, sent to acquaint Tancred; who fearing what had really happened, came into the room soon after she had laid herself down, and finding it was too late, began to lament most grievously. She then said to him, "Sir, save those tears against worse fortune that may happen, for I want them not. Who but yourself would mourn for a thing of your own doing? But if any part of that love now remains in you, which you once had for me, the last request I shall make is, that as you would not suffer us to be happy together whilst living, that our two bodies (wherever you have disposed of his) may be publicly interred together when dead." Extreme grief would suffer him to make no reply; when, finding herself drawing near her end, she strained the heart strongly to her breast, saying, "Receive us, heaven; I die!" Then closing her eyes, all sense forsook her, and she departed this miserable life. Such an end had the amours of Guiscard and Ghismond, as you have now heard; whilst the prince, repenting of his cruelty when it was too late, had them buried in one grave, in the most public manner, to the general grief of all the people of Salerno.

THEODORE AND HONORIA. [433]

Boccacio, who, according to Benvenuto da Imola, was a curious investigator of all delectable histories, is said to have taken this goblin tale from the Chronicle of Helinandus, a French monk, who flourished in the reign of Philip Augustus,[216] and composed a history of the world from its creation, as was the fashion of monkish historians. The Florentine novelist, however, altered the place of action, and disguised the names of the persons, whom he calls Nastagio and Traversari, the designations of two noble families in Ravenna. So good a subject for a ballad did not escape our English makers, by one of whom the novel of Boccacio was turned into the ballad stanza[217]. Dryden, however, converted that into a poem, which, in the hands of the old rhymer, was only a tale, and has given us a proof how exquisitely his powers were adapted for the management of the machinery, or supernatural agency of an epic poem, had his situation suffered him to undertake the task he so long meditated. Nothing can be more highly painted than the circumstances preliminary of the apparition;— the deepening gloom, the falling wind, the commencement of an earthquake; above all, the indescribable sensation of horror with which Theodore is affected, even ere he sees the actors in the supernatural tragedy. The appearance of the female, of the gaunt mastiffs by which she is pursued, and of the infernal huntsman, are all in the highest tone of poetry, and could only be imitated by the pencil of Salvator. There is also a masterly description of Theodore's struggles between his native courage, prompted by chivalrous education, and that terror which the presence of supernatural beings imposes upon the living. It is by the account of the impression, which such a sight makes upon the supposed spectator, more [434] even than by a laboured description of the vision itself, that the narrator of such a tale must hope to excite the sympathetic awe of his audience. Thus, in the vision so sublimely described in the book of Job, chap. iv. no external cause of terror is even sketched in outline, and our feelings of dread are only excited by the fear which came upon the spectator, and the trembling which made all his bones to shake. But the fable of Dryden combines a most impressive description of the vision, with a detailed account of its effect upon Theodore, and both united make the most admirable poem of the kind that ever was written. It is somewhat derogatory from the dignity of the apparition, that Theodore, having once witnessed its terrors, should coolly lay a scheme for converting them to his own advantage; but this is an original fault in the story, for which Dryden is not answerable. The second apparition of the infernal hunter to the assembled guests, is as striking as the first; a circumstance well worthy of notice, when we consider the difficulty and hazard of telling such a story twice. But in the second narration, the poet artfully hurries over the particulars of the lady's punishment, which were formerly given in detail, and turns the reader's attention upon the novel effect produced by it, upon the assembled guests, which is admirably described, as "a mute scene of sorrow mixed with fear." The interrupted banquet, the appalled gallants, and the terrified women, grouped with the felon knight, his meagre mastiffs, and mangled victim, displays the hand of the master poet. The conclusion of the story is defective from the cause already hinted at. The machinery is too powerful for the effect produced by it; a lady's hard heart might have been melted without so terrible an example of the punishment of obduracy.

It is scarcely worth while to mention, that Dryden has changed the Italian names into others better adapted to English heroic verse.

THEODORE AND HONORIA.

[435]

OF all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief, and most renowned, Ravenna stands;
Adorned in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.
But Theodore the brave, above the rest,
With gifts of fortune and of nature blessed,
The foremost place for wealth and honour held,
And all in feats of chivalry excelled.
  This noble youth to madness loved a dame,
Of high degree, Honoria was her name;
Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,
And fiercer than became so soft a kind:
Proud of her birth, (for equal she had none;)
The rest she scorned, but hated him alone.
His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing gained;
For she, the more he loved, the more disdained.
He lived with all the pomp he could devise,
At tilts and tournaments obtained the prize,
But found no favour in his lady's eyes:
Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid [436]
Turned all to poison that he did or said:
Nor prayers, nor tears, nor offered vows, could move.
The work went backward; and the more he strove
To advance his suit, the farther from her love.
  Wearied at length, and wanting remedy,
He doubted oft, and oft resolved to die.
But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,
For who would die to gratify a foe?
His generous mind disdained so mean a fate;
That passed, his next endeavour was to hate.
But vainer that relief than all the rest;
The less he hoped, with more desire possessed;
Love stood the siege, and would not yield his breast.
  Change was the next, but change deceived his care;
He sought a fairer, but found none so fair.
He would have worn her out by slow degrees,
As men by fasting starve the untamed disease;
But present love required a present ease.
Looking, he feeds alone his famished eyes,
Feeds lingering death; but, looking not, he dies.
Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,
Wasting at once his life, and his estate.
  His friends beheld, and pitied him in vain,
For what advice can ease a lover's pain!
Absence, the best expedient they could find,
Might save the fortune, if not cure the mind:
This means they long proposed, but little gained,
Yet after much pursuit, at length obtained.
  Hard you may think it was to give consent,
But, struggling with his own desires, he went;
With large expence, and with a pompous train,
Provided as to visit France or Spain,
Or for some distant voyage o'er the main.
But love had clipped his wings, and cut him short,
Confined within the purlieus of his court.
Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat; [437]
His travels ended at his country-seat:
To Chassis' pleasing plains he took his way,
There pitched his tents, and there resolved to stay.
  The spring was in the prime; the neighbouring grove
Supplied by birds, the choristers of love;
Music unbought, that ministered delight

To morning walks, and lulled his cares by night:
There he discharged his friends; but not the expence
Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence.
He lived as kings retire, though more at large
From public business, yet with equal charge;
With house and heart still open to receive;
As well content as love would give him leave:
He would have lived more free; but many a guest,
Who could forsake the friend, pursued the feast.
  It happ'd one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his usual hour he left his bed,
To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood
On every side surrounded by the wood:
Alone he walked, to please his pensive mind,
And sought the deepest solitude to find:
'Twas in a grove of spreading pines he strayed;
The winds within the quivering branches played,
And dancing trees a mournful music made.
The place itself was suiting to his care,
Uncouth and savage, as the cruel fair.
He wandered on, unknowing where he went,
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And summoned him to due repast at noon,
But love could feel no hunger but his own.
  While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immersed within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rocked the ground;
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rocked the ground; [438]
With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled.
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seemed threatened, though unseen to mortal eye.
Unused to fear, he summoned all his soul,
And stood collected in himself, and whole:
Not long; for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distressed, who cried for aid,
And filled with loud laments the secret shade.
  A thicket close beside the grove there stood,
With briers and brambles choked, and dwarfish wood:
From thence the noise, which now approaching near,
With more distinguished notes invades his ear;
He raised his head, and saw a beauteous maid,
With hair dishevelled, issuing through the shade;
Stripped of her clothes, and even those parts revealed,
Which modest nature keeps from sight concealed.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs, were torn,
With passing through the brakes and prickly thorn;
Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight pursued,
And oft their fastened fangs in blood embrued:
Oft they came up, and pinched her tender side,—
Mercy, O mercy! heaven, she ran, and cried;
When heaven was named, they loosed their hold again;
Then sprung she forth, they followed her amain.
  Not far behind, a knight of swarthy face,
High on a coal-black steed pursued the chace;
With flashing flames his ardent eyes were filled,
And in his hand a naked sword he held:
He cheered the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vowed revenge on her devoted head.
  As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action roused his manly mind;
Moved with th' unworthy usage of the maid,
He, though unarmed, resolved to give her aid.
A saplin pine he wrenched from out the ground, [439]
The readiest weapon that his fury found.
Thus furnished for offence, he crossed the way
Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.
  The knight came thundering on, but, from afar,

Thus in imperious tone forbade the war:—
Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief;
But give me leave to seize my destined prey,
And let eternal justice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, disdained, betrayed,
And suffering death for this ungrateful maid.—
He said, at once dismounting from the steed;
For now the hell-hounds with superior speed
Had reached the dame, and fastening on her side,
The ground with issuing streams of purple dyed.
Stood Theodore surprised in deadly fright,
With chattering teeth, and bristling hair upright;
Yet armed with inborn worth,—Whate'er, said he,
Thou art, who know'st me better than I thee,
Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defied.—
The spectre, fiercely staring, thus replied:
Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,
And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
One common sire our fathers did beget,
My name and story some remember yet:
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
When for my sins I loved this haughty maid;
Not less adored in life, nor served by me,
Than proud Honoria now is loved by thee.
What did I not, her stubborn heart to gain?
But all my vows were answered with disdain;
She scorned my sorrows, and despised my pain.
Long time I dragged my days in fruitless care;
Then loathing life, and plunged in deep despair,
To finish my unhappy life, I fell
On this sharp sword, and now am damned in hell.
Short was her joy; for soon the insulting maid [440]
By heaven's decree in the cold grave was laid;
And as in unrepented sin she died,
Doomed to the same bad place, is punished for her pride,
Because she deemed I well deserved to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.
There, then, we met; both tried, and both were cast,
And this irrevocable sentence passed;
That she, whom I so long pursued in vain,
Should suffer from my hands a lingering pain:
Renewed to life, that she might daily die,
I daily doomed to follow, she to fly;
No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
I seek her life (for love is none below;)
As often as my dogs with better speed
Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed:
Then with this fatal sword, on which I died,
I pierce her open back, or tender side,
And tear that hardened heart from out her breast,
Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry hounds a feast.
Nor lies she long, but as her fates ordain,
Springs up to life, and, fresh to second pain,
Is saved to-day, to-morrow to be slain—
This, versed in death, the infernal knight relates,
And then for proof fulfilled their common fates;
Her heart and bowels through her back he drew,
And fed the hounds that helped him to pursue.
Stern looked the fiend, as frustrate of his will,
Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the soul expiring through the wound,
Had left the body breathless on the ground,
When thus the grisly spectre spoke again:—
Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain!
As many months as I sustained her hate,
So many years is she condemned by fate
To daily death; and every several place, [441]
Conscious of her disdain, and my disgrace,
Must witness her just punishment; and be
A scene of triumph and revenge to me.
As in this grove I took my last farewell,
As on this very spot of earth I fell,
As Friday saw me die, so she my prey

Becomes even here, on this revolving day.—
Thus while he spoke, the virgin from the ground
Upstarted fresh, already closed the wound,
And, unconcerned for all she felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the shore:
The hell-hounds, as ungorged with flesh and blood,
Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food:
The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace,
And all the vision vanished from the place.
Long stood the noble youth oppressed with awe,
And stupid at the wondrous things he saw,
Surpassing common faith, transgressing nature's law:
He would have been asleep, and wished to wake,
But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,
Though strong at first; if vision, to what end,
But such as must his future state portend?
His love the damsel, and himself the fiend.
But yet reflecting that it could not be
From heaven, which cannot impious acts decree,
Resolved within himself to shun the snare,
Which hell for his destruction did prepare;
And as his better genius should direct,
From an ill cause to draw a good effect.
Inspired from heaven, he homeward took his way,
Nor palled his new design with long delay;
But of his train a trusty servant sent,
To call his friends together at his tent.
They came, and usual salutations paid,
With words premeditated thus he said:—
What you have often counselled, to remove [442]
My vain pursuit of unregarded love,
By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,
Though late, yet is at last become my care:
My heart shall be my own; my vast expence
Reduced to bounds, by timely providence:
This only I require; invite for me
Honoria, with her father's family,
Her friends, and mine, (the cause I shall display,)
On Friday next; for that's the appointed day.—
Well pleased were all his friends; the task was light,
The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast,
But yet resolved, because it was the last.
The day was come, the guests invited came,
And, with the rest, the inexorable dame:
A feast prepared with riotous expence,
Much cost, more care, and more magnificence.
The place ordained was in that haunted grove,
Where the revenging ghost pursued his love:
The tables in a proud pavilion spread,
With flowers below, and tissue overhead:
The rest in rank, Honoria, chief in place,
Was artfully contrived to set her face
To front the thicket, and behold the chace.
The feast was served, the time so well forecast,
That just when the desert and fruits were placed,
The fiend's alarm began; the hollow sound
Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around,
Air blackened, rolled the thunder, groaned the ground.
Nor long before the loud laments arise,
Of one distressed, and mastiffs' mingled cries;
And first the dame came rushing through the wood,
And next the famished hounds that sought their food,
And griped her flanks, and oft essayed their jaws in blood.
Last came the felon, on the sable steed, [443]
Armed with his naked sword, and urged his dogs to speed.
She ran, and cried, her flight directly bent,
(A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent,
The scene of death, and place ordained for punishment.
Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest,

The women shrieked, the men forsook the feast;
The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely bayed;
The hunter close pursued the visionary maid,
She rent the heaven with loud laments, imploring aid.
The gallants to protect the lady's right,
Their faulchions brandished at the grisly sprite;
High on his stirrups he provoked the fight.
Then on the crowd he cast a furious look,
And withered all their strength before he strook:—[218]
Back, on your lives! let be, said he, my prey,
And let my vengeance take the destined way:
Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,
Against the eternal doom of Providence:
Mine is the ungrateful maid by heaven designed;
Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall she find.—
At this the former tale again he told
With thundering tone, and dreadful to behold:
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
Nor needed to be warned a second time,
But bore each other back; some knew the face,
And all had heard the much-lamented case
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.
And now the infernal minister advanced,
Seized the due victim, and with fury lanced
Her back, and piercing through her inmost heart, [444]
Drew backward, as before, the offending part.
The reeking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meagre mastiffs made a prey.
The pale assistants on each other stared,
With gaping mouths for issuing words prepared;
The still-born sounds upon the palate hung,
And died imperfect on the faultering tongue.
The fright was general; but the female band
(A helpless train) in more confusion stand:
With horror shuddering, on a heap they run,
Sick at the sight of hateful justice done;
For conscience rung the alarm, and made the case their own.
So, spread upon a lake, with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They close their trembling troop; and all attend
On whom the sowsing eagle will descend.
But most the proud Honoria feared the event,
And thought to her alone the vision sent.
Her guilt presents to her distracted mind
Heaven's justice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
And the same fate to the same sin assigned;
Already sees herself the monster's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'Twas a mute scene of sorrow, mixed with fear;
Still on the table lay the unfinished cheer:
The knight and hungry mastiffs stood around,
The mangled dame lay breathless on the ground;
When on a sudden, re-inspired with breath,
Again she rose, again to suffer death;
Nor stayed the hell-hounds, nor the hunter stayed,
But followed, as before, the flying maid:
The avenger took from earth the avenging sword,
And mounting, light as air, his sable steed he spurred;
The clouds dispelled, the sky resumed her light,
And nature stood recovered of her fright.
But fear, the last of ills, remained behind, [445]
And horror heavy sat on every mind.
Nor Theodore encouraged more his feast,
But sternly looked, as hatching in his breast
Some deep design; which when Honoria viewed,
The fresh impulse her former fright renewed:
She thought herself the trembling dame who fled,
And him the grisly ghost that spurred the infernal steed:
The more dismayed, for when the guests withdrew,
Their courteous host, saluting all the crew,

Regardless passed her o'er, nor graced with kind adieu.
That sting infixed within her haughty mind,
The downfal of her empire she divined;
And her proud heart with secret sorrow pined.
Home as they went, the sad discourse renewed,
Of the relentless dame to death pursued,
And of the sight obscene so lately viewed.
None durst arraign the righteous doom she bore;
Even they, who pitied most, yet blamed her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damned the living dame.
At every little noise she looked behind,
For still the knight was present to her mind:
And anxious oft she started on the way,
And thought the horseman-ghost came thundering for his prey.
Returned, she took her bed, with little rest,
But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral feast:
Awaked, she turned her side, and slept again;
The same black vapours mounted in her brain,
And the same dreams returned with double pain.
Now forced to wake, because afraid to sleep,
Her blood all fevered, with a furious leap
She sprung from bed, distracted in her mind,
And feared, at every step, a twitching sprite behind.
Darkling and desperate with a staggering pace, [446]
Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace;
Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart assailed,
Pride put remorse to flight, but fear prevailed.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her soul forethought the fiend would change his game,
And her pursue, or Theodore be slain,
And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her o'er the plain.
This dreadful image so possessed her mind,
That desperate any succour else to find,
She ceased all farther hope; and now began
To make reflection on the unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who past expression loved,
Proof to disdain, and not to be removed:
Of all the men respected and admired,
Of all the dames, except herself, desired:
Why not of her? preferred above the rest
By him, with knightly deeds, and open love, professed?
So had another been, where he his vows addressed.
This quelled her pride, yet other doubts remained,
That, once disdaining, she might be disdained.
The fear was just, but greater fear prevailed,
Fear of her life by hellish hounds assailed:
He took a lowering leave; but who can tell,
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her sex's arts she knew, and why not, then,
Might deep dissembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; resolved to try,
She fixed on this her utmost remedy;
Death was behind, but hard it was to die.
'Twas time enough at last on death to call,
The precipice in sight: a shrub was all,
That kindly stood betwixt to break the fatal fall.
One maid she had, beloved above the rest;
Secure of her, the secret she confessed;
Secure of her, the secret she confessed; [447]
And now the cheerful light her fears dispelled,
She with no winding turns the truth concealed,
But put the woman off, and stood revealed:
With faults confessed commissioned her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe.
The welcome message made, was soon received;
'Twas what he wished, and hoped, but scarce believed;

Fate seemed a fair occasion to present,
He knew the sex, and feared she might
repent,
Should he delay the moment of consent.
There yet remained to gain her friends, (a care
The modesty of maidens well might spare;)
But she with such a zeal the cause embraced,
(As women, where they will, are all in haste,)
That father, mother, and the kin beside,
Were overborne by fury of the tide:
With full consent of all she changed her state;
Resistless in her love, as in her hate.
By her example warned, the rest beware;
More easy, less imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil designed
For one fair female, lost him half the kind.

ORIGINAL, FROM THE DECAMERON. [448]

THE FIFTH DAY.

NOVEL VIII.

Anastasio being in love with a young lady, spent a good part of his fortune without being able to gain her affections. At the request of his relations he retires to Chiassi, where he sees a lady pursued and slain by a gentleman, and then given to the dogs to be devoured. He invites his friends, along with his mistress, to come and dine with him, when they see the same thing, and she, fearing the like punishment, takes him for her husband.

When Lauretta had made an end, Philomena began, by the queen's command, thus: Most gracious lady, as pity is a commendable quality in us, in like manner do we find cruelty most severely punished by divine justice; which, that I may make plain to you all, and afford means to drive it from your hearts, I mean to relate a novel as full of compassion as it is agreeable.

In Ravenna, an ancient city of Romagna, dwelt formerly many persons of quality; amongst the rest was a young gentleman named Anastasio de gli Honesti, who, by the deaths of his father and uncle, was left immensely rich; and, being a bachelor, fell in love with one of the daughters of Signor Paolo Traversaro (of a family much superior to his own) and was in hopes, by his constant application, to gain her affection: but though his endeavours were generous, noble, and praise-worthy, so far were they from succeeding, that, on the contrary, they rather turned out to his disadvantage; and so cruel, and even savage, was the beloved fair one, (either her singular beauty, or noble descent, having made her thus haughty and scornful,) that neither he, nor any thing that he did, could ever please her. This so afflicted Anastasio, that he was going to lay [449] violent hands upon himself; but, thinking better of it, he frequently thought to leave her entirely; or else to hate her, if he could, as much as she had hated him. But this proved a vain design; for he constantly found that the less his hope, the greater always his love. Persevering then in his love and extravagant way of life, his friends looked upon him as destroying his constitution, as well as wasting his substance; they therefore advised and entreated that he would leave the place, and go and live somewhere else; for, by that means, he might lessen both his love and expence. For some time he made light of this advice, till being very much importuned, and not knowing how to refuse them, he promised to do so; when, making extraordinary preparations, as if he was going some long journey either into France or Spain, he mounted his horse and left Ravenna, attended by many of his friends, and went to a place about three miles off, called Chiassi, where he ordered tents and pavilions to be brought, telling those who had accompanied him, that he meant to stay there, but that they might return to Ravenna. Here he lived in the most splendid manner, inviting sometimes this company, and sometimes that, both to dine and sup as he had used to do before. Now it happened in the beginning of May, the season being extremely pleasant, that, thinking of his cruel mistress, he ordered all his family to retire, and leave him to his own thoughts, when he walked along, step by step, and lost in reflection, till he came to a forest of pines. It being then the fifth hour of the day, and he advanced more than half a mile into the grove, without thinking either of his dinner, or any thing else but his love, on a sudden he seemed to hear a most grievous lamentation, with the loud shrieks of a woman: this put an end to his meditation, when, looking round him, to know what the matter was, he saw come out of a thicket full of briers and thorns, and run towards the place where he was, a most beautiful lady, naked, with her flesh all scratched and rent by the bushes, crying terribly, and begging for mercy: in close pursuit of her were two fierce mastiffs, biting and tearing wherever they could lay hold, and behind, upon a black steed, rode a gloomy knight, with a dagger in his hand, loading her with the bitterest imprecations. The sight struck him at once with wonder and consternation, as well as pity for the lady, whom he was desirous to rescue from such trouble and danger, if possible; but finding himself without arms, he seized the branch of a tree, instead of a truncheon, and went forward with it, to oppose both the dogs and the knight. The knight observing this, called out, afar off, "Anastasio, do not concern thyself; but leave the dogs and me to do by this wicked woman as she has deserved." At these words the dogs laid hold of her, and he coming up to them, dismounted from his horse. Anastasio then stept up to him, and said, "I [450] know not who you are, that are acquainted thus with me; but I must tell you, that it is a most villainous action for a man armed as you are to pursue a naked woman, and to set dogs upon her also, as if she were a wild beast; be assured, that I shall defend her to the utmost of my power." The knight replied, "I was once your countryman, when you were but a child, and was called Guido de gli Anastagi, at which time I was more enamoured with this woman, than ever you were with Traversaro's daughter; but she treated me so cruelly, and with so much insolence, that I killed myself with this dagger which you now see in my hand, for which I am doomed to eternal punishment. Soon afterwards she, who was over and above rejoiced at my death, died likewise, and for that cruelty, as also for the joy which she expressed at my misery, she is condemned as well as myself; our sentences are for her to flee before me, and for me, who loved her so well, to

pursue her as a mortal enemy; and when I overtake her, with this dagger, with which I murdered myself, do I murder her; then I open her through the back, and take out that hard and cold heart, which neither love nor pity could pierce, with all her entrails, and throw them to the dogs; and in a little time (so wills the justice and power of heaven) she rises, as though she had never been dead, and renews her miserable flight, whilst we pursue her over again. Every Friday in the year, about this time, do I sacrifice her here, as you see, and on other days in other places, where she has ever thought or done any thing against me; and thus being from a lover become her mortal enemy, I am to follow her as many years as she was cruel to me months. Then let the divine justice take its course, nor offer to oppose what you are no way able to withstand." Anastasio drew back at these words, terrified to death, and waited to see what the other was going to do: who having made an end of speaking, ran at her with the utmost fury, as she was seized by the dogs, and kneeled down begging for mercy, when with his dagger he pierced through her breast, drawing forth her heart and entrails, which they immediately, as if half famished, devoured. And in a little time she rose again, as if nothing had happened, and fled towards the sea, the dogs biting and tearing her all the way, the knight also being remounted, and taking his dagger, pursued her as before, till they soon got out of sight. Upon seeing these things, Anastasio stood divided betwixt fear and pity, and at length it came into his mind that, as it happened always on a Friday, it might be of particular use. Returning then to his servants, he sent for some of his friends and relations, when he said to them, "You have often importuned me to leave off loving this my enemy, and to contract my expences; I am ready to do so, provided you grant me one favour, which is this, that next Friday, you engage Paolo Traversaro, his wife and daughter, with [451] all their women-friends and relations to come and dine with me: the reason of my requiring this you will see at that time." This seemed to them a small matter, and returning to Ravenna they invited all those whom he had desired, and though they found it difficult to prevail upon the young lady, yet the others carried her at last along with them. Anastasio had provided a magnificent entertainment in the grove where that spectacle had lately been; and, having seated all his company, he contrived that the lady should sit directly opposite to the scene of action. The last course then was no sooner served up, but the lady's shrieks began to be heard. This surprised them all, and they began to enquire what it was, and, as nobody could inform them, they all arose; when immediately they saw the lady, dogs, and knight, who were soon amongst them. Great was consequently the clamour, both against the dogs and knight, and many of them went to her assistance. But the knight made the same harangue to them, that he had done to Anastasio, which terrified and filled them with wonder; whilst he acted the same part over again, the ladies, of whom there were many present, related to both the knight and lady, who remembered his love and unhappy death, all lamenting as much as if it happened to themselves. This tragical affair being ended, and the lady and knight both gone away, they had various arguments together about it; but none seemed so much affected as Anastasio's mistress, who had heard and seen every thing distinctly, and was sensible that it concerned her more than any other person, calling to mind her usage of and cruelty towards him; so that she seemed to flee before him all incensed, with the mastiffs at her heels; and her terror was such, lest this should ever happen to her, that, turning her hatred into love, she sent that very evening a trusty damsel privately to him, who entreated him in her name to come to see her, for that she was ready to fulfil his desires. Anastasio replied, that nothing could be more agreeable to him; but that he desired no favour from her, but what was consistent with her honour. The lady, who was sensible that it had been always her fault they were not married, answered, that she was willing; and going herself to her father and mother, she acquainted them with her intention. This gave them the utmost satisfaction; and the next Sunday the marriage was solemnized with all possible demonstrations of joy. And that spectacle was not attended with this good alone; but all the women of Ravenna, for the time to come, were so terrified with it, that they were more ready to listen to, and oblige the men, than ever they had been before.

CYMON AND IPHIGENIA.

[452]

Beroaldus, who translated this novel into Latin, and published it in Paris in 1499, affirms, that it is taken from the annals of the kingdom of Cyprus; and from his intimacy with Hugo IV., king of that island, may perhaps have had grounds for saying so, besides Boccaccio's own allegation to the same effect. Whether entirely fictitious, or grounded upon historical fact, it is one of those novels which have added most to the reputation of the "Decameron;" nor has the version of Dryden been the least admired among his poems. This popularity seems entirely due to the primary incident, the reforming of Cymon from his barbarism and idiocy, by the influence of a passion, which almost all have felt at one period of their life, and love to read and hear of ever afterwards. Perhaps the original idea of Cymon's conversion is to be found in the Idyl of Theocritus, entitled ΒΟΥΚΟΛΙΣΚΟΣ. There is not in our language a strain of more beautiful and melodious poetry, than that so often quoted, in which Dryden describes the sleeping nymph, and the effect of her beauty upon the clownish Cymon. But it is only sufficient to mention that passage, to recal it to the recollection of every general reader, and of most who have read any poetry at all. The narrative, it must be confessed, is otherwise inartificial, and bears little proportion, or even reference, to this most striking and original incident. Cymon might have carried off Iphigene, and all the changes of fortune which afterwards take place might have happened, though his love had commenced in an ordinary manner; nor is there any thing in his character or mode of conduct, which calls back to our recollection, his having such a miraculous instance of the power of love. In short, in the progress of the tale, we quite lose sight of its original and striking commencement; nor do we find much compensation by the introduction of the new actor Lysander, with whose passion and disappointment we have little sympathy; and whose expedients, as Dryden plainly confesses, are no other than an abuse of his public office by [453] the commission of murder and rape. These are perhaps too critical objections to a story, which Dryden took from Boccaccio, as Boccaccio had probably taken it from some old annalist, as containing a striking instance of the power of the gentler affections, in regulating and refining the human mind, and a curious illustration of the mutability of fortune, in the subsequent incidents attending the loves of Cymon and Iphigene.

Dryden, in the introductory verses, has hazarded a more direct attack upon Collier, than his consciousness of having merited his accusations had yet permitted him to bring forward.

CYMON AND IPHIGENIA.

[454]

Poeta loquitur.

OLD as I am, for ladies love unfit,
The power of beauty I remember yet,
Which once inflamed my soul, and still inspires my wit.
If love be folly, the severe divine
Has felt that folly, though he censures mine;
Pollutes the pleasures of a chaste embrace,
Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,
With riotous excess, a priestly race.
Suppose him free, and that I forge the offence,
He shewed the way, perverting first my sense;
In malice witty, and with venom fraught,
He makes me speak the things I never thought.
Compute the gains of his ungoverned zeal;
Ill suits his cloth the praise of railing well.
The world will think that what we loosely write,
Though now arraigned, he read with some delight;
Because he seems to chew the cud again,
When his broad comment makes the text too plain;
And teaches more in one explaining page, [455]
Than all the double meanings of the stage.[219]
What needs he paraphrase on what we mean?
We were at worst but wanton; he's obscene.
I, nor my fellows, nor myself excuse;
But love's the subject of the comic muse;
Nor can we write without it, nor would you
A tale of only dry instruction view.
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,
Awakes the sleepy vigour of the soul,
And, brushing o'er, adds motion to the pool.
Love, studious how to please, improves our parts
With polished manners, and adorns with arts.
Love first invented verse, and formed the rhime,
The motion measured, harmonised the chime;
To liberal acts enlarged the narrow soul'd,
Softened the fierce, and made the coward bold;
The world, when waste, he peopled with increase,
And warring nations reconciled in peace.
Ormond, the first, and all the fair may find,
In this one legend, to their fame designed,
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind.

In that sweet isle where Venus keeps her court,
And every grace, and all the loves, resort;
Where either sex is formed of softer earth,
And takes the bent of pleasure from their birth;
There lived a Cyprian lord above the rest,
Wise, wealthy, with a numerous issue blessed.
But as no gift of fortune is sincere, [456]
Was only wanting in a worthy heir;
His eldest born, a goodly youth to view,
Excelled the rest in shape, and outward shew;
Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion joined,
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.
His soul belied the features of his face;
Beauty was there, but beauty in disgrace.
A clownish mein, a voice with rustic sound,
And stupid eyes that ever loved the ground.
He looked like nature's error, as the mind
And body were not of a piece designed,
But made for two, and by mistake in one were joined.

joined.
The ruling rod, the father's forming care,
Were exercised in vain on wit's despair;
The more informed, the less he understood,
And deeper sunk by floundering in the mud.
Now scorned of all, and grown the public shame,
The people from Galesus changed his name,
And Cymon called, which signifies a brute;
So well his name did with his nature suit.
His father, when he found his labour lost,
And care employed, that answered not the cost,
Chose an ungrateful object to remove,
And loathed to see what nature made him love;
So to his country farm the fool confined;
Rude work well suited with a rustic mind.
Thus to the wilds the sturdy Cymon went,
A squire among the swains, and pleased with banishment.
His corn and cattle were his only care,
And his supreme delight, a country fair.
It happened on a summer's holiday,
That to the green-wood shade he took his way;
For Cymon shunned the church, and used not much to pray.
His quarter-staff, which he could ne'er forsake, [457]
Hung half before, and half behind his back.
He trudged along, unknowing what he sought,
And whistled as he went, for want of thought.
By chance conducted, or by thirst constrained,
The deep recesses of the grove he gained;
Where in a plain defended by the wood,
Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,
By which an alabaster fountain stood;
And on the margin of the fount was laid,
(Attended by her slaves) a sleeping maid.
Like Dian and her nymphs, when, tired with sport,
To rest by cool Eurotas they resort.
The dame herself the goddess well expressed,
Not more distinguished by her purple vest,
Than by the charming features of her face,
And even in slumber a superior grace:
Her comely limbs composed with decent care,
Her body shaded with a slight cymarr;
Her bosom to the view was only bare;
Where two beginning paps were scarcely spied,
For yet their places were but signified:
The fanning wind upon her bosom blows,
To meet the fanning wind the bosom rose;
The fanning wind, and purling streams, continue her repose.
The fool of nature stood with stupid eyes,
And gaping mouth, that testified surprise,
Fixed on her face, nor could remove his sight,
New as he was to love, and novice in delight;
Long mute he stood, and, leaning on his staff,
His wonder witnessed with an idiot laugh;
Then would have spoke, but by his glimmering sense,
First found his want of words, and feared offence;
Doubted for what he was he should be known,
By his clown accent, and his country tone.
Through the rude chaos thus the running light [458]
Shot the first ray that pierced the native night;
Then day and darkness in the mass were mixed,
Till gathered in a globe the beams were fixed;
Last shone the sun, who, radiant in his sphere,
Illumined heaven and earth, and rolled around the year.
So reason in this brutal soul began:
Love made him first suspect he was a man;
Love made him doubt his broad barbarian sound;
By love his want of words, and wit, he found;
That sense of want prepared the future way
To knowledge, and disclosed the promise of a day.
What not his father's care, nor tutor's art,
Could plant with pains in his unpolished heart,
The best instructor, love, at once inspired.

As barren grounds to fruitfulness are fired;
Love taught him shame, and shame, with love at strife,
Soon taught the sweet civilities of life.
His gross material soul at once could find
Somewhat in her excelling all her kind;
Exciting a desire till then unknown,
Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
This made the first impression in his mind,
Above, but just above, the brutal kind.
For beasts can like, but not distinguish too,
Nor their own liking by reflection know;
Nor why they like or this or t'other face,
Or judge of this, or that peculiar grace;
But love in gross, and stupidly admire;
As flies, allured by light, approach the fire.
Thus our man-beast, advancing by degrees,
First likes the whole, then separates what he sees;
On several parts a several praise bestows,
The ruby lips, the well-proportioned nose,
The snowy skin, the raven-glossy hair, } [459]
The dimpled cheek, the forehead rising fair,
And even in sleep itself, a smiling air.
From thence his eyes descending viewed the rest,
Her plump round arms, white hands, and heaving breast.
Long on the last he dwelt, though every part
A pointed arrow sped to pierce his heart.
Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,
(A judge erected from a country clown,)
He longed to see her eyes, in slumber hid,
And wished his own could pierce within the lid:
He would have waked her, but restrained his thought,
And love new-born the first good manners taught.
An awful fear his ardent wish withstood,
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood;
For such she seemed by her celestial face,
Excelling all the rest of human race;
And things divine, by common sense he knew,
Must be devoutly seen at distant view:
So checking his desire, with trembling heart
Gazing he stood, nor would, nor could depart;
Fixed as a pilgrim wildered in his way,
Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray,
But stands with awful eyes to watch the dawn } of day.
At length awaking, Iphigene the fair,
(So was the beauty called, who caused his care,)
Unclosed her eyes, and double day revealed,
While those of all her slaves in sleep were sealed.
The slavering cudden, propped upon his staff,
Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh,
To welcome her awake, nor durst begin
To speak, but wisely kept the fool within.
Then she; What make you, Cymon, here alone?—
For Cymon's name was round the country known,
Because descended of a noble race, [460]
(And for a soul ill sorted with his face.)
But still the sot stood silent with surprise,
With fixed regard on her new-opened eyes,
And in his breast received the envenomed dart,
A tickling pain that pleased amid the smart.
But conscious of her form, with quick distrust
She saw his sparkling eyes, and feared his brutal lust;
This to prevent, she waked her sleepy crew,
And, rising hasty, took a short adieu.
Then Cymon first his rustic voice essayed,
With proffered service to the parting maid
To see her safe; his hand she long denied,
But took at length, ashamed of such a guide.
So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,
No more would to his country clowns repair,
But sought his father's house, with better mind,
Refusing in the farm to be confined.
The father wondered at the son's return,
And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn;
But doubtfully received, expecting still

To learn the secret causes of his altered will.
Nor was he long delayed; the first request
He made, was like his brothers to be dress'd,
And, as his birth required, above the rest.
  With ease his suit was granted by his sire,
Distinguishing his heir by rich attire:
His body thus adorned, he next designed
With liberal arts to cultivate his mind;
He sought a tutor of his own accord,
And studied lessons he before abhorred.
  Thus the man-child advanced, and learned so fast,
That in short time his equals he surpassed:
His brutal manners from his breast exiled,
His mien he fashioned, and his tongue he filed;
In every exercise of all admired,
He seemed, nor only seemed, but was inspired;
Inspired by love, whose business is to please; [461]
He rode, he fenced, he moved with graceful ease,
More famed for sense, for courtly carriage more,
Than for his brutal folly known before.
  What then of altered Cymon shall we say,
But that the fire which choked in ashes lay,
A load too heavy for his soul to move,
Was upward blown below, and brushed away by love.
Love made an active progress through his mind,
The dusky parts he cleared, the gross refined,
The drowsy waked; and, as he went, impressed
The Maker's image on the human breast.
Thus was the man amended by desire,
And, though he loved perhaps with too much fire,
His father all his faults with reason scan'd,
And liked an error of the better hand;
Excused the excess of passion in his mind,
By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refined;
So Cymon, since his sire indulged his will,
Impetuous loved, and would be Cymon still;
Galesus he disowned, and chose to bear
The name of fool, confirmed and bishoped by the fair.
  To Cipseus by his friends his suit he moved,
Cipseus, the father of the fair he loved;
But he was pre-engaged by former ties,
While Cymon was endeavouring to be wise;
And Iphigene, obliged by former vows,
Had given her faith to wed a foreign spouse:
Her sire and she to Rhodian Pasimond,
Though both repenting, were by promise bound,
Nor could retract; and thus, as fate decreed,
Though better loved, he spoke too late to speed.
  The doom was past; the ship already sent
Did all his tardy diligence prevent;
Sighed to herself the fair unhappy maid,
While stormy Cymon thus in secret said:—
The time is come for Iphigene to find [462]
The miracle she wrought upon my mind;
Her charms have made me man, her ravished love
In rank shall place me with the blessed above.
For mine by love, by force she shall be mine,
Or death, if force should fail, shall finish my design.—
  Resolved he said; and rigged with speedy care
A vessel strong, and well equipped for war.
The secret ship with chosen friends he stored;
And bent to die, or conquer, went aboard.
Ambushed he lay behind the Cyprian shore,
Waiting the sail that all his wishes bore;
Nor long expected, for the following tide
Sent out the hostile ship and beauteous bride.
  To Rhodes the rival bark directly steered,
When Cymon sudden at her back appeared,
And stopped her flight; then standing on his prow,
In haughty terms he thus defied the foe:—
Or strike your sails at summons, or prepare
To prove the last extremities of war.—
Thus warned, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
Already were the vessels side by side,

These obstinate to save, and those to seize the bride.
But Cymon soon his crooked grapples cast,
Which with tenacious hold his foes embraced,
And, armed with sword and shield, amid the press he passed.
Fierce was the fight, but, hastening to his prey,
By force the furious lover freed his way;
Himself alone dispersed the Rhodian crew,
The weak disdained, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conquest for his following friends remained,
He reaped the field, and they but only gleaned.
His victory confessed, the foes retreat,
And cast their weapons at the victor's feet.
Whom thus he cheared:—O Rhodian youth, I fought
For love alone, nor other booty sought;
Your lives are safe; your vessel I resign, [463]
Yours be your own, restoring what is mine:
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
Robbed by my rival, and detained by you;
Your Pasimond a lawless bargain drove,
The parent could not sell the daughter's love;
Or if he could, my love disdains the laws,
And, like a king, by conquest gains his cause;
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,
Love taught me force, and force shall love maintain.
You, what by strength you could not keep, release,
And at an easy ransom buy your peace.—
Fear on the conquered side soon signed the accord,
And Iphigene to Cymon was restored.
While to his arms the blushing bride he took,
To seeming sadness she composed her look;
As if by force subjected to his will,
Though pleased, dissembling, and a woman still.
And, for she wept, he wiped her falling tears,
And prayed her to dismiss her empty fears;—
For yours I am, he said, and have deserved
Your love much better whom so long I served,
Than he to whom your formal father tied
Your vows, and sold a slave, not sent a bride.—
Thus while he spoke, he seized the willing prey,
As Paris bore the Spartan spouse away.
Faintly she screamed, and even her eyes confessed
She rather would be thought, than was, distressed.
Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?
Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,
Proud of the present, to the future blind!
Secure of fate, while Cymon plows the sea,
And steers to Candy with his conquered prey,
Scarce the third glass of measured hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun,
The promise of a storm; the shifting gales
Forsake by fits, and fill, the flagging sails;
Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard, [464]
And night came on, not by degrees prepared,
But all at once; at once the winds arise,
The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
In vain the master issues out commands,
In vain the trembling sailors ply their hands;
The tempest unforeseen prevents their care,
And from the first they labour in despair.
The giddy ship, betwixt the winds and tides
Forced back and forwards, in a circle rides,
Stunned with the different blows; then shoots amain,
Till, counterbuffed, she stops, and sleeps again.
Not more aghast the proud archangel fell,
Plunged from the height of heaven to deepest hell,
Than stood the lover of his love possessed,
Now cursed the more, the more he had been blessed;
More anxious for her danger, than his own,
Death he defies, but would be lost alone.
Sad Iphigene to womanish complaints
Adds pious prayers, and wearies all the saints;
Even, if she could, her love she would repent,
But since she cannot, dreads the punishment:
Her forfeit faith, and Pasimond betrayed,

Are ever present, and her crime upbraid.
She blames herself, nor blames her lover less,
Augments her anger, as her fears increase:
From her own back the burden would remove,
And lays the load on his ungoverned love,
Which interposing durst, in heaven's despite,
Invade, and violate another's right:
The powers incensed awhile deferred his pain,
And made him master of his vows in vain:
But soon they punished his presumptuous pride,
That for his daring enterprise she died,
Who rather not resisted, than complied.
Then, impotent of mind, with altered sense,
She hugged the offender, and forgave the offence,
Sex to the last: meantime with sails declined [465]
The wandering vessel drove before the wind:
Tossed and retossed, aloft, and then alow,
Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,
But every moment wait the coming blow.
Thus blindly driven, by breaking day they viewed
The land before them, and their fears renewed;
The land was welcome, but the tempest bore
The threatened ship against a rocky shore.
A winding bay was near; to this they bent,
And just escaped; their force already spent:
Secure from storms, and panting from the sea,
The land unknown at leisure they survey;
And saw (but soon their sickly sight withdrew)
The rising towers of Rhodes at distant view;
And cursed the hostile shore of Pasimond,
Saved from the seas, and shipwrecked on the ground.
The frighted sailors tried their strength in vain
To turn the stern, and tempt the stormy main;
But the stiff wind withstood the labouring oar,
And forced them forward on the fatal shore!
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian strand,
And the ship moored constrains the crew to land:
Yet still they might be safe, because unknown;
But, as ill fortune seldom comes alone,
The vessel they dismissed was driven before,
Already sheltered on their native shore;
Known each, they know, but each with change of chear;
The vanquished side exults, the victors fear;
Not them but theirs, made prisoners ere they fight,
Despairing conquest, and deprived of flight.
The country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia swarms; [220]
Mouths without hands; maintained at vast expence, [466]
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand:
This was the morn when, issuing on the guard,
Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepared
Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.
The cowards would have fled, but that they knew
Themselves so many, and their foes so few;
But, crowding on, the last the first impel,
Till overborne with weight the Cyprians fell;
Cymon enslaved, who first the war begun,
And Iphigene once more is lost and won.
Deep in a dungeon was the captive cast,
Deprived of day, and held in fetters fast;
His life was only spared at their request,
Whom taken he so nobly had released:
But Iphigenia was the ladies care,
Each in their turn addressed to treat the fair;
While Pasimond and his the nuptial feast prepare.
Her secret soul to Cymon was inclined,
But she must suffer what her fates assigned;
So passive is the church of womankind.
What worse to Cymon could his fortune deal,

Rolled to the lowest spoke of all her wheel?
It rested to dismiss the downward weight,
Or raise him upward to his former height:
The latter pleased; and love (concerned the most)
Prepared the amends, for what by love he lost.
  The sire of Pasimond had left a son,
Though younger, yet for courage early known,
Ormisda called, to whom by promise tied, [467]
A Rhodian beauty was the destined bride;
Cassandra was her name, above the rest
Renowned for birth, with fortune amply blessed.
Lysimachus, who ruled the Rhodian state,
Was then by choice their annual magistrate:
He loved Cassandra too with equal fire,
But fortune had not favoured his desire;
Crossed by her friends, by her not disapproved,
Nor yet preferred, or like Ormisda loved:
So stood the affair; some little hope remained,
That, should his rival chance to lose, he gained.
  Meantime young Pasimond his marriage pressed,
Ordained the nuptial day, prepared the feast;
And frugally resolved (the charge to shun,
Which would be double should he wed alone,)
To join his brother's bridal with his own.
  Lysimachus, oppressed with mortal grief,
Received the news, and studied quick relief:
The fatal day approached; if force were used,
The magistrate his public trust abused;
To justice liable, as law required,
For when his office ceased, his power expired:
While power remained, the means were in his hand
By force to seize, and then forsake the land:
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,
A slave to fame, but more a slave to love:
Restraining others, yet himself not free,
Made impotent by power, debased by dignity.
Both sides he weighed; but after much debate,
The man prevailed above the magistrate.
  Love never fails to master what he finds,
But works a different way in different minds,
The fool enlightens, and the wise he blinds.
This youth, proposing to possess and scape,
Began in murder, to conclude in rape:
Unpraised by me; though heaven sometime may bless
An impious act with undeserved success;
The great, it seems, are privileged alone [468]
To punish all injustice but their own.
But here I stop, not daring to proceed,
Yet blush to flatter an unrighteous deed;
For crimes are but permitted, not decreed.
  Resolved on force, his wit the prætor bent,
To find the means that might secure the event;
Not long he laboured, for his lucky thought
In captive Cymon found the friend he sought.
The example pleased; the cause and crime the same;
An injured lover, and a ravished dame.
How much he durst he knew by what he
    dared;
The less he had to lose, the less he cared
To manage loathsome life when love was the reward.
  This pondered well, and fixed on his intent,
In depth of night he for the prisoner sent;
In secret sent the public view to shun,
Then with a sober smile he thus begun:—
The powers above, who bounteously bestow
Their gifts and graces on mankind below,
Yet prove our merit first, nor blindly give
To such as are not worthy to receive:
For valour and for virtue they provide
Their due reward, but first they must be tried:
These fruitful seeds within your mind they sowed;
'Twas yours to improve the talent they bestowed:
They gave you to be born of noble kind,
They gave you love to lighten up your mind,
And purge the grosser parts; they gave you care

To please, and courage to deserve the fair.
Thus far they tried you, and by proof they found
The grain intrusted in a grateful ground:
But still the great experiment remained,
They suffered you to lose the prize you gained,
That you might learn the gift was theirs alone;
And, when restored, to them the blessing own.
Restored it soon will be; the means prepared, [469]
The difficulty smoothed, the danger shared:
Be but yourself, the care to me resign,
Then Iphigene is yours, Cassandra mine.
Your rival Pasimond pursues your life,
Impatient to revenge his ravished wife,
But yet not his; to-morrow is behind,
And love our fortunes in one band has joined:
Two brothers are our foes, Ormisda mine,
As much declared as Pasimond is thine:
To-morrow must their common vows be tied:
With love to friend, and fortune for our guide,
Let both resolve to die, or each redeem a bride.
Right I have none, nor hast thou much to plead;
'Tis force, when done, must justify the deed:
Our task performed, we next prepare for flight,
And let the losers talk in vain of right:
We with the fair will sail before the wind;
If they are grieved, I leave the laws behind.
Speak thy resolves; if now thy courage droop,
Despair in prison, and abandon hope;
But if thou darest in arms thy love regain,
(For liberty without thy love were vain,)
Then second my design to seize the prey,
Or lead to second rape, for well thou know'st the way.
Said Cymon, overjoyed,—Do thou propose
The means to fight, and only shew the foes:
For from the first, when love had fired my mind,
Resolved, I left the care of life behind.—
To this the bold Lysimachus replied,—
Let heaven be neuter, and the sword decide;
The spousals are prepared, already play
The minstrels, and provoke the tardy day:
By this the brides are waked, their grooms are dressed;
All Rhodes is summoned to the nuptial feast,
All but myself, the sole unbidden guest.
Unbidden though I am, I will be there, [470]
And, joined by thee, intend to joy the fair.
Now hear the rest; when day resigns the light,
And cheerful torches gild the jolly night,
Be ready at my call; my chosen few
With arms administered shall aid thy crew.
Then, entering unexpected, will we seize
Our destined prey, from men dissolved in ease,
By wine disabled, unprepared for fight;
And hastening to the seas, suborn our flight:
The seas are ours, for I command the fort,
A ship well manned expects us in the port:
If they, or if their friends, the prize contest,
Death shall attend the man who dares resist.—
It pleased; the prisoner to his hold retired,
His troop with equal emulation fired,
All fixed to fight, and all their wonted work required.
The sun arose; the streets were thronged around,
The palace opened, and the posts were crowned.
The double bridegroom at the door attends
The expected spouse, and entertains the friends:
They meet, they lead to church, the priests invoke
The powers, and feed the flames with fragrant smoke.
This done, they feast, and at the close of night
By kindled torches vary their delight,
These lead the lively dance, and those the briming bowls invite.
Now, at the appointed place and hour assigned,

With souls resolved the ravishers were joined:
Three bands are formed; the first is sent before
To favour the retreat, and guard the shore;
The second at the palace-gate is placed,
And up the lofty stairs ascend the last:
A peaceful troop they seem with shining vests,
But coats of mail beneath secure their breasts.
  Dauntless they enter, Cymon at their head, [471]
And find the feast renewed, the table spread:
Sweet voices, mixed with instrumental sounds,
Ascend the vaulted roof, the vaulted roof rebounds.
When, like the harpies, rushing through the hall
The sudden troop appears, the tables fall,
Their smoking load is on the pavement thrown;
Each ravisher prepares to seize his own:
The brides, invaded with a rude embrace,
Shriek out for aid, confusion fills the place.
Quick to redeem the prey their plighted lords
Advance, the palace gleams with shining swords.
  But late is all defence, and succour vain;
The rape is made, the ravishers remain:
Two sturdy slaves were only sent before
To bear the purchased prize in safety to the shore.
The troop retires, the lovers close the rear,
With forward faces not confessing fear:
Backward they move, but scorn their pace to mend;
Then seek the stairs, and with slow haste descend.
  Fierce Pasimond, their passage to prevent,
Thrust full on Cymon's back in his descent,
The blade returned unbathed, and to the handle bent.
Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two
His rival's head with one descending blow:
And as the next in rank Ormisda stood,
He turned the point; the sword, inured to blood,
Bored his unguarded breast, which poured a purple flood.
With vowed revenge the gathering crowd pursues
The ravishers turn head, the fight renews;
The hall is heaped with corpse; the sprinkled gore
Besmears the walls, and floats the marble floor.
Dispersed at length the drunken squadron flies,
The victors to their vessel bear the prize,
And hear behind loud groans and lamentable cries.
The crew with merry shouts their anchors weigh, [472]
Then ply their oars, and brush the buxom sea,
While troops of gathered Rhodians crowd the key.
What should the people do when left alone?
The governor and government are gone;
The public wealth to foreign parts conveyed;
Some troops disbanded, and the rest unpaid.
Rhodes is the sovereign of the sea no more;
Their ships unrigged, and spent their naval store,
They neither could defend, nor can pursue,
But grin'd their teeth, and cast a helpless view:
In vain with darts a distant war they try,
Short, and more short, the missive weapons fly.
Meanwhile the ravishers their crimes enjoy,
And flying sails and sweeping oars employ:
The cliffs of Rhodes in little space are lost,
Jove's isle they seek, nor Jove denies his coast.
  In safety landed on the Candian shore,
With generous wines their spirits they restore;
There Cymon with his Rhodian friend resides,
Both court, and wed at once the willing brides.
A war ensues, the Cretans own their cause,
Stiff to defend their hospitable laws:
Both parties lose by turns; and neither wins,
Till peace propounded by a truce begins.
The kindred of the slain forgive the deed,
But a short exile must for show precede:
The term expired, from Candia they remove;
And happy each at home, enjoys his love.

ORIGINAL, FROM THE DECAMERON. [473]

THE FIFTH DAY.

NOVEL I.

Cymon becomes wise by being in love, and by force of arms wins Ephigenia his mistress upon the seas, and is imprisoned at Rhodes. Being delivered from thence by Lysimachus, with him he recovers Ephigenia, and flies with her to Crete, where he is married to her, and is afterwards recalled home.

A great many novels come now fresh into my mind, for the beginning of such an agreeable day's discourse as this is likely to be; but one I am more particularly pleased with, because it not only shews the happy conclusion which we are to treat about, but how sacred, how powerful also, as well as advantageous, the force of love is; which some people, without knowing what they say, unjustly blame and vilify, and which I judge will rather be had in esteem by you, as I suppose you all to be subject to the tender passion.

According to the ancient histories of Cyprus, there lived sometime in that island, one of great rank and distinction, called Aristippus, by far the wealthiest person in all the country; and if he was unhappy in any one respect, it was in having, amongst his other children, a son, who, though he exceeded most young people of his time in stature and comeliness, yet was he a perfect natural; his true name was Galeso, but as neither the labour nor skill of his master, nor the correction of his father, was ever able to beat one letter into his head, or the least instruction of any kind, and as his voice and manner of speaking were strangely harsh and uncouth, he was, by [474] way of disdain, called only Cymon; which, in their language, signified *beast*. The father had long beheld him with infinite concern; and as all hopes were vanished concerning him, to remove out of his sight an object which afforded constant matter of grief, he ordered him away to his country-house, to be there with his slaves. This was extremely agreeable to Cymon, because people of that sort had been always most to his mind. Residing there, and doing all sorts of drudgery pertaining to that kind of life, it happened one day, as he was going, about noontide, with his staff upon his shoulder, from one farm to another, that he passed through a pleasant grove, which, as it was then the month of May, was all in bloom; from whence, as his stars led him, he came into a meadow surrounded with high trees, in one corner of which was a crystal spring, and by the side of it, upon the grass, lay a most beautiful damsel asleep, clothed with a mantle so exceedingly fine and delicate, as scarcely to conceal underneath the exquisite whiteness of her skin; only from her waist downwards she wore a white silken quilt, and at her feet were sleeping likewise two women and a man servant. As soon as Cymon cast his eye upon her, as if he had never seen the face of a woman before, he stood leaning upon his staff, and began to gaze with the utmost astonishment, without speaking a word. When suddenly in his rude uncivilized breast, which had hitherto been incapable of receiving the least impression of politeness whatsoever, a sudden thought arose, which seemed to intimate to his gross and shallow understanding, that this was the most agreeable sight that ever was seen. From thence he began to examine each part by itself, commending every limb and feature; and being now become a judge of beauty from a mere idiot, he grew very desirous of seeing her eyes, on which account he was going several times to wake her; but as she so far excelled all other women that he ever saw, he was in doubt whether she was a mortal creature. This made him wait to see if she would awake of her own accord; and though that expectation seemed tedious to him, yet so pleasing was the object, that he had no power to leave it. After a long time she came to herself, and raising up her head, saw Cymon stand propt upon his stick before her, at which she was surprised, and said: "Cymon, what are you looking for here at this time of day?" Now he was known all over the country, as well for his own rusticity, as his father's nobility and great wealth. He made no answer, but stood with his eyes fixed upon hers, which seemed to dart a sweetness, that filled him with a kind of joy to which he had hitherto been a stranger; whilst she observing this, and not knowing what his rudeness might prompt him to, called up her women, and then said: "Cymon, go about your business." He replied, "I will go along with you." And though she was [475] afraid, and would have avoided his company, yet he would not leave her till he had brought her to her own house; from thence he went home to his father, when he declared, that he would return no more into the country, which was very disagreeable to all his friends, but yet they let him alone, waiting to see what this change of temper could be owing to. Love thus having pierced his heart, when no lesson of any kind could ever find admittance, in a little time his way of thinking and behaviour were so far changed, that his father and friends were strangely surprised at it, as well as every body that knew him. First of all then, he asked his father to let him have clothes, and every thing else like his brethren; to which the father very willingly consented. Conversing too with young gentlemen of character, and observing their ways and manner of behaving, in a very short time he not only got over the first rudiments of learning, but attained to some knowledge in philosophy. Afterwards, his love for Ephigenia being the sole cause of it, his rude and rustic speech was changed into a tone more agreeable and civilized: he grew also a master of

music: and with regard to the military art, as well by sea as land, he became as expert and gallant as the best. In short, not to run over all his excellencies, before the expiration of the fourth year from his being first in love, he turned out the most accomplished young gentleman in every respect that ever Cyprus could boast of. What then, most gracious ladies, shall we say of Cymon? Surely nothing less than this; that all the noble qualities, which had been infused by heaven into his generous soul, were shut up as it were by invidious fortune, and bound fast with the strongest fetters in a small corner of his heart, till love broke the enchantment, and drove with all its might these virtues out of that cruel obscurity, to which they had been long doomed, to a clear and open day; plainly shewing from whence it draws those spirits that are its votaries, and whither its mighty influence conducts them. Cymon, therefore, though he might have his flights like other young people, with regard to his love for Ephigenia, yet when Aristippus considered it was that had made a man of him, he not only bore with it, but encouraged him in the pursuit of his pleasures. Cymon, nevertheless, who refused to be called Galeso, remembering that Ephigenia had styled him Cymon, being desirous of bringing that affair to an happy conclusion, had often requested her in marriage of her father, who replied, that he had already promised her to one Pasimunda, a young nobleman of Rhodes, and that he intended not to break his word. The time then being come, that was appointed for their nuptials, and the husband having sent in form to demand her, Cymon said to himself: O, Ephigenia, the time is now come when I shall give proof how I love you! I am become a man on your account; and could I but [476] obtain you, I should be as glorious and happy as the gods themselves; and have you I will, or else I will die. Immediately he prevailed upon some young noblemen who were his friends, to assist him; and, fitting out a ship of war privately, they put to sea, in order to way-lay the vessel that was to transport Ephigenia; who, after great respect and honour shewed by her father to her husband's friends, embarked with them for Rhodes. Cymon, who had but little rest that night, overtook them on the following day, when he called out, "Stop, and strike your sails; or expect to go to the bottom of the sea." They, on the other hand, had got all their arms above deck, and were preparing for a vigorous defence. He therefore threw a grappling iron upon the other ship, which was making the best of its way, and drew it close to his own; when, like a lion, without waiting for any one to second him, he jumped singly among his enemies, as if he cared not for them, and, love spurring him on with incredible force, he cut and drove them all like so many sheep before him, till they soon threw down their arms, acknowledging themselves his prisoners; when he addressed himself to them in the following manner: "Gentlemen, it is no desire of plunder, nor enmity to any of your company, that made me leave Cyprus to fall upon you here in this manner. What occasioned it is a matter, the success of which is of the utmost consequence to myself, and as easy for you quietly to grant me: it is Ephigenia, whom I love above all the world; and as I could not have her from her father peaceably, and as a friend, my love constrains me to win her from you as an enemy, by force of arms. Therefore I am resolved to be to her what your Pasimunda was to have been. Resign her then to me, and go away in God's name." The people, more by force than any good will, gave her, all in tears, up to Cymon; who seeing her lament in that manner, said: "Fair lady, be not discouraged; I am your Cymon, who have a better claim to your affection, on account of my long and constant love, than Pasimunda can have by virtue of a promise." Taking her then on board his ship, without meddling with any thing else that belonged to them, he suffered them to depart. Cymon thus being the most overjoyed man that could be, after comforting the lady under her calamity, consulted with his friends what to do, who were of opinion that they should by no means return to Cyprus yet; but that it were better to go directly to Crete, where they had all relations and friends, but Cymon especially, on which account they might be more secure there along with Ephigenia; and accordingly they directed their course that way. But fortune, who had given the lady to Cymon by an easy conquest, soon changed his immoderate joy into most sad and bitter lamentation. In about four hours from his parting with the Rhodians, night came upon them, which was more welcome to Cymon than any of the rest, [477] and with it a most violent tempest, which overspread the face of the heavens in such a manner, that they could neither see what they did, nor whither they were carried; nor were they able at all to steer the ship. You may easily suppose what Cymon's grief must be on this occasion. He concluded, that heaven had crowned his desires only to make death more grievous to him, which before would have been but little regarded. His friends also were greatly affected, but especially Ephigenia, who trembled at every shock, still sharply upbraiding his ill-timed love, and declaring that this tempest was sent by Providence for no other reason, but that as he had resolved to have her, contrary to the will and disposal of heaven, to disappoint that presumption; and that, seeing her die first, he might die likewise in the same miserable manner. Amongst such complaints as these, they were carried at last, the wind growing continually more violent, near the island of Rhodes; and not knowing where they were, they endeavoured, for the safety of their lives, to get to land if possible. In this they succeeded, and got into a little bay, where the Rhodian ship had arrived just before them; nor did they know they were at Rhodes till the next morning, when they saw, about a bow-shot from them, the same ship they had parted with the day before. Cymon was greatly concerned at this; and fearing what afterwards came to pass, he bid them put to sea if possible, and trust to fortune, for they could never be in a worse place. They used all possible means then to get out, but in vain; the wind was strongly against them, and drove them to shore in spite of all they could do to prevent it. They were soon known by the sailors of the other ship, who had now gained the shore, and who ran to a neighbouring town, where the young gentlemen that had been on board were just gone before, and informed them how Cymon and Ephigenia were, like themselves, driven thither by stress of weather. They, hearing this, brought a great many people from the town to the sea-side, and took Cymon and his companions prisoners, who had got on shore, with a design of flying to a neighbouring wood, as also Ephigenia, and brought them all together to the town. Pasimunda, upon hearing the news, went and made his complaints to the senate, who accordingly sent Lysimachus, who was chief magistrate that year, along with a

guard of soldiers, to conduct them to prison. Thus the miserable and enamoured Cymon lost his mistress soon after he had gained her, and without having scarcely so much as a kiss for his pains. In the mean time Ephigenia was handsomely received by many ladies of quality, and comforted for the trouble she had sustained in being made a captive, as well as in the storm at sea; and she remained with them till the day appointed for her nuptials. However, Cymon and his [478] friends had their lives granted them (though Pasimunda used all his endeavours to the contrary) for the favour shewed to the Rhodians the day before; but they were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, where they remained sorrowfully enough, as they had no hopes of obtaining their liberty. Now whilst Pasimunda was making preparation for his nuptials, fortune, as if she had repented the injury done to Cymon, produced a new circumstance for his deliverance. Pasimunda had a brother, beneath him in years, but not in virtue, called Ormisda, who had been long talked of as about to marry a beautiful lady of that city, called Cassandra, whom Lysimachus was also in love with, and had for some time been prevented marrying her, by diverse unlucky accidents. Now as Pasimunda was to celebrate his own nuptials with great state and feasting, he supposed it would save a great deal of expence and trouble, if his brother was to marry at the same time. He consequently proposed the thing again to Cassandra's friends, and soon brought it to a conclusion; when it was agreed by all parties, that the same day that Pasimunda brought home Ephigenia, Ormisda should bring home Cassandra. This was very grating to Lysimachus, who saw himself now deprived of the hope which he had hitherto entertained of marrying her himself; but he was wise enough to conceal it, contriving a way to prevent its taking effect if possible; none however appeared, but that of taking her away by force. This seemed easy enough on account of his office; still he thought it not so reputable as if he had borne no office at all at that time; but in short, after a long debate with himself, honour gave way to love, and he resolved, happen what would, to bear away Cassandra. Thinking then what companions he should make choice of for this enterprise, as well as the means that were to be taken, he soon called Cymon to mind, whom he had in custody, as also his companions; and thinking he could have nobody better to assist him, nor one more trusty and faithful on that occasion than Cymon, the next night he had him privately into his chamber, where he spoke to him in this manner:—"Cymon, as the gods are the best and most liberal givers of all things to mankind, so are they also the ablest judges of our several virtues and merits: such then as they find to be firm and constant in every respect, them do they make worthy of the greatest things. Now concerning your worth and valour, they are willing to have a more certain trial of both, than it was possible for you to shew within the scanty limits of your father's house, whom I know to be a person of the greatest distinction; for first then, by the pungent force of love, as I am informed, have they, from a mere insensible creature, made a man of you; and afterwards by adverse fortune, and now by a miserable imprisonment, are they willing to see if your soul be changed from what it was, when you appeared flushed so [479] lately with the prize you had won. If that continues the same, I can propose nothing so agreeable to you, as what I am now going to offer; which, that you may resume your former might and valour, I shall immediately disclose. Pasimunda, overjoyed with your disappointment, and a zealous promoter, as far as in him lay, of your being put to death, is now about to celebrate his marriage with your Ephigenia, that he may enjoy that blessing, which fortune, when she was favourable, first put into your power, and afterwards snatched away from you; but how this must afflict you, I can easily suppose by myself, who am like to undergo the same injury, and at the same time, with regard to my mistress Cassandra, who is to be married then to his brother Ormisda. Now I see no remedy for either of us, but what consists in our own resolution, and the strength of our arms: it will be necessary, therefore, to make our way with our swords, for each of us to gain his lady: if then you value (I will not say your liberty, because that without her would be of little weight with you; but, I say, if you value) your mistress, you need only follow me, and fortune has put her into your hands." These words spoke comfort to the drooping soul of Cymon, who immediately replied, "Lysimachus, you could never have a more stout, nor a more trusty friend for such an enterprize than myself, if it be as you seem to promise: tell me then what you would have me do, and you shall see me put it nobly into execution." Lysimachus made answer, "Three days hence the ladies are to be brought home to their espoused husbands, when you, with your friends and myself, with some people whom I can confide in, will go armed in the evening, and enter their house whilst they are in the midst of their mirth, where we will seize on the two brides, and carry them away to a ship which I have secretly provided, killing all that shall presume to oppose us." This scheme was entirely to Cymon's good liking, and he waited quietly till the time appointed. The wedding-day being now come, and every part of their house full of mirth and feasting, Lysimachus, after giving the necessary orders at the time fixed, divided Cymon and his companions with his own friends into three parties, and putting arms under their several cloaks, and animating them boldly to pursue what they had undertaken, he sent one party to the haven to secure their escape, and with the other two they went to Pasimunda's house; one they stationed at the gate, to prevent any persons shutting them up in the house; whilst he, along with Cymon, went up stairs with the remaining part.—Coming then into the dining-room, where the two brides, with many other ladies, were seated orderly at supper, they advanced up to them, and throwing down all the tables, each seized his lady, and giving them into the arms of their followers, ordered them to carry them away to their ship. The brides, as well as the other ladies [480] and the servants, cried out so much, that immediately there was a great tumult. In the mean time, Cymon and Lysimachus, with their followers, all drew their swords, and came down stairs again without any opposition, till they met with Pasimunda, having in his hand a great club, whom the noise had drawn thither, when Cymon, at one stroke, laid him dead at his feet, and whilst Ormisda was running to his assistance, he was likewise killed by Cymon; many others also of their friends, who came to their relief, were wounded and beaten back. Leaving the house then all full of blood and confusion, they joined parties, and went directly on to their ship with their booty, without the least hindrance whatever; when putting the ladies on board, and they with all

their friends following them, the shore was soon filled with crowds of people, who came to rescue them, upon which they plied their oars, and sailed joyfully away for Crete. There they were cheerfully received by all their friends and relations, when they espoused their ladies, and were well pleased with their several prizes. This occasioned great quarrels afterwards between the two islands of Cyprus and Rhodes. At length, by the interposition of friends, every thing was amicably adjusted, and then Cymon returned along with Ephigenia to Cyprus, and Lysimachus in like manner carried Cassandra back to Rhodes, where they lived very happily to the end of their days.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] "I am so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting farther into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness."

[2] Used for *elaborate composition*.

[3] Some of Sir Robert Howard's songs were set to music. One of them, beginning, "O Charon, gentle Charon," is quoted as a popular air in one of Shadwell's plays.

[4] Rete Mirabile. DRYDEN.

[5] Sir Robert Howard's collection contains a translation of the Fourth Book of the Æneid, under the title of "The Loves of Dido and Æneas."

[6] Sir Robert also translated the Achilleis of Statius, an author whom Dryden seldom mentions without censuring his turgid and bombastic style of poetry. The story of this neglected epic turns on the juvenile adventures of Achilles.

[7] The annotations on the Achilleis.

[8] Sir Robert Howard's poems contain a "Panegyric to the King," concerning which he says, in the preliminary address to the reader, "I should be a little dissatisfied with myself to appear public in his praise just when he was visibly restoring to power, did not the reading of the Panegyric vindicate the writing of it, and, besides my affirmation, assure the reader, it was written when the king deserved the praise as much as now, but was separated farther from the power; which was about three years since, when I was prisoner in Windsor Castle, being the best diversion I could then find for my own condition, to think how great his virtues were for whom I suffered, though in so small a measure compared to his own, that I rather blush at it, than believe it meritorious."

[9] The volume begins with the "Poem to the King," and ends with a "Panegyric to General Monk."

[10]

Hic situs est Rufus qui pulso vindice quondam,
Imperium asseruit non sibi sed patriæ. DRYDEN.

[11] The author speaks the language of astrology, in which geniture signifies nativity.

[12] The copy prefixed to the "Chorea Gigantum" reads, *Until 'twas*.

[13] First edition, *The English are not*.

[14] Bacon, Lord Verulam, a name beyond panegyric.

[15] William Gilbert, M.D. chief physician to Queen Elizabeth and King James I. He published a treatise, "*De Magnete, magnetecisque corporibus, et de magno magnete Tellure Physiologia Nova*. London, 1600, folio." This treatise on the magnet is termed by the great Bacon "a painful and experimental work." Gilbert also invented two instruments for the use of seamen in calculating the latitude, without the aid of the heavenly bodies. He died A.D. 1603.

[16] The Hon. Robert Boyle, who so laudably distinguished his name by his experimental researches, was a son of the great Earl of Corke. He was about this time actively engaged in the formation of the Royal Society, of which he may be considered as one of the principal founders. This necessarily placed his merits under Dryden's eye, who was himself an original member of that learned body. His *great brother* was Roger Lord Broghill, created upon the Restoration Earl of Orrery, to whom Dryden dedicated the "Rival Ladies." See Vol. II. p. 113.

[17] William Harvey, the famous discoverer of the circulation of the blood. His *Exercitatio Anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis*, was printed at Frankfort, 1627. He adhered to his master Charles I. during the civil wars; and when his affairs became desperate, retired to privacy in London. His last treatise, entitled, *Exercitatio de generatione Animalium*, was published in 1651, at the request of Dr George Ent, a learned physician, mentioned by Dryden in the next line. This gentleman, in a dedication to the President and College of Physicians, gives a detailed account of the difficulty which he had in prevailing on the aged and retired philosopher to give his work to the press, which he only consented to do on Dr Ent's undertaking the task of editor. Harvey died in June 1667.

Ent himself was a physician of eminence, and received the honour of knighthood from Charles II. He defended Dr Harvey's theory of circulation against Parisanus, in a treatise, entitled, *Apologia pro circulatione sanguinis contra Æmilianum Parisanum*. He was an active member of the Royal Society, and died, according to Wood, 13th October, 1689.

[18] First edit. *Chose by.*

[19] This conceit, turning on the ancient and modern hypothesis, is founded on the following curious passage in Dr Charleton's dedication of the "*Chorea Gigantum*" to Charles II. "Your majesty's curiosity to survey the subject of this discourse, the so much admired antiquity of Stone-Henge, hath sometime been so great and urgent, as to find room in your royal breast, amidst your weightiest cares; and to carry you many miles out of your way towards safety, when any heart, but your fearless and invincible one, would have been wholly filled with apprehensions of danger. For as I have had the honour to hear from that oracle of truth and wisdom, your majesty's own mouth, you were pleased to visit that monument, and for many hours together entertain yourself with the delightful view thereof; when, after the defeat of your loyal army at Worcester, Almighty God, in infinite mercy to your three kingdoms, miraculously delivered you out of the bloody jaws of those monsters of sin and cruelty, who, taking counsel only from the heinousness of their crimes, sought impunity in the highest aggravation of them; desperately hoping to secure rebellion by regicide, and by destroying their sovereign, to continue their tyranny over their fellow-subjects."

[20] Preface to "The Wild Gallant," Vol. II. p. 17.

[21]

> Dryden, who one would have thought had more wit,
> The censure of every man did disdain;
> Pleading some pitiful rhymes he had writ
> In praise of the Countess of Castlemain.
> *Session of the Poets*, 1670.

[22] This seems to be the passage sneered at in the "Session of the Poets."

[23] Our author alludes to the copy of verses addressed to him by Lee, on his drama, called the "State of Innocence," and which the reader will find in Vol. V. p. 103. Dryden expresses some apprehension, lest his friend and he should be considered as vouching for each other's genius, in the same manner that Bessus and the two swordsmen, in "King and no King," grant certificates of each others courage, after having been all soundly beaten and kicked by Bacurius.

"*2 Swordsman.* Captain, we must request your hand now to our honours.

Bessus. Yes, marry shall ye; and then let all the world come, we are valiant to ourselves, and there's an end." *Act V.*

[24] The person thus distinguished seems to be the gallant Sir Edward Spragge, noted for his gallantry in the two Dutch wars, and finally killed in the great battle of 11th August, 1672. In 1671, he was sent to the Mediterranean with a squadron, to chastise the Algerines. He found seven vessels belonging to these pirates, lying in the bay of Bugia, covered by the fire of a castle and forts, and defended by a boom, drawn across the entrance of the bay, made of yards, top-masts, and cables, buoyed up by casks. Nevertheless, Sir Edward bore into the bay, silenced the forts, and, having broken the boom with his pinnaces, sent in a fire-ship, which effectually destroyed the Algerine squadron; a blow which was long remembered by these piratical states.

[25] See Vol. XII. p. 264.

[26] Vol. XII. p. 341.

[27] Vol. X. p. 33.

[28] Roscommon, it must be remembered, was born in Ireland, where his property also was situated. But the Dillons were of English extraction.

[29] In this verse, which savours of the bathos, our author passes from Roscommon to Mulgrave; another "author nobly born," who about this time had engaged with Dryden and others in the version of Ovid's Epistles, published in 1680. The Epistle of Helen to Paris, alluded to in the lines which follow, was jointly translated by Mulgrave and Dryden, although the poet politely ascribes the whole merit to his noble co-adjutor. See Vol. XII. p. 26.

[30] Vol. IX. p. 402.

[31] Vol. IX. p. 344.

[32] Vol. X. p. 366. Otway furnished an epilogue on the same night.

[33] Vol. XIII. p. 108.

[34] "They tell me my old acquaintance, Mr Dryden, has left off the theatre, and wholly applies himself to the study of the controversies between the two churches. Pray heaven, this strange alteration in him portends nothing disastrous to the state; but I have all along observed, that poets do religion as little service by drawing their pens for it, as the divines do poetry, by pretending to versification." This letter is dated 21st October, 1689.

[35] Charles, 2d Earl of Middleton, a man of some literary accomplishment. He had been Envoy Extraordinary to the Emperor of Germany, and was now one of the secretaries of state for Scotland.

[36] Graf, or Count.

[37] Countess.

[38] *Quere*, Did Pope think of this passage in his famous account of Belinda's bodkin?

[39] Henry VIII.

[40] The map does not convey any such information. Ratisbon lies in latitude 48° 58′ N. Dryden alludes to the commencement of Etherege's epistle to Middleton, in which he

mentions having gone three degrees northward, London being 41° 15′ N. Dryden transfers Ratisbon into a high latitude, merely to suit the rhyme, and produce the antithesis of 53 degrees latitude, to 52 years of age.

[41] The three ecclesiastical Electors WERE, the Electors of Treves, Cologne, and Mentz. At this time the Diet of the empire was sitting at Ratisbon.

[42] Etherege has been pleased to confirm our author's opinion of the German jollity, and his own inclination to softer pleasures, by the following passage of a letter to the Duke of Buckingham.

"I find that to this day, they (*i.e.* the Germans) make good the observation that Tacitus made of their ancestors; I mean, that their affairs (let them be never so serious and pressing) never put a stop to good eating and drinking, and that they debate their weightiest negociations over their cups.

"'Tis true, they carry this humour by much too far for one of my complexion; for which reason I decline appearing among them, but when my master's concerns make it necessary for me to come to their assemblies: They are, indeed, a free-hearted open sort of gentlemen that compose the Diet, without reserve, affectation, and artifice; but they are such unmerciful plyers of the bottle, so wholly given up to what our sots call good-fellowship, that 'tis as great a constraint upon my nature to sit out a night's entertainment with them, as it would be to hear half a score long-winded Presbyterian divines cant successively one after another.

"To unbosom myself frankly and freely to your grace, I always looked upon drunkenness to be an unpardonable crime in a young fellow, who, without any of these foreign helps, has fire enough in his veins to enable him to do justice to Cælia whenever she demands a tribute from him. In a middle-aged man, I consider the bottle only as subservient to the nobler pleasures of love; and he that would suffer himself to be so far infatuated by it, as to neglect the pursuit of a more agreeable game, I think deserves no quarter from the ladies: In old age, indeed, when it is convenient very often to forget and even steal from ourselves, I am of opinion, that a little drunkenness, discreetly used, may as well contribute to our health of body as tranquillity of soul.

"Thus I have given your grace a short system of my morals and belief in these affairs. But the gentlemen of this country go upon a quite different scheme of pleasure; the best furniture of their parlours, instead of innocent china, are tall overgrown rummers; and they take more care to enlarge their cellars, than their patrimonial estates. In short, drinking is the hereditary sin of this country; and that hero of a deputy here, that can demolish, at one sitting, the rest of his brother envoys, is mentioned with as much applause as the Duke of Lorain for his noble exploits against the Turks, and may claim a statue, erected at the public expence, in any town in Germany.

"Judge, then, my lord, whether a person of my sober principles, and one that only uses wine (as the wiser sort of Roman Catholics do images,) to raise up my imagination to something more exalted, and not to terminate my worship upon it, must not be reduced to very mortifying circumstances in this place; where I cannot pretend to enjoy conversation, without practising that vice that directly ruins it."

[43] This is the only mention that our author makes of the "Rehearsal" in poetry: In prose he twice notices that satirical farce with some contempt. The length of time which the Duke spent upon it, or at least which elapsed between the first concoction and the representation, is mentioned by Duke in his character of Villerius:

> But with play-houses, wars, immortal wars,
> He waged, and ten years rage produced a farce.
> As many rolling years he did employ,
> And hands almost as many, to destroy
> Heroic rhyme, as Greece to ruin Troy.
> Once more, says fame, for battle he prepares,
> And threatens rhymers with a second farce;
> But if as long for this as that we stay,
> He'll finish Cliveden sooner than his play.

The last line alludes to the magnificent structure at Cliveden, which Buckingham planned, but never completed. Another satirist has the same idea:

> I come to his farce, which must needs well be done,
> For Troy was no longer before it was won,
> Since 'tis more than ten years since this farce was begun.

[44] To the honourable Thomas Wharton, Esq. comptroller of his majesty's household.

[45] See the introductory remarks on that play, Vol. VIII.

[46] Welsted, "howe'er insulted by the spleen of Pope," was a poet of merit. His fate is an instance, among a thousand, of the disadvantage sustained by an inferior genius, who enters into collision with one of supereminent talents. It is the combat of a gun-boat with a frigate; and many an author has been run down in such an encounter, who, had he avoided it, might have still enjoyed a fair portion of literary reputation. The apologue of the iron and earthen pot contains a moral applicable to such circumstances.

[47] The moral of the "Wives' Excuse" is as bad as possible; but the language of the play is free from that broad licence which disgraces the dramatic taste of the age.

[48] Nokes was then famous for parts of low humour. Cibber thus describes him: "This celebrated comedian was of the middle size, his voice clear and audible, his natural

countenance grave and sober; but the moment he spoke, the settled seriousness of his features was utterly discharged, and a dry, drolling, or laughing levity, took such full possession of him, that I can only refer the idea of him to your imagination. In some of his low characters, that became it, he had a shuffling shamble in his gait, with so contented an ignorance in his aspect, and an aukward absurdity in his gesture, that, had you not known him, you could not have believed, that naturally he could have had a grain of common sense." Our author insinuates, that the audience had been so accustomed to the presence of this facetious actor, that they could not tolerate a play where his low humour was excluded.

[49] Alluding to the character of Mrs Friendall in "The Wives' Excuse."

[50]

From spawn of Will's, these wits of future tense,
He now appeals to men of riper sense;
And hopes to find some shelter from the wrath
Of furious critics of implicit faith;
Whose judgment always ebb, but zeal flows high,
Who for these truths upon the church rely.
Will's is the mother-church: From thence their creed,
And as that censures, poets must succeed.
  Here the great patriarch of Parnassus sits,
And grants his bulls to the subordinate wits.
From this hot-bed with foplings we're opprest,
That crowd the boxes, and the pit infest;
Who their great master's falling spittle lick,
And at the neighbouring playhouse judge on tick.
Thus have I seen from some decaying oak,
A numerous toad-stool brood his moisture suck,
And as the reverend log his verdure sheds,
The fungous offspring flourishes and spreads.

Verses prefixed to "Sir Noisy Parrot," 4to, 1693.

[51] This circumstance is noticed by one of Higden's poetical comforters:

Friend Harry, some squeamish pretenders to thinking,
Say, thy play is encumbered with eating and drinking;
That too oft, in conscience, thy table's brought out,
And unmerciful healths fly like hail-shot about.
Such a merry objection who ere could expect,
That does on the town or its pleasures reflect?
Is a treat and a bottle grown quite out of fashion,
Or have the spruce beaus found a new recreation?
At a tavern I'm certain they seldom find fault,
When flask after flask in due order is brought:
Why then should the fops be so monstrous uncivil,
As to damn at a play, what they like at the *Devil*?

Begging pardon of this apologist, who subscribes himself Tho. Palmer, there is some difference between the satisfaction of eating a good dinner at a tavern, and seeing one presented on the stage.

[52] A truncheon, with a fool's head and cap upon one end. It was carried by the ancient jester, and is often alluded to in old plays.

[53] Juvenal.

[54] Mr Malone quotes part of a letter from Dryden on the subject of "The Double Dealer," and his own tragi-comedy of "Love Triumphant." It is addressed to Mr Walsh, and runs thus:

"Congreve's 'Double Dealer' is much censured by the greater part of the town, and is defended only by the best judges, who, you know, are commonly the fewest. Yet it gains ground daily, and has already been acted eight times. The women think he has exposed ——; and the gentlemen are offended with him for the discovery of their follies, and the way of their intrigue under the notions of friendship to their ladies' husbands.

"I am afraid you discover not your own opinion concerning my irregular use of tragi-comedy, in my *doppia favola*. I will never defend that practice, for I know it distracts the hearers; but know withal, that it has hitherto pleased them for the sake of variety, and for the particular taste which they have to low comedy."

[55] "The first that was acted was Mr Congreve's, called 'The Double Dealer.' It has fared with that play, as it generally does with beauties officiously cried up; the mighty expectation which was raised of it made it sink, even beneath its own merit. The character of the Double Dealer is artfully writ; but the action being but single, and confined within the rules of true comedy, it could not please the generality of our audience, who relish nothing but variety, and think any thing dull and heavy which does not border upon farce. The critics were severe upon this play, which gave the author occasion to lash them in his epistle dedicatory, in so defying or hectoring a style, that it was counted rude even by his best friends; so that 'tis generally thought he has done his business, and lost himself; a thing he owes to Mr Dryden's treacherous friendship, who, being jealous of the applause he had got by his 'Old Bachelor,' deluded him into a foolish imitation of his own way of writing angry prefaces."—See MALONE'S *History of the English Stage, prefaced to Shakespeare's Plays*.

[56] Shadwell, who, at the Revolution, was promoted to Dryden's posts of poet-laureat, and

royal historiographer, died in 1692: was succeeded in his office of laureat by Nahum Tate, and in that of historiographer by Thomas Rymer. Our author was at present on bad terms with Rymer; to whom, not to Tate, he applies the sarcastic title of Tom the Second. Yet his old co-adjutor, Nahum, is probably included in the warning, that they should not mistake the Earl of Dorset's charity for the recompense of their own merit. We have often remarked, that the Earl of Dorset, although, as lord-chamberlain, he was obliged to dispose of Dryden's offices to persons less politically obnoxious, bestowed at the same time such marks of generosity on the abdicated laureat, that Dryden, here, and elsewhere, honours him with the title of "his patron." For the quarrel between Rymer and Dryden, see the Introduction to the "Translations from Ovid's Metamorphoses," Vol. XII. p. 46. Rymer was an useful antiquary, as his edition of the *Fœdera* bears witness; but he was a miserable critic, and a worse poet. His tragedy of "Edgar" is probably alluded to in the Epistle as one of the productions of his reign. It was printed in 1678; but appeared under the new title of "*The English Monarch*," in 1691.

[57] It was augured by Southerne and by Higgons, that Congreve would succeed to the literary empire exercised by Dryden. The former has these lines addressed to the future monarch:

> Dryden has long extended his command,
> By right divine, quite through the Muses' land,
> Absolute lord; and holding now from none
> But great Apollo his undoubted crown,—
> That empire settled, and grown old in power,—
> Can wish for nothing but a successor;
> Not to enlarge his limits, but maintain
> Those provinces, which he alone could gain.
> His eldest, Wycherley, in wise retreat,
> Thought it not worth his quiet to be great;
> Loose wandering Etherege, in wild pleasure tost,
> And foreign interests, to his hopes long lost;
> Poor Lee and Otway dead; Congreve appears
> The darling and last comfort of his years.
> May'st thou live long in thy great master's smiles,
> And, growing under him, adorn these isles!
> But when—when part of him, (but that be late!)
> His body yielding, must submit to fate;
> Leaving his deathless works, and thee, behind.
> The natural successor of his mind,
> Then may'st thou finish what he has begun;
> Heir to his merit, be in fame his son!

In the same strain, Bevill Higgons:

> What may'n't we then, great youth, of thee presage
> Whose art and wit so much transcend thy age!
> How wilt thou shine in thy meridian light,
> Who, at thy rising, give so vast a light!
> When Dryden, dying, shall the world deceive,
> Whom we immortal as his works believe,
> Thou shalt succeed, the glory of the stage,
> Adorn and entertain the coming age.

[58] Congreve discharged the sacred duty thus feelingly imposed. See his Preface to Dryden's Plays, Vol. II. p. 7.

[59] These sarcasms are levelled at the players; one of whom, George Powel, took it upon him to retort in the following very singular strain of effrontery, which Mr Malone transfers from the preface of a tragedy; called "The Fatal Discovery, or Love in Ruins," published in 4to, 1698.

"Here I am afraid he makes but a coarse compliment, when this great wit, with his treacherous memory, forgets, that he had given away his laurels upon record twice before, viz. once to Mr Congreve, and another time to Mr Southerne. Pr'ythee, old Œdipus, expound this mystery! Dost thou set up thy transubstantiation miracle in the donation of thy idol bays, that thou hast them fresh, new, and whole, to give them three times over?

"For the most mortal stroke at us, he charges us with downright *murdering of plays, which we call reviving*. I will not derogate from the merit of those senior actors of both sexes, of the other house, that shine in their several perfections, in whose lavish praises he is so highly transported; but, at the same time, he makes himself but an arbitrary judge on our side, to condemn unheard, and that under no less a conviction than murder, when I cannot learn, for a fair judgment upon us, that his reverend crutches have ever brought him within our doors since the division of the companies [1695]. 'Tis true, I think, we have revived some pieces of Dryden, as his "Sebastian," "Maiden Queen," "Marriage A-la-Mode," "King Arthur," &c. But here let us be tried by a Christian jury, the audience, and not receive the bow-string from his Mahometan Grand Signiorship. 'Tis true, his more particular pique against us, as he has declared himself, is in relation to our reviving his "Almanzor." There, indeed, he has reason to be angry for our waking that sleepy dowdy, and exposing his nonsense, not ours; and if that dish did not please him, we have a Scotch proverb for our justification, viz. *'twas rotten roasted, because*, &c. and the world must expect, 'twas very hard crutching up what Hart and Mohun before us could not prop. I confess, he is a little severe, when he will allow our best performance to bear no better fruit than a crab vintage. Indeed, if we young actors

spoke but half as sourly as his old gall scribbles, we should be crab all over."

[60] The poet here endeavours to vindicate himself from the charge of having often, and designedly, ridiculed the clerical function.

[61] There is a report admitted into the "Baronetage," that this gentleman and his three brothers took upon them a vow to die unmarried; and it must be owned, that the praises of our author, on the score of celibacy, argue his cousin to have been a most obstinate and obdurate old bachelor. But Mr Malone produces the evidence of an old lady descended of the family, in disproof of this ungallant anecdote.—See *Baronetage*, Vol. II. p. 92. Malone's *Life of Dryden*, p. 324.

[62] "'Tis thought the king will endeavour to keep up a standing army, and make the stir in Scotland his pretence for it: My cousin Dryden, and the country party, will, I suppose, be against it; for when a spirit is raised, 'tis hard conjuring him down again."

[63] "In the description which I have made of a Parliament-man, I think I have not only drawn the features of my worthy kinsman, but have also given my own opinion of what an Englishman in Parliament ought to be; and deliver it as a memorial of my own principles to all posterity. I have consulted the judgment of my unbiassed friends, who have some of them the honour to be known to you; and they think there is nothing which can justly give offence in that part of the poem. I say not this, to cast a blind on your judgement, (which I could not do if I endeavoured it,) but to assure you, that nothing relating to the public shall stand without your permission; for it were to want common sense to desire your patronage, and resolve to disoblige you: And as I will not hazard my hopes of your protection, by refusing to obey you in any thing which I can perform with my conscience, or my honour, so I am very confident you will never impose any other terms on me."—*Letter to the Honourable Charles Montague.*

[64] In the family of Pigott, descended from John Dryden of Chesterton.

[65] Sir Robert Driden inherited the paternal estate of Canon-Ashby, while that of Chesterton descended to John, his second brother, to whom the epistle is addressed, through his mother, daughter of Sir Robert Bevile.

[66] William Guibbons, M.D.—Dryden mentions this gentleman in terms of grateful acknowledgment in the Postscript to Virgil:—"That I have recovered, in some measure, the health which I had lost by application to this work, is owing, next to God's mercy, to the skill and care of Dr Guibbons and Dr Hobbs, the two ornaments of their profession, which I can only pay by this acknowledgment." As Dr Guibbons was an enemy to the Dispensary, he is ridiculed by Garth in his poem so entitled, under the character of "Mirmillo the famed *Opifer*."

[67] Sir Richard Blackmore, poet and physician, whose offences towards our author have been enumerated in a note on the prologue to "The Pilgrim," where his character is discussed at length under the same name of Maurus. See Vol. VIII. p. 442, and also the Postscript to Virgil, where Dryden acknowledges his obligations to the Faculty, and adds, in allusion to Blackmore, that "the only one of them, who endeavoured to defame him, had it not in his power."

[68] In this line, as in the end of the preface to the "Fables," our author classes together "one Milbourne and one Blackmore." The former was a clergyman, and beneficed at Yarmouth. Dryden, in the preface just quoted, insinuates, that he lost his living for writing libels on his parishioners. These passing strokes of satire in the text are amply merited by the virulence of Milbourne's attack, not only on our author's poetry, but on his person, and principles political and religious. See a note on the preface to the "Fables," near the end.

[69] Sir Samuel Garth, the ingenious author of the "Dispensary." Although this celebrated wit and physician differed widely from Dryden in politics, being a violent Whig, they seem, nevertheless, to have lived in the most intimate terms. Dryden contributed to Garth's translation of the "Metamorphoses;" and Sir Samuel had the honour to superintend the funeral of our poet, and to pronounce a Latin oration upon that occasion. Garth's generosity, here celebrated, consisted in maintaining a Dispensary for issuing advice and medicines gratis to the poor. This was highly disapproved of by the more selfish of his brethren, and their disputes led to Sir Samuel's humorous poem.

[70] A very bloody war had been recently concluded by the peace of Ryswick, in 1697. But the country party in Parliament entertained violent suspicions, that King William, whose continental connections they dreaded, intended a speedy renewal of the contest with France. Hence they were jealous of every attempt to maintain any military force; so that, in 1699, William saw himself compelled, not only to disband the standing army, but to dismiss his faithful and favourite Dutch guards. The subsequent lines point obliquely at these measures, which were now matter of public discussion. Dryden's cousin joined in them with many of the Whigs, who were attached to what was called the country-party. As for the poet, his jacobitical principles assented to every thing which could embarrass King William. But, for the reasons which he has assigned in his letter to Lord Montague, our author leaves his opinion concerning the disbanding of the army to be inferred from his panegyric on the navy, and his declamation against the renewal of the war.

[71] Our poet had originally accompanied his praises of the British soldiers with some aspersions on the cowardice of the Dutch, their allies. These he omitted at his cousin's desire, who deemed them disrespectful to King William. In short, he complains he had corrected his verses so far, that he feared he had purged the spirit out of them; as Bushby used to whip a boy so long, till he made him a confirmed blockhead.

[72] Sir Robert Bevile, maternal grandfather to John Driden of Chesterton, seems to have been imprisoned for resisting some of Charles I.'s illegal attempts to raise supplies without the authority of parliament. Perhaps our author now viewed his opposition to the royal will as more excusable than he would have thought it in the reigns of Charles II. or of James II. It is thought, that the hard usage which Sir Robert Bevile met on this score,

decided our poet's uncle, his son-in-law, in his violent attachment to Cromwell.

[73] The reader will perhaps doubt, whether Mr Dryden's account of his cousin Chesterton's accomplishments as a justice of peace, fox-hunter, and knight of the shire, even including his prudent abstinence from matrimony, were quite sufficient to justify this classification.

[74] The ancients did not understand perspective; accordingly their figures represent those on an Indian paper. It seems long before it was known in England; for so late as 1634, Sir John Harrington thought it necessary to give the following explanation, in the advertisement to his translation of *Orlando Furioso*.

"The use of the picture is evident;—that, having read over the book, they may read it as it were again in the very picture; and one thing is to be noted, which every one haply will not observe, namely, the perspective in every figure. For the personages of men, the shapes of horses, and such like, are made large at the bottom, and lesser upward, as if you were to behold all the same in a plain, that which is nearest seems greatest, and the farthest shews smallest, which is the chief art in picture."

[75] This portrait was copied from one in the possession of Mr Betterton, and afterwards in that of the Chandos family. Twelve engravings were executed from this painting, which, however, the ingenious Mr Stevens, and other commentators on Shakespeare, pronounced a forgery. The copy presented by Kneller to Dryden, is in the collection of Earl Fitzwilliam, at Wentworth-house; and may claim that veneration, from having been the object of our author's respect and enthusiasm, which has been denied to its original, as a genuine portrait of Shakespeare. It is not, however, an admitted point, that the Chandos picture is a forgery: the contrary has been keenly maintained; and Mr Malone's opinion has given weight to those who have espoused its defence.

[76] He travelled very young into Italy. DRYDEN.

[77] Mr Walpole says, that "where Sir Godfrey offered one picture to fame, he sacrificed twenty to lucre; and he met with customers of so little judgment, that they were fond of being painted by a man who would gladly have disowned his works the moment they were paid for." The same author gives us Sir Godfrey's apology for preferring the lucrative, though less honourable, line of portrait painting. "Painters of history," said he, "make the dead live, and do not begin to live themselves till they are dead. I paint the living, and they make me live."—*Lord* ORFORD'S *Lives of the Painters*. See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 359. Dryden seems to allude to this expression in the above lines.

[78] Tycho Brache, the Danish astronomer.

[79] Dryden's opinion concerning the harshness of Oldham's numbers, was not unanimously subscribed to by contemporary authors. In the "Historical Dictionary," 1694, Oldham is termed, "a pithy, sententious, elegant, and smooth writer:" and Winstanley says, that none can read his works without admiration; "so pithy his strains, so sententious his expression, so elegant his oratory, so swimming his language, so smooth his lines." Tom Brown goes the length to impute our author's qualification of his praise of Oldham to the malignant spirit of envy: "'Tis your own way, Mr Bayes, as you may remember in your verses upon Mr Oldham, where you tell the world that he was a very fine, ingenious gentleman, but still did not understand the cadence of the English tongue."—*Reasons for Mr Bayes' changing his Religion*, Part II. p. 33.

But this only proves, that Tom Brown and Mr Winstanley were deficient in poetical ear; for Oldham's satires, though full of vehemence and impressive expression, are, in diction, not much more harmonious than those of Hall or of Donne. The reader may take the following celebrated passage on the life of a nobleman's chaplain, as illustrating both the merits and defects of his poetry:

Some think themselves exalted to the sky,
If they light in some noble family;
Diet, a horse, and thirty pounds a year,
Besides the advantage of his Lordship's ear;
The credit of the business, and the state,
Are things that in a youngster's sense sound great.
Little the unexperienced wretch doth know
What slavery he oft must undergo;
Who, though in silken scarf and cassock dressed,
Wears but a gayer livery at best
When dinner calls, the implement must wait,
With holy words, to consecrate the meat;
But hold it for a favour seldom known,
If he be deigned the honour to sit down:
Soon as the tarts appear, Sir Crape withdraw;
These dainties are not for a spiritual maw.
Observe your distance, and be sure to stand
Hard by the cistern, with your cup in hand;
Hard by the cistern, with your cup in hand;
There for diversion you may pick your teeth,
Till the kind voider comes to your relief:
For mere board-wages such their freedom sell;
Slaves to an hour, and vassals to a bell;
And if the enjoyment of one day be stole,
They are but prisoners out upon parole;
Always the marks of slavery retain,
And e'en when loose, still drag about their chain.
And where's the mighty prospect, after all,
A chaplainship served up, and seven years thrall?
The menial thing perhaps, for a reward,
Is to some slender benefice preferred;
With this proviso bound, that he must wed
My lady's antiquated waiting-maid,
In dressing only skilled, and marmalade.
Let others, who such meannesses can brook,
Strike countenance to every great man's look;
Let those that have a mind turn slaves to eat,
And live contented by another's plate;
I rate my freedom higher, nor will I
For food and raiment track my liberty:
But if I must to my last shifts be put,
To fill a bladder and twelve yards of gut,
Rather with counterfeited wooden leg,
And my right arm tied up, I'll chuse to beg;
I'll rather chuse to starve at large, than be
The gaudiest vassal to dependency.
'T has ever been the top of my desires,
The utmost height to which my wish aspires,
That heaven would bless me with a small estate;
There, free from noise and all ambitious ends,
Enjoy a few choice books, and fewer friends;
Lord of myself, accountable to none,
But to my conscience and my God alone;
There live unthought of, and unheard of die,
And grudge mankind my very memory.

Satire to a Friend about to leave the University.

[80] Henry Killigrew, D.D., the young lady's father, was himself a poet. He wrote "The Conspiracy," a tragedy much praised by Ben Jonson and the amiable Lord Falkland, published in 1634. This edition being pirated and spurious, the author altered the play, and changed the title to "Pallantus and Eudora," published in 1652.—See Wood's *Athenæ Oxon*. Vol. II. p. 1036.

[81] This line certainly gave rise to that of Pope in Gay's epitaph:

In wit a man, simplicity a child.

[82] James II. painted by Mrs Killigrew.

[83] Mary of Este, as eminent for beauty as rank, also painted by the subject of the elegy.

[84] Mrs Katherine Philips, whom the affectation of her age called *Orinda*, was the daughter of Mr Fowler, a citizen of London. Aubrey, the most credulous of mankind, tells us, in MS. Memoirs of her life, that she read through the Bible before she was four years old, and would take sermons verbatim by the time she was ten. She married a decent respectable country gentleman, called Wogan; a name which, when it occurred in her extensive literary correspondence, she exchanged for the fantastic appellation of *Antenor*. She maintained a literary intercourse for many years with bishops, earls, and wits, the main object of which was the management and extrication of her husband's affairs. But whether because the correspondents of Orinda were slack in attending to her requests in her husband's favour, or whether because a learned lady is a bad manager of sublunary concerns, Antenor's circumstances became embarrassed, notwithstanding all Orinda's exertions, and the fair solicitor was obliged to retreat with him into Cardiganshire. Returning from this seclusion to London, in 1664, she was seized with the

small-pox, which carried her off in the 33d year of her age.

Her poems and translations were collected into a folio after her death, which bears the title of "Poems by the most deservedly admired Mrs Katherine Philips, the matchless ORINDA. London, 1667."—See BALLARD'S *Memoirs of Learned Ladies*, p. 287.

This lady is here mentioned with the more propriety, as Mrs Anne Killigrew dedicated the following lines to her memory:

> Orinda (Albion's and our sexes grace)
> Owed not her glory to a beauteous face,—
> It was her radiant soul that shone within,
> Which struck a lustre through her outward skin,
> That did her lips and cheeks with roses dye,
> Advanced her height, and sparkled in her eye:
> Nor did her sex at all obstruct her fame,
> But higher 'mong the stars it fixed her name;
> What she did write not only all allowed,
> But every laurel to her laurel bowed.

[85] James Bertie, Lord Norris of Rycote, was created Earl of Abingdon in 1682. There is in the Luttrell Collection an Elegy on his death.

[86] The gout.

[87] Donne's character as a love-poet is elsewhere very well given by Dryden. "He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with the speculations of philosophy, where he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love." Elizabeth Drury was the daughter of Sir Robert Drury, with whom Donne went to Paris. Donne celebrated her merit, and lamented her death in elegies, entitled, "The Anatomy of the World, wherein, by occasion of the untimely Death of Mrs Elizabeth Drury, the frailty and the decay of this whole World is represented." These elegiac verses are divided into two anniversaries, through which the editor attempted in vain to struggle in search of the acknowledgment quoted by Dryden.

[88] In allusion to the provision made in Egypt, during the seven years of plenty, for the succeeding seven years of famine.

[89] Lady Abingdon had six sons and three daughters.

[90] Æneas descending to the shades, finds his father Anchises engaged in the review of his posterity.—See *Æneid*, lib. vi.

[91] Lady Abingdon died in her thirty-third year; at which age Jesus Christ was crucified.

[92] She died in a ball-room in her own house.

[93] Whitsunday night.

[94] I have here inserted the Dedication which led to so singular a mistake, as the "Orpheus Britannicus" is a scarce book.—"To the Honourable Lady Howard. Madam, Were it in the power of music to abate those strong impressions of grief which have continued upon me ever since the loss of my dear lamented husband, there are few, I believe, who are furnished with larger or better supplies of comfort from this science, than he has left me in his own compositions, and in the satisfaction I find, that they are not more valued by me, who must own myself fond to a partiality of all that was his, than by those who are no less judges than patrons of his performances. I find, madam, I have already said enough to justify the presumption of this application to your ladyship, who have added both these characters to the many excellent qualities which make you the admiration of all that know you.

"Your ladyship's extraordinary skill in music, beyond most of either sex, and your great goodness to that dear person, whom you have sometimes been pleased to honour with the title of your master, makes it hard for me to judge whether he contributed more to the vast improvements you have made in that science, or your ladyship to the reputation he gained in the profession of it: For I have often heard him say, that, as several of his best compositions were originally designed for your ladyship's entertainment, so the pains he bestowed in fitting them for your ear, were abundantly rewarded by the satisfaction he has received from your approbation and admirable performance of them, which has best recommended both them and their author to all that have had the happiness of hearing them from your ladyship.

"Another great advantage, to which my husband has often imputed the success of his labours, and which may best plead for your ladyship's favourable acceptance of this collection, has been the great justness both of thought and numbers which he found in the poetry of our most refined writers, and among them, of that honourable gentleman, who has the dearest and most deserved relation to yourself, and whose excellent compositions were the subject of his last and best performances in music.

"Thus, madam, your ladyship has every way the justest titles to the patronage of this book; the publication of which, under the auspicious influence of your name, is the best (I had almost said the only) means I have left, of testifying to the world, my desire to pay the last honours to its dear author, your ladyship having generously prevented my intended performance of the duty I owe to his ashes, by erecting a fair monument over them, and gracing it with an inscription which may perpetuate both the marble and his memory.

"Your generosity, which was too large to be confined either to his life or person, has also extended itself to his posterity, on whom your ladyship has been pleased to entail your favours, which must, with all gratitude, be acknowledged as the most valuable part of

their inheritance, both by them, and your ladyship's most obliged, and most humble servant,

FR. PURCELL."

[95] The following account of the manner in which Sir Palmes Fairbone fell, and of the revenge to which the author alludes, is taken from the Gazette of the time:

"*Malaga, November 12.*—Three days since arrived here a small vessel, which stopped at Tangier, from whence we have letters, which give an account, that on the 2d instant, Sir Palmes Fairbone, the governor, as he was riding without the town with a party of horse, to observe what the Moors were doing, was shot by one of them, and, being mortally wounded, fell from his horse: That the Moors had intrenched themselves near the town, whereupon the whole garrison, consisting of 4000 horse and foot, sallied out upon them, commanded by Colonel Sackville: That they marched out in the night; but were quickly discovered by the Moors' sentinels, who immediately gave the alarm: That in the morning there was a very sharp engagement, which lasted six hours; and then the Moors, who were above 20,000, fled, and were pursued by the English, who killed above 1500 of them, took four of their greatest guns, and filled up all the trenches, and then retired to the town with several prisoners, having obtained a most signal victory, wherein the Spanish horse behaved themselves as well as men could do. The day the said vessel came from Tangier, which was the 7th, they heard much shooting, which makes us believe there has been a second engagement.

"*Malaga, November 12*, (1680.)—By a vessel arrived from Tangier, we have advice, that on Wednesday last all the force of that garrison took the field, and gave battle to about 30,000 Moors. The Spanish horse and 800 seamen marched in the van, the English horse with the main body. The fight lasted near six hours, with the slaughter of between 1500 and 2000 Moors, and of 150 of the garrison: That the Moors fled; the English kept the field; took six pieces of cannon, and six colours. Every soldier that brought in a flag had thirty guineas given to him; and every one that took a Moor prisoner had him for his encouragement. There were about twenty taken; and 300 bodies of Moors were dragged together in one heap, and as many heads in another pile. But the great misfortune was, that the Saturday before, the governor, as he was walking under the walls, received a mortal wound, which the Spanish horse so bravely resented, that immediately, without command, they mounted and charged the Moors with that courage, that they killed many of them, with the loss of seven or eight of themselves. Before this action, the Moors were so near the walls of the town, that with hand-slings they pelted our soldiers with stones."—*London Gazette*, No. 1567.

"*Whitehall, November 27.*—Yesterday morning arrived here Lieutenant-colonel Talmash from Tangier, and gave his Majesty an account, that Colonel Sackville, who has now the chief command, (Sir Palmes Fairbone, the late governor, having been unfortunately wounded with a musket shot on the 24th past, of which he died three days after,) finding that the Moors began to approach very near to Pole-fort, and were preparing to mine it, called a council of war, and, pursuant to what was there resolved, marched out on the 27th with 1500 foot and 300 horse, and fell upon the Moors with so much bravery, that, notwithstanding the inequality of their number, and the stout resistance they made, they beat them out of the trenches, and from their several lines, and gave them a total defeat; pursuing them a mile into the country, with a great slaughter of them; filling up their trenches, and levelling their lines, and taking two pieces of cannon, five colours, and several prisoners; though with the loss of many officers and private soldiers killed and wounded on our side."—*Ibidem*, No. 1569.

[96] The diapason, with musicians, is a chord including all notes. Perhaps Dryden remembered Spenser's allegorical description of the human figure and faculties:

"The frame thereof seemed partly circular,
And part triangular; O, work divine!
These two, the first and last, propitious are;
The one imperfect, mortal feminine,
The other immortal, perfect, masculine;
And 'twixt them both a quadrate was the base,
Proportioned equally by seven and nine;
Nine was the circle set in heaven's place;
All which compacted made a goodly diapase."

Fairy Queen, Book II. canto ix. stanza 22.

[97] St Cecilia is said to have invented the organ, though it is not known when or how she came by this credit. Chaucer introduces her as performing upon that instrument:

"And while that the organes maden melodie,
To God alone thus in her heart sung she."

The descent of the angel we have already mentioned. She thus announces this celestial attendant to her husband:

I have an angel which that loveth me;
That with great love, wher so I wake or slepe,
Is ready aye my body for to kepe."

The Second Nonne's Tale.

[98] James, second Duke of Ormond, was eldest son of the gallant Earl of Ossory, and grandson to the great Duke of Ormond, to whose honours he succeeded in 1688. He was

first married to Lady Anne Hyde, daughter of Lawrence Earl of Rochester; and, upon her death, to Lady Mary Somerset, second daughter of the Duke of Beaufort. The Duke of Ormond was favoured by King William, but attained still higher power and influence during the reign of Queen Anne, especially in her later years, when he entered into all the views of her Tory administration. Upon the accession of George I, he was impeached of high treason, and consulted his safety by flying abroad. He died in Spain in 1746.

The tales which follow, with the various translations marked in the preface, were first published in 1700 in one volume folio.

[99] See Vol. XVII. p. 1.

[100] See the passage in "Absalom and Achitophel," Vol. IX. p. 242. and the notes on that poem, pages 294-301.

[101] This character of the unfortunate nobleman was not exaggerated. When the impeachment against him was moved, Hutchinson, Jekyll, and many others, gave a splendid testimony to his private virtues.

[102] P. Valerius Poplicola, the third Roman consul; the same who caused the fasces, the emblems of consular dignity, to be lowered before the common people.

[103] In the bloody battle of Landen, fought on 29th July, 1693, the Duke of Ormond was in that brigade of English horse which King William led in person to support his right wing of cavalry. The Duke charged at the head of a squadron of Lumley's regiment, received several wounds, and had his horse shot under him. He was about to be cut to pieces, when he was rescued by a gentleman of the gardes-du-corps, and made prisoner. King William lost the day, after exhibiting prodigies of conduct and valour.

[104] This was, I suppose, our author's old foe, Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the tardy progress of whose great buildings at Cleveden was often the subject of satire:

> "Once more, says fame, for battle he prepares,
> And threatens rhymers with a second farce;
> But if as long for that as this we stay,
> He'll finish Cleveden sooner than his play."
> *The Review.*

[105] These translations are to be found in the 12th volume, being placed after the versions of Ovid's "Epistles."

[106] I cannot find any such passages in Spenser as are here alluded to.

[107] Edward Fairfax, natural son of Sir Thomas Fairfax of Denton in Yorkshire, translated Tasso's celebrated poem, stanza for stanza, with equal elegance and fidelity. His version, entitled "Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recovery of Jerusalem," was first published in 1600. Collins has paid the original author and translator the following singular compliment:

> "How have I sate, while piped the pensive wind,
> To hear thy harp by British Fairfax strung;
> Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders that he sung."
> *Ode on Highland Superstitions.*

[108] It would seem, from this respectful expression, that our author's feud with Rymer (See Vol. XI. p. 60. Vol. XII. p. 46.) was now composed.

[109] Jeremy Collier, whose diatribe against the theatre galled Dryden severely.

[110] See this version, Vol. XII. p. 357.

[111] The celebrated author of the "Leviathan." Burnet says, he was esteemed at court as a mathematician, though he had little talent that way.

[112] In this instance Dryden has inverted the fact. Boccacio tells the story of Griselda in his "Decameron," which was written about 1160, and Petrarch did not translate it till 1173, the year of his death, when he executed a Latin version of it. Even then, he mentions it as a traditional tale, which he had often heard with pleasure. The original edition of the story is difficult to discover. Noguier, in his "Histoire de Tholouse," affirms, that this mirror of female patience actually existed about the year 1103, and Le Grand lays claim to her history as originally a French fabliau. It seems certain, at least, that it was not invented by Petrarch, although Chaucer quotes his authority, probably that he might introduce a panegyric on his departed friend:

> "I wol you tell a tale, which that I
> Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
> As proved by his wordes, and his werk:
> He now is dede, and nailed in his cheste,
> I pray to God so geve his soule reste.
> Fraunceis Petrark, the laureate poete,
> Highte this clerke, whose rhetorik swete
> Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie."
> *Clerke's Prologue.*

[113] Tyrwhitt has laboured to show, that Boccacio's poem, called the "Philostrato," contains the original of Chaucer's "Troilus and Creseide." But Chaucer himself calls his original "Lollius" and the Book "Trophe;" and I think, with Mr Godwin, that we are not hastily to conclude that this was an invention, to disguise his pillaging Boccacio, when we consider

the probability of the work, which served as their common original, being lost in the course of so many ages. See this question discussed in Godwin's "Life of Chaucer," Vol. I. p 263.

[114] Unquestionably these poems are original as to the mode of treating them; but, in both cases, Chaucer was contented to adopt the story of some more ancient tale-teller. The "Wife of Bath's Tale" is imitated from the "Florent" in Gower, and that probably from the work of an older minstrel. Or Chaucer may have copied the old tale called the "Marriage of Sir Gawain," which is probably the corrupted fragment of a metrical romance. The apologue of "The Cock and the Fox," is to be found in the "Fables" of Marie of France, who seems to have lived in the reign of Henry III. of England.

[115] The Tabard was the inn whence Chaucer's pilgrims set forth on their joyous party to Canterbury, and took its name from the sign, a herald's coat, or tabard.

It is much to the credit of British painting, that Mr Stothard, of London, has been able to execute a picture, representing this celebrated groupe on their journey to Canterbury, with the genius and spirit of a master, and all the rigid attention to costume that could be expected by the most severe antiquary.

[116] Dryden seems here to intimate some hankering after those *Dalilahs of composition*, as he elsewhere calls them, that consisted in turning and playing upon words.

[117] The famous Cowley, whose metaphysical conceits had already, it would seem, begun to tarnish the brilliancy of his reputation.

[118] Thomas Speght's edition of Chaucer was published in 1597 and 1602. The preface contains the passage which Dryden alludes to: "And for his (Chaucer's) verses, although, in divers places, they seem to us to stand of unequal measures, yet a skilful reader, who can scan them in their nature, shall find it otherwise. And if a verse, here and there, fal out a syllable shorter or longer than another, I rather aret it to the negligence and rape of Adam Scrivener, (that I may speake as Chaucer doth) than to any unconning or oversight in the author: For how fearful he was to have his works miswritten, or his verse mismeasured, may appeare in the end of his fift booke of "Troylus and Creseide," where he writeth thus:

> "And for there is so great diversitie
> In English, and in writing of our tongue,
> So pray I God that none miswrite thee,
> Ne thee mismetre for defaut of tongue."

By his hasty and inconsiderate contradiction of honest Speght's panegyric, Dryden has exposed himself to be censured for pronouncing rashly upon a subject with which he was but imperfectly acquainted. The learned Tyrwhitt has supported Speght's position with equal pains and success, and plainly proves, that the apparent inequalities of the rhyme of Chaucer, arise chiefly from the change in pronunciation since his time, particularly from a number of words being now pronounced as one syllable, which in those days were prolonged into two, or as two syllables which were anciently three. These researches, in the words of Ellis, "have proved what Dryden denied, viz. that Chaucer's versification, wherever his genuine text is preserved, was uniformly correct, although the harmony of his lines has, in many cases, been obliterated by the changes that have taken place in the mode of accenting our language."—*Specimens of the Early English Poets*, Vol. I. p. 209.

[119] Chaucer was doubtless employed and trusted by Edward and by his grandson, and probably favoured by Henry IV., the son of his original patron; but if Dryden meant, that he held, during these reigns, the precise office of poet-laureat, once enjoyed by himself, it is difficult to suppose that any such had existence.

[120] The rebellion of the Commons was that tumult which took place under the management of John of Northampton, commonly called John Cumbertown. Chaucer was forced to fly to Holland, in consequence of having some concern in that insurrection, and on his return he was arrested and committed to the Tower. Katherine Swynford, mistress, and at length wife, to John of Gaunt, was sister of Philippa Rouet, wife of the poet.

[121] "The Ploughman's Tale" is now generally accounted spurious. In speaking of it, Dryden inadvertently confounds it with the work of Robert Langland, a secular priest, well known to collectors by the title of "Pierce Plowman's Visions." Both poems contain a bitter satire against the clergy; but that which has been falsely ascribed to Chaucer, is expressly written in favour of Wickliffe's doctrine. Dryden probably was sufficiently ready to adopt any authority which seemed to countenance severity against the churchmen,—a subject upon which he always flies into declamation.

[122] This ceremony having been only partially performed when Samuel Johnson, the author of Julian, was thus ignominiously punished, it was found that the degradation was incomplete, and thus he saved his benefice.

[123] It is almost unnecessary to mention their names,—Henry the Second and Thomas a Becket.

[124] Dr James Drake wrote, in answer to Collier, a work called, "The Ancient and Modern Stage Surveyed, or Mr Collier's View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage set in a true light." 8vo, 1699, p. 348-355.

[125] The famous Italian physiognomist.

[126] *Gat-toothed*, according to Chaucer; meaning nothing more than *goat-toothed*, which, applied to such a character, has an obvious meaning. The commentators, however, chose to read *gap-toothed*, as of more easy explanation.

[127] Alluding here, as elsewhere in the preface, to Jeremy Collier and Luke Milbourne, who had assailed not only his writings, but his moral character, with great severity.

[128] To whom "Don Sebastian" is dedicated. See Vol. VII. page 281. He died in 1696-7.

[129] This literal error was corrected by Tyrwhitt, from the better MSS. of Chaucer, being in fact, not a blunder of the poet, but of the press.

[130] This lady lived to the age of ninety-four. Her huge romances, "Artamenes, Clelia, and Cleopatra," were in my childhood still read in some old-fashioned Scottish families, though now absolutely forgotten, and in no chance of being revived. Mademoiselle de Scuderi died about eighteen months after this discourse was written. There is no reason to think she was seriously engaged in translating Chaucer, whose works certainly never existed in the old Provençal or Norman French, into which last they were more likely to have been translated.

[131] Pope, however, modernized this prologue, and, it is said, some of Chaucer's looser tales, though the latter were published under the name of Betterton. *Malone*, vol. iv. p. 631.

[132] The allusion, in Boccace, was probably to his own poem, the "Theseida," a work so scarce, as almost never to have been heard of, until it was described by Tyrwhitt, in his Essay concerning the Originals whence Chaucer drew his tales. It contains the whole story of Palamon and Arcite. But the tale itself was more ancient than the days of Boccace.

[133] There seems to have been something questionable in Milbourne's character. Dryden, a little lower down, hints, that he lost his living, for writing a libel upon his parishioners.

[134] "Prince Arthur," and "King Arthur," two works, facetiously entitled epic poems, published in 1695 and 1697. In the preface to the first, occurred the following severe attack upon Dryden, which is inserted by Mr Malone as illustrative of the passage in the text.

"Some of these poets, to excuse their guilt, allege for themselves, that the degeneracy of the age makes their lewd way of writing necessary. They pretend, the auditors will not be pleased, unless they are thus entertained from the stage; and to please, they say, is the chief business of the poet. But this is by no means a just apology. It is not true, as was said before, that the poet's chief business is to please: his chief business is to instruct, to make mankind wiser and better; and, in order to this, his care should be to please and entertain the audience, with all the wit and art he is master of. Aristotle and Horace, and all their critics and commentators, all men of wit and sense, agree, that this is the end of poetry. But they say, it is their profession to write for the stage; and that poets must starve, if they will not, in this way, humour the audience; the theatre will be as unfrequented as the churches, and the poet and the parson equally neglected. Let the poet, then, abandon his profession, and take up some honest, lawful, calling; where, joining industry to his great wit, he may soon get above the complaints of poverty, so common among these ingenious men, and lie under no necessity of prostituting his wit, to any such vile purposes as are here censured. This will be a course of life more profitable and honourable to himself, and more useful to others. And there are, among these writers, *some, who think they might have risen to the highest dignities, in other professions, had they employed their wit in those ways*. It is a mighty dishonour and reproach to any man that is capable of being useful to the world, in any *liberal and virtuous* profession, *to lavish out his life and wit, in propagating vice and corruption of manners*, and in battering, from the stage, the strongest entrenchments, and best works, of religion and virtue. Whoever makes this his choice, when the other was in his power, may he go off the stage unpitied, *complaining of neglect and poverty, the just punishments of his irreligion and folly*."

[135] This play is bad enough, yet the assertion seems a strong one. There can be little pleasure, however, in weighing filth against filth, so the point may be left undecided.

[136] There is an account of this desperate action, in the Memoirs of Captain Carleton. The Confederate Army were upon their march when the Prince of Condé suddenly attacked their rear, which he totally routed, and then led his forces between the second line of the Confederates, and their line of baggage, to compel them to a general action. But the plunder of the baggage occasioned so much delay, that the van of the Prince of Orange's army had time to rejoin the centre; and, though the French maintained the action with great vigour, they were, in the end, compelled to leave the Confederates in possession of the field of battle. This battle was fought 11th August, 1674.

[137] Lady Mary Somerset, second wife of the Duke of Ormond, to whom she was married in 1685. She was second daughter of Henry, first Duke of Beaufort.

[138] The first patroness of Chaucer was Blanche, first wife of John, Duke of Gaunt, whose death he has celebrated in the "Boke of the Duchesse." She was the second daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, grandson of Edmund, surnamed Crouchback, brother of Edward I. But I do not know how the Duchess of Ormond could be said to be "born of her blood," since she was descended of John of Gaunt by his third, not his first wife. Dryden, however, might not know, or might disregard, these minutiæ of genealogy.

[139] John of Gaunt had by his mistress, Catharine Rouet, whom he afterwards married, three sons and a daughter, who were legitimated by act of Parliament. John de Beaufort, the eldest of these, was created Earl of Somerset, and from him the ducal family of Beaufort are lineally descended. The patent of the first Duke, the father of this Duchess of Ormond, bears to be, in consideration of his services, and of his most noble descent from King Edward III., by John de Beaufort, eldest son of John of Gaunt, by his third marriage.

[140] Our author remembered his master Virgil:

Et Pater ipse, manu magnâ, Portunus euntem Impulit
——Æneidos, *Lib. V.*

[141] Our author is guilty of the same extravagant idea in the "Astræa Redux:"

It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you.

For which he is deservedly censured by Dr Johnson.

[142] The Duchess of Ormond went to Ireland in autumn 1697, according to Mr Malone, and was followed by the Duke.

[143] Alluding to the wars of the Revolution in Ireland.

[144] She seems to have been just recovered from a fever.

[145] Titus, who is said to have wept at the destruction of the Temple, during the storm of Jerusalem.

[146] Dr Christopher Love Morley, a physician of eminence.

[147] It was not the Duchess's fortune ever to pay this debt to the house of Ormond.

[148] The poet here introduces a distinction, well known in heraldry. The banner was a square flag, which only barons of a great lineage and power had a right to display. The pennon was a forked streamer borne by a knight: Theseus carried both to the field, each bearing a separate device. Chaucer says,

"And by his banner borne is his pennon."

[149] This play of words, which is truly Ovidian, does not occur in Chaucer, nor is it in conformity with our author's general ideas of translating him. (See Introduction to the "Fables.") The Old Bard says simply:

The other where him list may ride and go,
But see his lady shall he never mo.

[150] This violent machine seems unnecessary. The change, previously described as having taken place in Arcite's appearance, might have vindicated his return to the court of Theseus. The apparition of Hermes is only intended as an allegory, to signify Arcite's employing stratagem.

[151] Juno.

[152] Here Dryden mistakes his author's meaning, though he employs his word. Chaucer says,

"Pity renneth sone in gentel herte:"

That is, in the heart of a man of gentle, or noble birth.

[153] The bars were the palisades of the lists. Upon one occasion, when a challenger, in a cause of treason, had died before the day of combat, a court of chivalry appointed his dead body to be brought into the lists, completely armed, and adjudged that the defendant should be held conqueror, if he could throw it over the bars. But the corpse and arms being weighty, the sun set before he could accomplish this, and he was condemned for treason as conquered in the trial by combat. See Sir David Lindsay on Heraldry, MS. Advocates' Library.

[154] This strange association of persons did not shock the times of Chaucer.

[155] Chaucer reads more appropriately, "under a bent."

[156] Rubeus and Puella.—Dryden.

[157] Dryden has here omitted a striking circumstance:

A wolf there stood before him at his feet,
With eyen red, and of a man he eat.

[158] Prussia.

[159] Boots, or armour for the legs.

[160] The accoutrements of the knights of yore were as various as the modern fashions of female dress; and as it was necessary, in the single combat, that each warrior should be equally armed, it was a matter of no small nicety, to ascertain exactly, what weapons, offensive and defensive, should be allowed to them. But in general tournaments, each knight seems to have used the arms which pleased him best; subject always to such general regulations as were laid down by the judges, for lessening the danger of these military games. There is a long enumeration of various kinds of armour, in the romance of "Clariodus and Meliadus."

[161] First edition, *pots*.

[162] Derrick's edition, *The*.

[163] This line, containing a political allusion, is Dryden's exclusively. In Chaucer's time, the "churl's rebellion" excited the dreadful remembrance of the insurrection of Jack Straw in England, and that in France called the Jacquerie, both recent events.

[164] The court of chivalry, which, in 1631, regulated the intended judicial combat between David Ramsay and Lord Rae, appointed, that until the word *lesser les armes* was given, the combatants should have meat and drink, iron-nails, hammer, file, scissars, bodkin, needle and thread, armourer, and tailor, with their weapons to aid them as need required. See *State Trials*, Vol. XI. p. 130.

[165] That is, at disadvantage.

[166] Derrick's Edit, the.

[167] This fine passage does not occur in Chaucer, although his commencement of the battle is in the highest degree animated. Perhaps Dryden remembered Sidney's "Arcadia."

"And now the often-changing fortune began also to change the hue of the battles. For at the first, though it were terrible, yet Terror was decked so bravely with rich furniture, gilt swords, shining armours, pleasant pensils, that the eye with delight had scarcely leisure to be afraid: but now all universally defiled with dust, blood, broken armour, mangled bodies took away the masque, and set forth Horror in his own horrible manner."—*Arcadia*, Book III.

[168] Derrick's Edit. *The*.

[169] Emetrius.

[170] Another political sarcasm of the Tory poet, unauthorized by his original.

[171] An "infernal fury," according to the best readings of Chaucer, though others, which Dryden probably followed, have "fire."

[172] Folio Edit. *Not.*

[173] This sort of expostulation is common to many barbarous nations, and is said to be retained by the native Irish.

[174] The French *launde*, means a wild, uncultivated meadow, or glade. The word *lawn*, which we have formed from it, has a more limited signification.

[175] Derrick's Edit. *their*.

[176] Partlet, or Perthelot, as the proper name of a hen, is a word of difficult and dubious etymology. Ruddiman, in his Glossary to Douglas's Virgil, gives several derivations; the most plausible is that which brings it from Partlet, an old word signifying a woman's ruff.

[177] Among the distiches ascribed to Cato, we do in fact find one to that purpose:—

Somnia ne cures.—Lib. ii. distich 32.

[178] Cicero, who tells both the following stories in his treatise, *De Divinatione*, lib. i. cap. 27. Chaucer has reversed their order, and added many picturesque circumstances.

[179] *Hoped* and *unhoped*, anciently meant only *expected* and *unexpected*. Puttenham, in his "Art of English Poesie," 1589, mentions the Tanner of Tamworth, who, in his broad dialect, said to King Edward, upon discovering his rank, and remembering the familiarities he had used with him while in disguise; "I hope I shall be hanged to-morrow," for "I fear me I shall be hanged." The use of the verb *hope*, was therefore limited to its present sense, even in Queen Elizabeth's time. But Dryden, in translating an old poet, used some latitude in employing ancient language.

[180] There may be room to suspect, that the line should run,

A court of coblers, and a mob of kings;

as better expressing the confusion of ideas incident to dreaming.

[181] Kenelm, son of Kenulph, king of Mercia, was murdered at the age of seven years by his sister Quendreda, and accounted a martyr.

[182] This vision Chaucer found, not in Homer, but in Dares Phrygius. Shakespeare alludes to it:

——Come, Hector, come, go back,
Thy wife hath dreamed.——

[183] *In principio* refers to the beginning of Saint John's Gospel.

[184] Taken from a fabulous conversation between the Emperor Adrian and the philosopher Secundus, reported by Vincent de Beauvais, Spec. Hist. *Quid est Mulier? Hominis confusio; in saturabilis bestia,* &c. The Cock's polite version is very ludicrous.

[185] Indulging, as usual, his political antipathies, Dryden fails not to make the fox a Puritan.

[186] According to the romantic history of Charlemaign, Gano, or Ganelon, betrayed the Christian army, at the battle of Roncesvalles, where Orlando and the Peers of France were slain. The pun upon *Gallic*, which is renewed in deriving the cock from Brennus and Belinus, a little farther down, is entirely Dryden's.

[187] Thomas Bradwardin, archbishop of Canterbury, a contemporary of Chaucer, composed a treatise on Predestination, and a work entitled, *De Causu Dei*, against Pelagius.

[188] Nigellus Wireker, who, in Richard the First's reign, composed a Book, called "*Burnellus, seu Speculum Stultorum*." The story alluded to, is of a cock, who, having been lamed by a priest's son, called Gundulfus, in revenge, omitted to crow upon a morning, when his enemy had directed that he should be called very early, in order to go to a distant church, where he was to take orders. By this stratagem, Gundulfus overslept himself, and was disappointed of his ordination.

[189] *Native*, in astrology, is the person whose scheme of nativity is calculated.

[190] Ganfride, or Geoffrey de Vinsauf, a Norman historian, and parcel poet, bewailed the death of Richard in plaintive hexameters, in which he particularly exclaims against Friday, the day on which that hero was shot by Bertram de Gurdun:

Oh Veneris lacrymosa dies, O sydus amarum
Illa dies tua nox fuit, et Venus illa venenum, &c.

[191] Dryden has given Jack Straw the national antipathies of the mob in his own time. Chaucer says more correctly, their rage was directed against the Flemings. In the next two lines, Dryden again alludes to the riots of his own time, whose gathering cry used to be "one and all."

[192] This excellent parody upon Virgil is introduced by Dryden, and marks his late labours:

——*Vicisti! et victum tendere palmas*
Ausonii videre.——

[193] In the original, the tale concludes by a reflection of the Fox. The cock had said,

——he that winketh when he should see
Al wilfully God let him never the.
Nay, quoth the Fox, but God give him mischance
That is so indiscreet of governance,
That jangleth when that he should hold his peace.

[194] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, Vol. I. p. 346.

[195] Derrick, *wearied*.

[196] Trumpeters, and other warlike musicians, long held some part of the character of heralds and of ancient minstrels. They were distinguished by collars and tabards, and often employed on messages, during which their persons were sacred.

[197] The joints of the armour were rivetted with nails after the warrior had put it on. Hence among the sounds of preparation for battle, Shakespeare enumerates that of

——The armourers accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up.

[198] Personal attendants, as the name implies. They followed the knights in battle, and never quitted their side:

The Duke of York so dread,
The eager vaward led,
With the main Harry sped,
Among his *henchmen*.
DRAYTON'S *Ballad of Agincourt*.

This office was long retained by the Highland chiefs, and usually conferred on a foster brother. Before a battle, the Frenchmen carried, as in the text, the arms of the knight ready for use.

[199] Derrick, *pleasures*.

[200] i.e. *psaltery.*

[201] A species of song or lyric composition, with a returning burden. It is of kin to the *Rondeau*, but of a different measure.

[202] The common list of the nine worthies comprehends—Hector, Pompey, and Alexander, Pagans; Joshua, David, and Judas Machabeus, Jews; and Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boulogne, Christians: But it is sometimes varied.

[203] This is a mistake of Dryden, who was misled by the spelling of the old English. Chaucer talks of *boughs*, not of *bows*; and says simply,

And tho that barin bowes in their hand;
Of the precious lawrier so notable.

This refers to the description of the knights at their entrance, which Dryden has rightly rendered:

Some in their hands, besides the lance and shield,
The bows of woodbine, or of hawthorn, held;
Or branches for their mystic emblems took
Of palm, of laurel, or of cerrial oak.

The bow, though the youth trained to chivalry were taught to use it, made no part of a knight's proper weapons. But it is curious how Dryden, having fallen into an error, finds out a reason for his false reading, by alleging, that the bows were borne as an emblem of strength of arm, valour, and victory. [Since this note was written, I observe, that the ingenious Dr Aikin has anticipated my observation.]

[204] Derrick, *glance*.

[205] The disappearance of the Fairies, which Chaucer ascribes to the exercitation of the friars, a latter bard, in the same vein of irony, imputes to the Reformation:

By which we note the fairies,
  Were of the old profession;
Their songs were Ave Marie's;
  Their dances were procession.

But now, alas! they all are dead,
  Or gone beyond the seas;
Or farther for religion fled,
  Or else they take their ease.

See "The Fairies Farewell," a lively little song, by the witty Bishop Corbet.

[206] Our author, to whom, now so far advanced in life, the recollection of some of his plays could not be altogether pleasant, is willing to seek an excuse for their licence in the debauchery of Charles and of his court. The attack of Collier had been too just to admit of its being denied; and our author, like other people, was content to make excuses where defence was impossible.

[207] Or Ganore, or Vanore, or Guenever, the wife of Arthur in romance.

[208] Ovid, indeed, tells the story in the Metamor. lib. xi. But how will the fair reader excuse Chaucer for converting the talkative male domestic of Midas into that king's wife?

[209] The sound which the bittern produces by suction among the roots of water plants, is provincially called *bumping*.

[210]

Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.
JUVENAL, Satire X.

[211] This passage is obviously introduced by the author, to apologize for the splendid establishment of the clergy of his own community. What follows, applies, as has been noticed, to the non-juring clergy, who lost their benefices for refusing the oath of allegiance to King William.

[212] He flourished in the reign of Henry VII.; and his work, entitled, "The Stately Tragedy of Guiscard and Sigismond," is printed in 1597, probably from an earlier edition.

[213] It was published by Wilmot, in 1592, under the title of "The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund," and occurs in the 2d volume of Dodsley's old plays.

[214] This minute circumstance, which is mentioned by Boccacio, seems to argue, that the story had a real, at least a traditional foundation; for there is no other reason why it should have been introduced.

[215] The dispute between William and his Parliament about his favourite Dutch guards, was obviously in Dryden's recollection.

[216] *Manni Della Illustrazione del Boccario*, p. 355.

[217] There is a copy in the late Duke John of Roxburghe's library, under the title of "Nastagio and Traversari."

[218] Derrick, *spoke*. The reading of the folio, besides furnishing an accurate rhyme, is in itself far more picturesque. The spectre is described in the very attitude of assault.

[219] Although this interpretation is invidious, it might have been wished, that Collier, against whom the insinuation is directed, had been less coarse, and somewhat veiled the indecencies which he justly censures.

[220] Dryden willingly seizes the opportunity of being witty at the expence of the militia of England, which were then drawn out, and exercised once a month, instead of being formed as at present into permanent fencible regiments; differing from those of the line, only in the mode of raising them, and the extent of service.

END OF THE ELEVENTH VOLUME.

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Transcriber's notes:

P.36. 'Hoddesden' changed to 'Hoddesdon'.
P.119. 'Eleanora' changed to 'Eleonora'.
P.120. 'Eleanora' changed to 'Eleonora'.
P.152. 'copartment' changed to 'compartment'.
P.232. In footnote 130 'reason to thing' changed to 'reason to think'.
P.260. 'musk ask' changed to 'must ask'.
P.279. 'profered' is 'proffer'd' in another volume, changed.
P.301. 'atchievements' changed to 'achievements'.
P.436. 'mein' changed to 'mien'.

P.453. 'criti- objections' changed to 'critical objections'.
P.475. 'disagreeble' changed to 'disagreeable', changed.
Various punctuation fixed.

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